

# HUBBARD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## MINUTES FROM March 11, 2020 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting  
at 603 Central Avenue North, Suite 100, Park Rapids, MN.

Members present: Marcel Noyes, Chair  
Bob Iles, Treasurer  
Lynn Goodrich, Secretary  
Don Sells, PR&I

Member absent: Don Rettinger, Vice-Chair

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

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

### AGENDA AND MINUTES

**A motion was made by Supervisor Iles to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Supervisor Goodrich. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.**

**Supervisor Iles moved to approve the minutes as presented. Supervisor Sells seconded the motion. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.**

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Staff reported the 2020 billable amounts had not been updated as of the end of February and will make the adjustment for the March financial reports to correct it. Treasurer Iles had no questions and presented the treasurer's report to the board, subject to the auditor's review.

### OLD BUSINESS

- SWCD Leadership Self-Assessment Tool: The Board reviewed the form and discussed thoughts for improvements on items answered as NO. Staff will complete the form as indicated and forward on to MASWCD as requested.
- Amount & Interest Rates for next CD: Staff presented the current interest rates in local banks as well as higher interest rates in saving through an institution not local. Board suggested that we have one or two high interest rate savings with computer access for ease of transferring funds as needed. Staff will visit and decide what will be the best fit for our needs and bring to Board in April.

- Chippewa Loop Project & Exact Location of Project: Staff received maps from Bill Westerberg showing the two points of access for their project and pinpointed them on a full map of Long Lake to show the Board Supervisors exactly where the project points are.
- Actual Approved Grant Funds Available In 1W1P's: Staff indicated the Leech Lake River 1W1P grant money should be available shortly and will be available to use. A map was given to supervisors to show the amounts for each watershed grant within Minnesota. Staff will check forest stewardship applications already received in 2020 to verify if any are in the watershed and if signature dates are appropriate for the grant's execution date.
- SWAG Grant: Monies are now available for preparation of the spring/summer lake testing. Kelly O'Hara is scheduled to be here April 22 to let us know what is required for this grant. If new personnel are not available to attend, we will try to tape for viewing after they start employment. *(Meeting canceled due to COVID-19, training will be available by computer or conference call.)*
- 2019 Financial Reports and 2020 Work Plan: Staff didn't have a chance to complete this but will be working on it next week and will plan to present it at the April meeting.
- Update Billable Rate: Staff collected and presented data from surrounding SWCD's and are requesting our billable rate be increased to \$48.00/hour to match what we are using for the LLR 1W1P. Our billable rate was last updated February 2019. **Supervisor Sells moved to raise the billable rate to \$48.00/hour subject to semi-annual review. Supervisor Iles seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.** This rate will be for all Fees for Services requested. Our individual billable rates will still be used for our in-house grant activities. Staff will update forms as needed including a statement indicating that the rate will be reviewed on a semi-annual basis.

## NEW BUSINESS

- Spring Newsletter: Staff requested articles of interest from supervisors. Anticipated articles for the spring newsletter include information about the Leech Lake River 1W1P/forest stewardship planning, our tree sales, nitrates new requirements and a list of our summer clinic schedule.
- Summer Nitrate Schedule: Staff is requesting Board decision on which off-site clinics we will be doing this year. (Farden Cleanup days, Grace Lake Assn., Akeley Paul Bunyan Days, Laporte Ind/Celeb Days, Hubbard County Fair, Lake George BB Festival, Becida Days-check with Don R). Laporte Days will require a \$10 table fee. Note: COVID-19 might affect our participation at these events.
- Pandemic Policy: We already have our Telecommuting Policy in place and will be sufficient if needed. The Board recommended the staff clean/disinfect common contact areas at least daily. They also recommended everyone should avoid coming to the office if they become ill or are exposed to COVID-19.
- Water Quality Resource Research & Easement Specialist Part-time Position: Staff presented expense breakdown for the upcoming positions. The Personnel Committee recommended to the Board to hire Pete Jacobson for a 10-hour week for this position after indicating his exceptional qualifications. **Supervisor Sells moved to hire Peter Jacobson as our part-time Water Quality Resource Research & Easement Specialist Position for an average of 10 hour/week up to 520 hours/year at \$34.00/hour without**

**benefits. Supervisor Noyes seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.** Crystal will contact Pete and send a formal letter of appointment. The Board would like Pete to attend the first board meeting, after he starts, to meet him and thereafter give updates as appropriate to keep the Board informed.

- Water Quality Resource Technician Full Time Position: Crystal did telephone interviews with 15 applicants and suggested 9 to the Personnel Committee of which 6 were chosen for interviews. Crystal and the Personnel Committee recommended, to the Board, to hire Alicia Gohmann at \$20.00/hour for our Full-time Technician Position and covered her interests and qualification as well as what her job would entail. **Supervisor Iles moved to hire Alicia Gohmann for the full-time position at the rate of \$20.00/hour, giving Crystal authorization to offer up to \$1/hour more if necessary, with full benefits. Supervisor Sells seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.** She would be able to start May 1, 2020. **Supervisor Goodrich moved to give Crystal the authority to bring Alicia in on an hourly basis, as needed, prior to her start date at \$20.00/hour with no benefits. Supervisor Iles seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.** Crystal will contact Alicia and send a formal letter of appointment. The other applicants will be notified that we would like to keep their applications on file for other possible placings.
- Review Sun-setting Resolutions: No information received yet, table until next month. **Supervisor Goodrich moved to table until next meeting. Supervisor Iles seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.**
- Sustainable Grazing Incentive Act Idea/Easements-Resolution in Process: Board would like to possibly get a resolution ready to submit this year. Phil Doll will be stopping by after today's meeting to visit with everyone interested about what he has been doing and if he is putting a resolution together. Hubbard SWCD would like to support a resolution to encourage use/adoption of grazing best management practices for the long-term sustainability of grazing lands in Minnesota or to submit one similar to what he might put together. **Supervisor Goodrich moved to table until next meeting. Supervisor Iles seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.**
- New Resolution(s): None presented at this time. **Supervisor Goodrich moved to table until next meeting. Supervisor Iles seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. Absent: Rettinger. Motion carried.**

Chair Noyes called for a break at 10:00 am.

