



TITLE: REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: JANUARY 7, 2025

1. ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Stuart Christian called the January 7, 2025, meeting to order at 4 PM at the District Office. Other managers attending were Clayton Bartz, Craig Engelstad and Shawn Brekke. Managers absent included Don Andringa. Staff members present included April Swenby – Administrator. Others attendance included Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

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

3. REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD:

Annual reorganization of the Board was conducted. Chairman Christian turned the meeting over to Manager Brekke who asked for nominations for **Chairman of the Board**. Manager Bartz nominated Manager Christian for Chair. Nominations were called for three times by Manager Brekke. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Stuart Christian for Chairman by Manager Engelstad **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**. Manager Brekke returned the chair to Chairman Christian.

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Vice Chairman** of the Board. Manager Engelstad nominated Manager Andringa for Vice Chairman. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Andringa for Vice Chairman by Manager Brekke, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Secretary of the Board**. Manager Bartz nominated Manager Brekke for Secretary. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Manager Brekke for Secretary by Manager Englestad, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Treasurer** of the Board. Manager Engelstad nominated Manager Bartz for Treasurer. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Manager Bartz for Treasurer by Manager Brekke **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

Manager Brekke made a **Motion** for the following: That the Fertile Journal is designated as the official newspaper of the SHRWD. That the following financial institutions be designated as official depositories for SHRWD funds: Red River State Bank of Fertile and Bremer Bank, Detroit Lakes, MN. That the District's consulting engineering firm is Houston Engineering, PO Box 5054, Fargo, ND. That the attorney for the District is David Hauff, Firm of Anderson and Bottrell, PO Box 10247, Fargo, ND. That mileage for District business is reimbursable at a per mile rate coinciding with the allowable IRS mileage rate. That manager per diem is set at \$40 per hour with a maximum daily total of \$125.00 as prescribed by State law. **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to authorize Stuart Christian, Clayton Bartz, and April Swenby as the current financial and representative signers and keeping Donna Bjerk a financial signer for the Red River State Bank account, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to appoint April Swenby and Donna Bjerk as an authorized signer to the Business Rewards Credit card with FCCU giving Bjerk and Swenby the ability to use the assigned credit card on behalf of the district, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**. Credit card charges are always listed on

the bills to be paid individually for the managers to review each month. Both meeting minutes and one signature are required for any future signature additions/removals to this credit card.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad authorizing the April Swenby and Clayton Bartz as authorized representatives regarding the Membership Savings account and credit card listing them on the entity authorization form, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**.

For informational purposes, Swenby reminded the managers of the following which are regulated by the credit card company:

1. One signature is required to withdraw funds from the Reward Savings account at First Community Credit Union.
2. One signature is also required to open/close any accounts with First Community Credit Union.
3. When new employees or new Treasurers represent the Sand Hill Watershed District, proper documentation will need to be reflected for the credit card.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz authorizing April Swenby and Donna Bjerk as authorized representatives regarding the Sam's Club Credit card listing both on the entity authorization form, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to set the regular board meeting for 2025 for the first Thursday of every month at 8 AM, except for February which will be February 7, 2025, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to set the beaver bounty at \$125 per beaver effective May 1, 2025, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**. The program will not change for townships and their portion will remain at \$10.

4. MINUTES:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2024, meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

5. FINANCIAL REPORT:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to dispense the reading and approve the December 2024 Treasurer Reports, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

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

Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson	97.50
April J. Swenby	320.15
CMGB Land	641.54
First Community Credit Union	1,475.30
Garden Valley Telephone Company	164.94
Joe Cyr	300.00
Liberty Township	450.00
Rinke-Noonan	991.00
Sletten Township	450.00
Stuhaug Sanitation	336.96
Todd's Landscaping	140.00
Wild Rice Electric	112.43
TOTAL	<u>5,479.82</u>

Swenby drew to the attention of the managers that two additional bills were presented that were not included on the bills to be paid report sent in the meeting packet as they came after the meeting packet was distributed to the managers; The bill for \$336.96 from Stuhaug Sanitation and one for \$300 for Joe Cyr.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to approve and pay the bills with a total of \$5,479.82, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

6. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

IRS Mileage rate: Swenby reported that the rate for 2025 has increased to \$.70/mile.

Sand Hill Ditch Redetermination: Swenby plans to work on public communications correspondence with H2Over. Swenby has let the county know of the district's decision last month. She was unaware of any communications between the H2Over Viewers and the county regarding their systems.

