



1. ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Stuart Christian called the February 4, 2020 meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers present were Clayton Bartz, Craig Engelstad, and JJ Hamre. Managers absent include Dan Vesledahl. One staff member was present April Swenby – Administrator. Others in attendance included Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering, Mike Larson – Larson Helicopters, Debra Walchuck – NRCS and Keith Weston – Red River Retention Authority.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre to approve the agenda with the addition of a presentation from Laron Helicopters, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

3. MINUTES:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the minutes from the January 7, 2020 meeting as presented, correcting a typo on Page 7, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

4. TREASURER'S/FINANCIAL REPORT:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre to approve the Treasurer's Report for January, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

Two investments are due in February. Swenby will solicit quotes from banks for competitive interest rates.

The managers reviewed their expense reports and reported on activities for the month. The following bills were reviewed:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson | 770.00 |
| April J. Swenby | 112.23 |
| City of Fertile | 51.75 |
| EcoLab | 53.57 |
| Fertile Hardware Hank | 69.99 |
| First Community Credit Union | 2,553.32 |
| Garden Valley Telephone Company | 208.67 |
| Houston Engineering | 23,580.15 |
| JC & J Trucking, Inc. | 18,925.00 |
| Kraulik Excavating, Inc. | 41,800.00 |
| Minnesota Assoc. of Drainage Inspectors | 50.00 |
| Minnesota Viewers Association | 200.00 |
| Otter Tail Power Company | 523.05 |
| Sarah Wise | 55.00 |
| Solien & Larson Engineering Inc. | 2,775.00 |

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Todd's Landscaping | 190.00 |
| Wild Rice Electric | 136.38 |
| TOTAL | <u>92,054.11</u> |

Additional Bills that were presented that were not listed on the bills to be paid report due to timing of when the report was created include:

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Jason Benbo | 450.00 |
| TOTAL | <u>450.00</u> |

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve and pay the bills with a total of \$92,501.11 **Seconded** by Hamre, **Carried**.

5. KEITH WESTON/DEBRA WALCHUCK:

Keith Weston – Red River Retention Authority and Debra Walchuck – NRCS came before the board to discuss the status of the district’s RCPP planning process. The agreement expires in May 2020. An extension was requested and Swenby will submit the paperwork for a one year extension. The managers were unified to continue to move forward. Herrmann stated we have submitted review point three, but we are nearing the completion of Review Point 4. A project team meeting will be scheduled within the next month of two. The district was encouraged to keep moving forward with the plan to see it to completion.

6. HELICOPTER SPRAYING

Mike Larson presented to the board his services for helicopter spraying. They specialize in cattail control and broad leaf. Larson explained the products he’s been using (Polaris). Glysophate, which is typically the product that has been used in the past has a 2 year life span. The product Larson uses, Polaris can last up to 3-4 years. The residual is usually 1 year. Larson stated that there is no residual with runoff, only with soil. With Polaris, Larson stated that burn is unable to be seen within 7 days. Because it usually takes until frost to be visibly seen, he doesn’t see until the following season what was missed. Larson inspects the following season to grab anything missed. After services, a GPS map of exactly what was sprayed is provided to the customer. Larson stated that there is not a spray drift for concern for adjacent crops/buildings and selects his days of spraying carefully.

Larson confirmed that thistle patches must identified ahead of time. Milestone is the product used for those types of nuisances.

He distributed his 2020 price list and information about the product he uses. Larson would propose, after the first initial year, a management program where he files and inspects annually for cattails. He also proposes a spray in June for broadleaf and a spray in August for cattails.

Larson expressed interest in the districts mowing operations. Larson will develop an hourly rate and provide that to the managers. The districts main concern is the ditch bottoms and having the legal systems clean to aid with spring runoff and high-water events.

Swenby will place this on the agenda for March as an action item.

7. ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Project #17: Last month, Herrmann was asked to provide more details of the scope of work that

Braun Intertec proposed for the sluffing on Project # 17. Site reconnaissance, drilling, (1 boring), soils laboratory analysis, stability analysis and reporting were included in their scope of work. Herrmann stated that to lay the slope back (7:1), the cost is estimated to be about \$40,000-\$50,000, purchasing additional ROW. Braun's analysis would provide reassurance that laying the slope back is the best solution. Currently, Herrmann doesn't believe that the sluff is affecting the design flow, but sediment loss from the slope does affect it downstream and it eventually will pinch the ditch. Braun's analysis may provide for an alternative solution that will allow for us to stay within the footprint and not purchase additional ROW. The managers will evaluate this after spring inspections.

Additionally, this summer, Herrmann was asked to review the breakout on Ditch 9 as per a landowner's request. Herrmann noted that it appears to be constructed as designed and indicated concern of potential impacts upstream due to the change in the breakout elevation. Herrmann will have a recommendation next month.

