

HUBBARD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES FROM August 12, 2020 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors meeting held via Zoom.

Members present: Marcel Noyes, Chair
Don Rettinger, Vice-Chair
Lynn Goodrich, Secretary
Don Sells, Treasurer
Candy Malm, PR&I

Others present: Crystal Mathisrud, District Manager
Annette Olson, Administrative Assistant
Dan Pazdernik, District Conservationist
Tom Krueger, Hubbard County Commissioner

Chair Noyes opened the Zoom meeting at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA AND MINUTES

Items added to the agenda: MCIT dividend added to Correspondence.

A motion was made by Supervisor Sells to accept the agenda as modified, seconded by Supervisor Goodrich. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

Supervisor Malm moved to approve the minutes as presented. Supervisor Rettinger seconded the motion. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Supervisors inquired about a payroll journal entry, interest earned on the fourth CD and maturity date for the first CD, staff answered their questions and will update the maturity date for the first CD. Supervisors recommended that renewing CD's should be done as quarterly until rates go back up. Supervisor Sells presented the treasurer's report to the board, subject to the auditor's review.

OLD BUSINESS

- Supervisor Malm Oath of Office – our new supervisor recited the oath of office and staff will notarize and then file. A copy will be sent to the County Auditor's office.
- MOU with Crow Wing County – Crystal gave a brief update on the Pine and Leech easements for Phase 3 and indicated that we are still waiting for the funds to come through before starting the work.
- Larson Cost-Share update – Crystal gave a brief report indicating that the Larson's have agreed to the plans Bill Westerberg drafted and they have made payment for the completion of the plans. Bill Westerberg will forward their plans on to Hubbard

SWCD when completed for staff to forward on to the client. Staff will update the Board when the plans are ready for the client.

- 2021 Tree Sale update – staff presented the list of trees we plan to have available for our sale. Staff will be finalizing the list and check with nurseries for the mid-sized apples we have been looking at. We plan to have a final list ready for the August COLA lake association meeting. Supervisors indicated that we should again look at similar pricing across the order form.
- Tails Up Dime Cost-Share update – staff did a site visit to get video and photos to cover the project and have compiled what was available. Staff will wait until the project is completed to finish the presentation and bring to the Board next month.
- Outreach Collaboration/Grant Proposal & Scope – Crystal presented information about the program we are working on to replace the 2020 annual Freshwater Festival. She has been working with and has a meeting set with the Beltrami SWCD and Mississippi River Headwaters Center to find grants to help support the educational project going forward. Both Beltrami and Headwaters Center have funds available for their staff to use towards educational outreach to help keep our costs down. Discussion included questions about the project cost and that we should draft a budget for it. Crystal also reported part of this project will be interactive with anyone wanting to add information into the system for the area where they are located. Plans are to have college students preview and verify data coming into the website as part of their set curriculum. Our new technician, Jake Shaughnessy, was introduced and he gave a brief overview of what was already setup for the pilot. He previewed how anyone in the community could add data through the website and will be presenting to community partners and teachers in September to preview and give their input. Supervisors agreed to have staff move forward with this pilot project, continue to work on finding funding for the project and to report back with progress.

NEW BUSINESS

- Training – Crystal updated supervisors with information regarding trainings and seminars new staff planned to attend and that many are being cancelled, postponed, or being held electronically. One-on-one-training is available for Alicia to learn grazing planning. Crystal has also been able to have one-on-one trainings with her peers. Crystal discussed the benefits of having the new esri GIS system available for our staff to use.
- Expiring Grants – Staff highlighted the grants that will be expiring December 2020 and asked for any input or ideas to help use the Buffer Law grant funds by the end of this fiscal year. Discussion included the possibility to contract with Beltrami for the use of their drone to help us do our buffer compliance checks.
- Crow Wing 1W1P Advisory Committee representative – The first Crow Wing 1W1P meeting was held the end of July and staff is now requesting to choose a supervisor for the Crow Wing 1W1P lead Policy Committee position. Supervisor Sells volunteered to be the primary representative and Supervisor Malm will be the alternate representative. Crystal will be the primary contact for the Advisory Committee with a staff alternate to be decided later. It was highly suggested that we reach out to as many state agencies, city organizations and private citizens as possible

to participate/help serve on the advisory committee. Crystal will plan to head the steering committee if we are the LGU or if we share the LGU 1W1P responsibilities. Commissioner Krueger announced that he will be the county representative and Commissioner Van Kempen will be the alternate for the committee. His role/responsibilities for the LLR1W1P has not changed yet.