Manager Training: Swenby provided information to the managers for an opportunity for manager training. This training will discuss manager roles and responsibilities, MN Watershed law and the new changes, Open Meeting Law and Data Practice obligations, and other resources such as the Watershed District Handbook. Options include January 28 in TRF or February 25 in Detroit Lakes. This is not just for new managers. This training is helpful for all managers new and old. Swenby and Bjerk will be attending the February 25 session.

Additionally, Swenby reminded the managers that the Drainage Conference is February 4 – 6 in Alexandria. Swenby will be attending and asked the managers to let her know if they would like to attend.

Ditch Mowing Policy: Last month, Manager Engelstad asked how long bales can be in the Ditch ROW. Swenby had looked through district records and in 2019, the district began to explore what it would look like if the district mowed what landowners didn't. Swenby provided the policy that was adopted. Swenby also provided the May of 2019 minutes that highlight the action the managers took and the intent behind the policy.

Swenby pointed out that after this was implemented, the district realized a couple of things:

- a. Just a small amount of landowners/renters, etc. filled out an application as per the policy adopted in 2019. Based on what was received, the district hired the contractor to mow because it had appeared by the response that they were all un-mowed by the lack of permits received. However, most of the systems were already done, but were never reported to district and it was not efficient or fair to the contractor to mobilize and have very little work as initially thought. He ended up mobilizing a mile here and there, multiple times, and it was not efficient.
- b. The district also had discussions how it wasn't fair to charge the whole system for landowners who don't mow, because the people who do mow effectively pay twice as landowners who mow have costs to mow, and then they also pay for others to mow through their assessments.
- c. Last year we sent out "the good stewardship postcard" to remind landowners to mow. Managers were provided a copy of this mailer as a reminder.

Swenby asked if the board would like to discuss revisions on the policy.

The managers discussed modifications to include the removal of obstructions on the buffer and the statutory obligation to maintain the grass. Additionally the managers discussed items left in the buffer could be a hinderance for snow melt in the string creating an issue for snowmelt. The managers reviewed Mn Statute 103E.021, Subd. 3.

Swenby will check with the district attorney for statute obligations and recommendations.

2024 Annual Audit: Audit is scheduled for March. An engagement letter will be forthcoming. Brady Martz asked to start earlier this year to better meet the deadlines of the State Auditor's office.

7. ENGINEER'S REPORT

Incremental Buffer: Herrmann plans to have a draft of the action items at the February meeting.

Project # 27: Herrmann is still working through alternatives with suppliers. Herrmann is aiming to bring alternatives to the February meeting. Manager Brekke sent Swenby an article about a practice that was working down South to manage zebra mussels. Manager Brekke asked about pumping to supplement irrigation for area ag producers vs. the pump drain moving draining to the natural channel. Zach felt that while this could be an option, the timing of ag water needs vs allowable pumping timeframes may be difficult to align. Staff can send an e-mail to the Mn DNR to determine how many gallons can each landowner pull from a body of water. Manager Engelstad asked when the board can expect solutions to review. Manager Engelstad reminded staff to include USFWS in the discussions for solutions early on. Herrmann is hopeful to have something to present to the board in February.

Project Team: Herrmann believes he is ready to present to the project team and walk through alternatives. Swenby and Herrmann are planning a Project Team meeting near the end of January.

Liberty Road Erosion and Scandia 25 repair: Herrmann would like to have these ready for bid in March. Swenby will check to see if an extension needs to be applied for.

8. ACTION ITEMS.

Last year the board approved to work with Rinke Noonan for various legal advice in conjunction with the designated district attorney. Swenby explained this covers simple inquiries and verbal and written opinions general in nature for the District Board and its staff. This allows the cost of such advice to be defrayed over the course of the month. Due to the nature and brevity of these inquiries and responses, billing statement entries for the retainer file will not be as detailed as statements for hourly service files regarding specific matters and proceedings. Work performed outside of the scope of the flat monthly retainer fee will be billed within individual matter files according to the discounted hourly rates for government clients.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke continue with Rinke-Noonan for a monthly retainer for \$2,400 per year, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz. **The Motion was carried.**

2. OTHER BUSINESS

The managers received information from the Drainage Work Group.

Manager Engelstad asked when the building addition will begin with the structure. Swenby had not heard, however stated that the contract states the project must be completed by July of 2025.

3. PERMITS:

No permits were brought before the board.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

The next regular meeting will be held February 7, 2025, 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 5:45 PM, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke. **The Motion was carried.**

April Swenby, Administrator

Shawn Brekke, Secretary