Project # 27/Union Lake Sarah Lake Outlet: The field survey has been completed for easement under the county road #44.

Ditch # 80: Houston Engineering is working with the contractor to define and updated schedule for completion.

SH Ditch: Swenby has asked Herrmann to review the ditch corridor with LiDAR and aerial imagery to establish where the required buffer isn't in place.

Rock Riffles: Last month, the managers approved Change order 1 extending the contract to November 1, 2020. Manager Christian signed the change order.

Kittleson Creek Outlet: The box culverts have been set and back filling was completed. The caupher dam that was constructed gave way near the end and the inspector has cautioned that material supporting the box may not be able to support or suitable for the box long term as designed. Manager Engelstad suggested that the soil be tested and recorded. It was also noted that the agreement was that the culvert removed was property of the Township, however, the pipe was not able to be salvaged. The inspector is suggesting that the contractor go back in this summer to confirm compaction.

Sand Hill Lake Dam: Some snow removal has taken place and stockpiling of rock has occurred.

Carlson Coulee (Timber removal): A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz approving pay request # 1 for \$41,800 (as reflected in the bills to be paid), **Seconded** by Manager Vesledahl, **Carried**.

Riparian Geomorphic Assessment Scope: Herrmann presented a scope of work that studies the district for areas of significant of erosion and bank stability. This study ultimately quantifies the benefits, sediment load reduction, and various clean water efforts. The issues in the district consist of significantly high banks that are slowly washing into the river. The scope of this work is estimated to be \$90,000. A grant can be applied for to complete this assessment that would pay for 75% of the cost to complete the analysis. A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to apply for a grant to complete the assessment, committing to 25% of the cost should the grant be received, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

8. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

Administrator Calendar: Swenby highlighted her calendar for February.

MAWD Legislative Days: Swenby has reserved lodging for the MAWD Legislative Days March 18-19 in St. Paul. The MAWD Legislative Breakfast and Day at the Capitol provide MAWD members

with a great opportunity to build relationships with key legislators and to advance our legislative agenda. There is a Wednesday evening reception on March 18 at the DoubleTree Hotel and breakfast at the Capitol on Thursday morning. Each Watershed District is responsible for scheduling meetings with their local legislators on Thursday, March 19th.

Drainage Conference: Swenby attended the 2nd Annual Drainage Conference at the Courtyard by Marriott Moorhead, MN on January 27, 2020 and provided the conference packet to the managers.

Quarterly/Calendar Reporting: Swenby reported that a fair amount of her time in January was spent with calendar year end and quarterly reporting. She reported that the district is in compliance with all quarterly and calendar reporting and filings, along with all grant reporting for LSOHC, CWF, and RCPP and requests for reimbursements.

MCIT Insurance: Swenby was scheduled to attend the Polk County Commissioner's meeting on January 28 to request sponsorship for MCIT coverage. Due to influenza, she did not attend, but asked Chuck Whiting to present on our behalf. The county board passed by resolution to support the district moving towards MCIT. County support by resolution was required to obtain coverage. It has been confirmed that coverage will begin March 1, 2020. Swenby will notify the district's current insurance companies and notify them that the district will not be renewing.

City of Nielsville: A letter was sent to Bill Brekke to address his concerns and he has formally been asked for his support of this project. Upon his approval, an additional letter will be drafted from the City of Nielsville and Polk County asking the State of MN to consider Nielsville as a viable location for flood protection. Brekke is in Texas and Swenby has been unable to connect with him.

Emerging Leaders Program: Swenby contacted Jody Horntvedt and indicated her willingness to partake in the Emerging Leaders Program, should a nomination come her way. Upon research of the program Swenby agreed that the experience would be a great asset of education for her role as Administrator.

LSOHC Grant: The grant agreement will need amending to align with moving forward on the Poissant Bridge project. A phone conference is scheduled for mid-February to discuss the amendment and what is needed. Swenby is told that it is likely that she will be required to testify before the council for the amendment can be approved, which will take place in the cities in late February or March.

Vesledahl Wetland Mitigation: I contacted Mark Johnson and Rod Gunderson (MnDOT) on January 13, 2020 for an update. Senator Johnson has stated that he would support the proposal for easements granted in the districts name. He is open to attending the meeting with MnDOT. A meeting is scheduled for February 14, with the presence of Senator Mark Johnson.

