



TITLE: REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

1. ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Stuart Christian called the September 7, 2023, meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers attending were Clayton Bartz, Craig Engelstad, Don Andringa and Shawn Brekke. Staff members present included April Swenby – Administrator and Donna Bjerk – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance included Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the agenda, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

3. MINUTES:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2023, Seconded by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

The Treasurer’s Report for August was presented. A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve and dispense the reading of the Treasurer’s Report for August, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

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

Anders Valley Publishing	326.25
Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson	930.00
April J. Swenby	639.62
Brandner Printing	358.87
EcoLab	53.57
First Community Credit Union	135.16
Houston Engineering	41,378.52
Larson Helicopters	10,594.50
Mosher Landscaping & Lawn Service	40.00
Norman County Index	684.00
Obremski LTD	27.72
Otter Tail Power Company	185.38
Sarah Wise	48.00
Sletten Township	375.00
Stuart Christian (Vendor)	346.30
The 13 Towns	133.90
The Mahnomen Pioneer	99.20

True North Steel	578.00
U.S. Post Office	70.00
Wild Rice Electric	176.97
TOTAL	<u>57,180.96</u>

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve and pay the bills with a total of \$57,180.96 Secoded by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

5. BUDGET HEARING:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to recess the regular meeting at 8:30 AM and open the budget hearing, **Secoded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.** The budget hearing was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chairman Christian. Chairman Christian opened the hearing for discussion. The budget for 2024 was presented as follows:

Three petitions (from Polk County) to fund basic water management, water quality and erosion, and water studies education and agency support in accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, were displayed and presented.

No one came forward with any comments or questions on the budget as advertised and as follows:

Income	
REIMBURSED EXPENSE	650.00
HOMESTEAD/AG CREDIT (HACA)	3,500.00
INTEREST INCOME	25,000.00
TAX LEVY INCOME	<u>250,000.00</u>
Total Income	279,150.00
Expense	
MISC	200.00
PUBLICITY	1,000.00
MEETING EXPENSE	2,100.00
WEB-SITE	3,000.00
DUES-MEMBERSHIP	3,000.00
EDUCATION	4,000.00
PAYROLL TAXES	7,000.00
EMPLOYEE TRAVEL EXPENSES	8,000.00
COMPUTER EXPENSE	10,000.00
BUILDING MAINTENCE/OCCUPANCY	13,000.00
FURNITURE-EQUIP	15,000.00
OFFICE OPERATIONS	18,000.00
PROF SERVICES	20,000.00
MANAGER EXPENSE	20,000.00
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	41,850.00
PAYROLL EXPENSES	<u>113,000.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>279,150.00</u>
Net Income	<u>0.00</u>

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to adjourn the budget hearing at 8:35 AM and reconvene the regular meeting at 8:36 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

6. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

230th Road Overtopping: After the August meeting, Herrmann and Swenby met with Russia Township and proposed a cost share fix. Richard Dale, Russia Twp. said he would bring it back to a Township meeting. If they are interested in fixing, they will contact the district.

County Commissioner Race: Paul Reese was elected to serve as District 1 County Commissioner. Swenby has reached out to him and has invited him to district meetings and offered a possible meeting to communicate with him on the watershed district roles in his district. He confirmed he was selected to serve on the SHRWD Advisory Committee.

One Watershed One Plan: During the last meeting the MnDNR had a presentation on hydrologic change in the Sand Hill River Watershed. Swenby provided the presentation to the managers. Swenby also included the priority areas that Swenby will be suggesting in the work plan, noting the SH River Ecosystem Restoration area a priority for Capital Improvements, and areas for side inlets, and bank slough for Projects and Practices.

Drainage Conference: Swenby attended the drainage conference August 16 – 18 and provided the agenda and the presentations that were given. Swenby stated that much focus was on Redetermination of Benefits.

Region 1 Administrators: Region 1 Administrators met on August 23. Swenby was absent performing ditch inspections but did provide the managers with the notes that came her way. Swenby noted that Middle Snake-Tamarac Watershed is interested in a resolution to simplify Redetermination of Benefits process, and it was suggested to bring this to the DWG. Swenby stated she'd like to learn more about what that would look like, as it relates to our issues on the Sand Hill Ditch.