- Administrative Assistant Annual Review – Supervisor Goodrich reported to the Board that Crystal held Annette’s review and reported back to the Personnel Committee. Supervisor Goodrich reported the Personnel Committee recommends continuing the employment of Annette Olson and she be given a raise, as her roll has increased with more responsibilities and that she be given a salary increase of about 7% that would increase her pay to \$22.00/hour. Other Personnel Committee member Supervisor Rettinger, and District Manager, Crystal Mathisrud, agreed. **Supervisor Goodrich put to a motion before the board to do the salary increase for Annette. Supervisor Noyes seconded the motion. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Motion carried.** Staff requested confirmation on retro pay for payroll following anniversary date. Supervisors confirmed to handle in the normal fashion.

PUBLIC INPUT

Commissioner Krueger – Commissioner Krueger reported on the following:

- The county has appointed Mr. Krueger to the Crow Wing 1W1P watershed with Ted Van Kempen as the alternate.
- The commissioners are working on a ‘no loss policy’ for when they buy/sell parcels to help keep the county, school districts and township revenue stable. He gave a few examples that they are looking into to help keep the revenue inflow stable.
- The County will be receiving 2.6 million in Cares Funds of which they have about \$700,000 of qualifying cares expenses, leaving 1.9 million available to distribute out to small businesses. The county is planning to allow the Heartland Lakes Development Commission setup a program to allow small businesses to apply for \$20,000 grants for the first round. Businesses applying will have to prove that they have had a 30% reduction of income directly due to COVID-19 between March 1st and June 30th of 2020. This also should help the county revenue indirectly.

A question was asked about what how COVID has impacted the County? Commissioner Krueger indicated that though they have collected approximately the same amount of tax dollars by this time last year, they are approximately 4% behind what was collected in 2019. (2020 year’s levy was increased by 4%.) Information shows that the State will have a shortage and might be cutting their funding to counties.

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST Dan Pazdernik’s report is available upon request.

Mr. Pazdernik also reported that their reorganization might close the Brooklyn Center and Thief River Falls offices as they are combining with other offices.

Chair Noyes called for a break at 10:26 am.

Meeting reconvened at 10:32 am.

REPORTS ON PROJECTS AND MEETINGS

Chair Noyes reported on the following:

- Supervisor Noyes reported that although there seemed to be good interest with the Ruby's Pantry nitrate drop-off clinic Facebook posting, only 11 samples were collected for testing. The Laporte Lions Club is planning to have an event around Labor Day and might try to plan another drop off clinic.
- He attended the Mississippi Headwaters River 1W1P meeting and announced that they plan to have a full draft ready by the 3rd week of August to review before submitting to BWSR by May 2021. The plan will have funding available to do well & septic inspections, free to residents. Any corrections/updates found with this inspection would need to be funded by the resident. They are looking for ideas to help make this a more palatable plan for the resident as well as the project. The committee is still waiting for the attorney's review on the MOA.
- Mr. Noyes attended the Crow Wing 1W1P session and indicated that starting early to make connections with other partners is a particularly good idea. He suggested that we should reach out to Gary Roerick to be a part of the advisory committee.
- He attended a virtual Mississippi 1W1P meeting in July. Their meeting had some technical difficulties. Kim Berns-Melhus from The Conservation Fund (TCF) would be another good resource for the Crow Wing 1W1P.

Supervisor Rettinger: He attended the July Board Meeting and reviewed the Administrative Assistant's evaluation.

Supervisor Goodrich reported on the following:

- Supervisor Goodrich attended the Crow Wing River 1W1P virtual meeting and agreed that it is good to start building relationships with the other partners now prior to the start of writing a plan.
- He was part of the annual review discussion for the administration assistant.