RRB Feasibility Study: In early January, Swenby forwarded an e-mail to the managers from Andrew Graham regarding a request for cost sharing for the RRB feasibility study. Information about the study was provided as a reminder to the managers. Swenby indicated in the e-mail that her biggest concern was that, when we were members, the RRWMB allocated \$97,000 towards the study and only spent 30K. She noted that now that we are not members, the district was being asked to pay an additional amount for the study and was under the impression that the cost was covered and allocated during the district's time as members. Swenby asked the RRWMB to consider giving the Sand Hill credit for the dollars allocated towards the study from when the district was a member. At the RRWMB meeting on January 14, the RRWMB discussed whether or not the SHRWD should be credited for RRWMB's original \$97K that was allocated to this study. The district was notified that the Sand Hill's share will be taken from what was allocated when they were members.

County Bond Refinance: The County is being asked to refinance their bonds (preliminary schedule attached). Swenby verified that the length of the refinanced bond will not change for the taxpayers.

Swenby provided the debt service run showing a savings of about \$102,000, or present value savings of \$98,000 to the assessed taxpayers. The county is not asking for district approval, as this will be approved at a county board level on Tuesday, February 4. Swenby confirmed that she told Chuck Whiting, County Administrator, that she did not foresee any issues as long as it did not cost the assessed landowners any additional money or extend the life of their debt.

Kittleson Creek Culvert: The box culverts at Kittleson were installed. Images were provided.

SH Ditch: There are some buffer infringements on the SH Ditch. Swenby has asked Houston Engineering to provide a map/landowner list of infringements. The board will need to consider options for enforcing the buffer. Swenby suggested consulting with Dave Hauff for the best way to do this because it is both the legal ditch system obligation and a landowner obligation due to the buffer law.

SH Lake Outlet: A preconstruction meeting was held January 31 at the district office with the MNDNR and the contractors. Notes from the meeting were provided. In summary, Landwehr Construction plans to begin February 10 and is expected to be finished by the first week in March.

RRWMB: Three documents were given to the managers as provided by the RRWMB regarding their newly approved strategic plan and a financial document stating that the RRWMB has experienced less administrative expenses with the elimination of the Administrator position and implementation of an Executive Director and Executive Assistant. The Executive Director has reached out to the Sand Hill and is open to meeting with the board.

NRCS RCPP Program Extension Request: A request was made to extend Cooperative Agreement: 68-6322-16-522 (Upper Sand Hill Watershed Plan). The request was attached for manager information.

Project # 3: Last month after the meeting, Manager Engelstad asked about the operations policy for the culvert at the start of Project # 3. According to documents found, the trap is set to be closed when the water overtops the on the East/West crossing, downstream of where the ditch enters Kittleson Creek. A handwritten contract between the district and Kevin Berhow was found indicating that he would be the responsible for the closing of the gate. A date was not found on the document, but historical minutes showed that on 11/12/1996, the board appointed Kevin Berhow manager of the operations of the gate. A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to appoint the District Administrator as the operations manager of the gate, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**

MNDNR/District Contract – Poissant Bridge: Swenby reviewed with the managers the purpose for a contract she presented from the MnDNR. The State is in need of preliminary engineering design and project planning services to remove a bridge that crosses the Sand Hill River and habitat restoration associated with the removal. The contact states that the district will provide oversight from State staff to complete preliminary engineering, design work, cost estimate, and plan set for the removal of the old Highway 32 bridge that crosses over the Sand Hill River just south of Fertile, MN and subsequent stream habitat restoration associated with the bridge removal. The state will review and approve design plans and reimburse the district for costs associated with the work up to \$5,000. A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve and sign the Joint Powers Agreement with the State of MN (MNDNR) – SWIFT contract # 171927, with the above stated intentions, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

Union Lake Pumping: Land rights will be conveyed from the County to the Watershed District for the pumping site, as per the attorney's recommendations. Additionally, all permanent easements during the initial establishment are with Polk County and our attorney has provided conveyance paperwork for those easements. All documents were provided for review. A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve and sign the easements as recommended by the district attorney for conveyance between the district and the county, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

Office Assistant: Swenby will draft a job description that she thinks will benefit the district.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Partnering agency reports were provided to the managers from agencies including the Drainage Workgroup, Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, and the RRWMB.

10. PERMITS:

Township Request for Assistance: Vineland Township (Big Vineland (148/148), Section 33, has proposed moving a road due to repetitive washouts at the outlet of County Ditch 90. They have not applied for a permit yet, but is asking for preliminary thoughts. The township is looking for some water management advice, wondering if moving the road is the best, most efficient way to manage the inundation of water. A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to ask Herrmann to review the area to provide up to \$1,500 of investigation analysis on the area to provide a recommendation for managing the water in that area, making a site visit, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**

11. ADJOURNMENT:

The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 8 AM. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to adjourn the meeting at 12:11 PM, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried.**

April Swenby, Administrator

JJ Hamre, Secretary