WRWD Project Team: Swenby provided the managers with the draft purpose and need statements for the WRWD Project Team. The WRWD Project Team met in August and displayed several alternatives, which Swenby presented. The board focused on the alternative for water coming North into the Sand Hill Ditch, recognizing that some of the areas in question are already assessed into the legal system. The board is open to learning more about downstream impacts, especially relating to spring vs. summer events.

Drainage Work Group: Swenby attended the DWG meeting on August 11. She confirmed they are working through all the notices required in statute (many environmental groups still feel that there is a gap in public notice requirements) and they are having the technical teams help to define "adequate outlet" and the process required to determine "adequate outlet".

Building Project: Two bids were received. One for \$1,126,000 and one for \$919,000. The lowest bidder was Schmitz Builders. Manager Bartz commented that those quotes are between \$550 and \$722 per square foot. He also stated that he did some research for commercial projects in Fargo, noting that some are between \$300 and \$160 per square foot.

The Architect was going to work with the lowest bidder to revise the plans/specs to develop a revision that would significantly reduce the costs. Swenby provided a possible revised plan reducing square footage. There was not much appeal for reducing the square footage, and the appeal was to search for a reduction in the square foot price.

MN 102 Boundary: Swenby is working with RLWD to approve a proposed petition to BWSR. It is ready to go, but the district is just waiting for RLWD's approval to move forward.

Project 27 – Sand Bag Structure. Herrmann has been working with the contractor to determine the logistics that will comply with the permit requirements and USFWS requirements.

SH Ditch FEMA Appeal: FEMA Region V responded to one of Swenby's many requests for an update. They have stated that it is still under review, and they expect to issue a determination soon and will do so as soon as possible.

Project Team: The Liberty-Reis Erosion project title has now been changed to the title SH Ecosystem Restoration. Swenby has submitted the necessary Project Team Documents regarding this project team and will present to the FDRWG meeting in October a proposal for the 50/50 cost share facilitation for this project team. In the action items, there is a revised project team membership list for this project team. Swenby is on the October agenda to present.

Permit/Inspection/Culvert Inventory Software: Bjerk and Swenby attended a demo training to learn the interface. Swenby began revising our watershed district permit application (paper copy) to mimic the format of the WRWD permit, and to modify the questions to mirror the online system to keep them both consistent. There are still some templates and letters that need revising, and likely when the system goes live, it will be quirks that staff will have to work out as they move forward. Swenby is hoping to have all the systems live and in function during the month of September. During our ditch inspections, Herrmann and Swenby were able to use the new system to record all their findings. Swenby stated she is very optimistic about the inspection software. She believes this will provide a permanent record, year to year, of the systems and is in a platform that is better to track stating that switching from manual/paper records to digital records for inspections is a huge upgrade for the watershed district. Swenby asked for comments on the new watershed permit and the online application.

Ditch Inspections: Swenby provided a listing of all repairs needed for the west end, based off Herrmann and Swenby's ditch inspection tour. Until the software is ready, staff complied with a manual report and presented that to the managers.

SH Ditch/dam removal: In July, Scott Eia expressed concern regarding the dam removal that was completed in recent years on the SH Ditch. It is his testimony that the water moves faster towards the west, causing additional flooding. Based on Eia's testimony, Herrmann was asked to review the original plans, in comparison to the existing structures, and report back at a later date. Herrmann stated that it might be better to answer this question after the project team process is underway, because modeling will likely be done at that time. In an effort to get a more immediate answer and to avoid additional district costs, Swenby has reached out to the Corp of Engineers, to ask them to answer Eia's questions, as they were the original designer of the project.

7. ENGINEER'S REPORT.

Project # 27: USFWS will provide a permit for the work. Herrmann has been coordinating with the contractor for options to access the project site and place embankment material that is compliant with the permit. Herrmann is also working on completing the amendments that are required for the interconnect, on Bryan Bohl's property, as directed by the board. As a reminder, the permit amendment expenditures will be billed back to the landowner, not the system.

Project Team: Herrmann and Swenby have been preparing for an active project team and the documents required through the FDRWG. The intent is to define the project in enough detail to apply for funding opportunities, stating that the project team process will focus on local landowner acceptance, stabilizing side slopes, environmental amenities to maximize funding potential, and the avoidance of any insurmountable permitting concerns.

SH Ditch: Herrmann was instructed in July to verify that the grades along County Road 232 have not changed before the board decided how to proceed forward with the survey results from last

month. Herrmann presented the LiDAR data that he used to show the flow path for breakouts to the north and the south.