Supervisor Malm reported on the following:

- Supervisor Malm spent time reviewing materials received for her new position.
- She contacted her townships and handed out their nitrate maps.
- Ms. Malm brought in a sample of her well water to be tested so she could understand the nitrate clinic process.
- She attended the Lake Emma township meeting and indicated that they were very interested in the nitrate testing. She was asked if there were any irrigation systems located in Emma Township.

Supervisor Sells: No report other than treasury duties.

District Manager's Report: Crystal Mathisrud's report is available upon request. Additional information on topics include:

- Buffer Law Grant: She wanted to remind everyone again that we are still looking for possible projects to help use the remaining grant funds before they expire. She reviewed possible parcels that we hope to do site visits at and discuss with the landowners the

benefits of improvements for their buffers. Staff sent out letters to selected landowners in July that could turn into a possible project. No responses have been received yet. Staff is still looking into why only agriculture related land is eligible for buffer law funds. The DNR has reached out to us about bad erosion on the Heartland Trail, by the Trestle Bridge, just east of Nevis. They are looking for help to remedy the issues before it gets too bad and becomes a buffer issue. Staff will continue to explore the buffer rules and guidelines pertaining to the use of Buffer Law Grant funds for more than just agriculture related buffers. Supervisor Noyes recommended that we reach out to other SWCD's to see if other districts have used buffer law funds for non-agricultural projects.

- Crystal has been very busy with all the revisions needing to be done for the Mississippi Headwaters River 1W1P Plan and mentioned that it would be a good idea to hire a professional plan writer for the Crow Wing 1W1P plan to alleviate the extra stresses for the staff involved.

Administrative Assistant's Report: Annette Olson's report is available upon request. Additional information reviewed included:

- The drop-off nitrate clinic on Friday, August 7th brought in 11 clients with 13 test and the results are as follows: 7 <1 ppm, 2 <10 ppm, 1 <15 ppm and 1 >20 ppm.
- Chippewa Loop will now contact Bill Westerberg about specific details within the boat landing projects and staff indicated to the chair that they will need to get 2 or more formal bids for the projects before going ahead.

Water Quality Technician's Report: Alicia Gohmann's report is available upon request.

- SWAG Testing – Supervisor Sells asked for clarification on what lake was showing a 'higher algae' reading. *Staff asked Alicia and she commented that it should have read lakes in the report.*

Water Quality & Easement Specialist Update: Peter Jacobson's report is available upon request.

Crystal announced that she will have the other staff rotate in to future board meetings to present or report on activities they are doing. That way the board can get to know the new staff better.

CORRESPONDENCE

- News Release: Nitrogen Fertilizer Restrictions Begin September 1st: Staff shared the MDA flyer with information about the webinar held today (August 12th) and links for information regarding regulations for nitrogen and fertilizer applications in fall and winter. Staff sent this information on to the Enterprise newspaper. *One of the Enterprise staff contacted our office, the afternoon of 8/12/2020, for some clarifications on the contact listed and said they will run the article soon.*
- MCIT Dividend notice: Staff reported that we would receive an \$883 dividend in November.

Supervisor Sells asked about the Conservation & Outreach Technician job description. Discussion included that all hires should have a written job description. **Supervisor Goodrich moved to approve the job description for the Conservation & Outreach Technician as presented. Supervisor Malm seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Motion**

passed. Staff was asked to make a general SWCD job description template for part-time hires so that future hires can easily be added when needed.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular board meeting of the Hubbard County Board of Supervisors will be on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. via ZOOM. Items on the agenda: will be Awareness Article and newsletter which will include the tree order.

WORKING LIST OF PRIORITIES:

- Leadership: The Board identified the representatives and leads for the Crow Wing 1W1P, Supervisor Malm attended township meeting.
- Financial Management: Supervisors requested that a budget be drafted for the educational outreach program, Board discussed options for future CD maturing.

Crystal asked the supervisors if they needed anything to be able to do their duties with the current circumstances.

Staff updated everyone on how Bob Iles was doing. Supervisors would like to send out a card to Bob and find out what might be an appropriate gift for him, that he could use in the future.

The Shane Foley property has been approved to start the easement through the Mississippi Corridor project. It scored well and staff will move forward with it.

ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor Sells moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor Goodrich seconded. Chair Noyes adjourned the meeting at 11:34 am.

APPROVED: _____

Date

SECRETARY _____

Lynn Goodrich, Secretary