Moen Outlet Stabilization: Herrmann presented the preliminary plan that was provided to regulatory agencies.

8. ACTION ITEMS.

Budget Approval: A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve the administrative budget as presented during the budget hearing, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve the following resolution relating to the budget and levy for 2024, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. A roll call vote was held and resulted in the following proceeding the resolution. **The Motion was carried.**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Managers of the Sand Hill River Watershed District:

WHEREAS, the Board of Managers of the Sand Hill River Watershed District have adopted budgets for 2024, said levies shall be for the year 2024 and shall be collectible with the taxes recovered in the year 2024; and said levies are all based on the 2024 taxable market values; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Annotated (M.S.A) Sections 103D.905, 103D.911, and 103D.915, the Board of Managers, Sand Hill River Watershed District is authorized to levy an ad valorem tax against all taxable property, in the District for various purposes; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Minnesota statutes, published notice was given by the said Board of Managers, Sand Hill River Watershed District, for a hearing, which was held on September 7, 2023, whereby the 2024 budget of the Sand Hill River Watershed District was determined, and the said Board of Managers is legally authorized to tax the levies listed below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Managers, Sand Hill River Watershed District:

- 1. In accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, the Sand Hill River Watershed District does hereby levy an ad valorem tax of \$250,000 to be assessed at the appropriate mill rate on all taxable property within the district. The proceeds of said levy shall be used and credited to the District's General Fund to pay for the general administrative expenses and any expenses involved in the construction and maintenance of any projects of common benefit to the District.*
- 2. In accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, the Sand Hill River Watershed District does hereby levy an amount not to exceed 0.00798 percent of all taxable market value (\$110,852.62) to pay the costs attributable to the basic water management features of projects initiated by petition of a political subdivision within the Watershed District. In 2024, these funds will be used for a variety of water management related efforts such as records retention and housing, project construction/maintenance, beaver control and NRE benefits.*
- 3. In accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, the Sand Hill River Watershed District does hereby levy a second amount not to exceed 0.00798 percent of all*

taxable market value (\$110,852.62) to pay the costs attributable to the basic water management features of projects initiated by petition of a political subdivision within the Watershed District. In 2024, these funds will be used for water quality and erosion efforts.

4. In accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, the Sand Hill River Watershed District does hereby levy a third amount not to exceed 0.00798 percent of all taxable market value (\$110,852.62) to pay the costs attributable to the basic water management features of projects initiated by petition of a political subdivision within the Watershed District. In 2024, these funds will be used for data collection, watershed studies, education and agency support.
5. That the Auditors of the Counties of Polk, Norman and Mahnomen shall make said levies in accordance with the provisions of the Minnesota Watershed Act, Chapter 103D, as amended. This entire levy (\$110,852.62) can be levied as one assessment, prorated per taxable market value between the three counties, and our office can do the breakdown.

	Yea	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Christian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Andringa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brekke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engelstad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As per new MN Statute requirements, in November, an agenda item will be added for truth and taxation information, offering a second comment period.

Project Team: A revised project team list was presented. **A Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve the project team member list as presented, **Seconded** by Manger Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

One Watershed One Plan: The Managers reviewed language is a formal letter, highlighting the board's decision to act as the fiscal agent for the One Watershed One Plan during the implementation part of the plan. **A Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve the language minor language changes in the memo for presentation to the 1W1P Policy Committee, **Seconded** by Manger Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

Employment Contract: As instructed last month, the draft employment contract, drafted by the district attorney, was presented to the board. **A Motion** was made by Manager Englestad to table the employment contract as presented until salary negotiations, **Seconded** by Manger Bartz. **The Motion was carried.**

9. OTHER BUSINESS & PARTNERING INFORMATION

The managers were given information from Mn Watersheds, the Drainage Work Group, International Water Institute, Minnesota Assn. of Watershed Administrators, the FDRWG and the FDRWG Communications Committee that Swenby participates in, and the MN Association of Drainage Inspectors.

10. PERMITS:

The following permit was presented to the board:

Permit 23-43: Norman County Hwy. Dept., Section 13, Bear Park Township, Bridge replacement/modification.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to approve Permit 23-043, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

11. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, October 5, 2023, 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 11:34 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

Donna Bjerk, Administrative Assistant

Shawn Brekke, Secretary