Meeting reconvened at 10:17 am.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

Commissioner Krueger: Mr. Krueger reported that the County was able to acquire a piece of property on County 4 along the trail head of the Heartland Trail for parking cars. It will be a great talking point to share when they go to the meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> to request the 3.8 million bonding money for the Heartland Spur Project. The County made an amendment to the Social Hosting Ordinance to add marijuana and controlled substances into the language. He attended a meeting regarding COVID-19 where they discussed what will be required if there is a need for social distancing. They discussed what employees and what tasks can be done from home and he indicated they will need to acquire more computers for staff to ensure they have a secure connection to the Internet. There will be a Public Planning Commission Meeting coming up in

April or May to review the road section of the Subdivision Ordinance regarding private or public roads.

## **DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST**

Dan Pazdernik: Notes are available upon request. The bulletin is out for the Local Work Group meeting and would like to set date to hold this meeting at next month's meeting.

## **REPORTS ON PROJECTS AND MEETINGS**

Chair Noyes: Kabekona Lake Association will be having a key meeting around July 4<sup>th</sup> and will try to get on their agenda. He attended the Hart Lake Twp. Meeting where Garfield Lake Assn. was in attendance. Garfield Lake Assn. has funded their AIS/veliger testing for years and they were requesting funding for their 2020 lake testing. The members in attendance indicated that they had veligers in their lake 2-3 years ago, while the last 2 samplings showed no veligers present. They would also like Hubbard County to help fund future testing. He helped with the technician position interview process and attended the Area 8 meeting. He met with Dan Stacey also.

Supervisor Goodrich: He attended an easement and forest management training with Crystal in Pine River; interviewed for the part-time water quality and full-time technician positions. He suggests that we possibly use one of the other applicants for our summer intern. He attended part of the COLA meeting, attended the Area 8 meeting and served as head judge for Badoura Twp. at the recent election.

Crystal explained the new priority maps on the wall for the Leech Lake River Watershed.

Supervisor Iles: He previewed the 9 technician position applicants for the interviews.

Supervisor Sells: He attended the Area 8 meeting, shared the Hatch Act information with group and is planning to attend the Forestry Association meeting next week. (*Agenda came out on 3/11/20 and the meeting was cancelled on 3/12/20 due to COVID-19.*)

Supervisor Rettinger: Absent. He helped, as Personnel Committee, with interviewing the part-time water quality position and attended the Area 8 meeting.

District Manager's Report: Notes are available upon request. Other points covered:

- Crystal indicated that the Ground Water Basics Online Course had good information.
- Briefed on the Lawns to Legumes funds available and that applications for grant help will be accepted through June 2, 2020 to private citizens. (see our Facebook page for links)
- She updated the Board on our TSA8 involvement and indicated that after visiting with Bill Westerberg and Beth Hippert, our engineers, she feels that they are stepping up and getting results with our current projects. We are benefiting greatly with Mitch Brinks (contractor) and Dain Erickson (marketing) for projects and information needed. She is not giving up on TSA8 and we don't want to lose their services yet. Crystal will check further into our TSA8 Contract specifications.

Administrative Assistant's Report: Notes are available upon request.

- Updated the Board with the inhouse nitrate clinic results held on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

CORRESPONDENCE: Staff presented:

- NRCS's Boot Camp Training is May – October and our new technician would benefit from it.
- The MASWCD Legislative Briefing @ the Capitol on March 24 & 25 (*event cancelled on March 12 due to COVID-19*)
- The Local Work Group needs to meet before the end of July. Dan will probably Chair, and we would like possible dates that would work to set a date at our next board meeting.
- Staff downloaded several items regarding COVID-19 if anyone is interested in reading.

WORKING LIST OF PRIORITIES

- Leadership: Marcel met with Dan Stacey; Marcel was invited to attend the Hendrickson and Steamboat event; supervisors attended township meetings; staff held nitrate clinic in the office; Crystal has been in contact with Miriam Rios-Sanchez from BSU and plans to visit with her soon; Marcel suggested to have her come to one of our meetings to brief the Board on her hopes for student interns; Phil Doll **will be** here after the board meeting to visit with supervisors regarding grazing best management practices.
- Financial Management: Donation letters sent out; we are moving extra checkbook funds into a higher interest rate type of fund (CD or special savings account); set Budget Committee Meeting for Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 9:00am.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular board meeting of the Hubbard County Board of Supervisors will be on Wednesday, April 8, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. in the office at 603 Central Avenue North, Park Rapids, MN. Items on the agenda include: Budget Committee Draft, (LWMP)Local Water Management Plan Task Force Meeting (plan date), (LWG)Local Work Group (plan date), set working schedule for tree sales and summer nitrate clinics.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Chair Noyes adjourned the meeting at 11:14 pm.

APPROVED: 4-8-2020  
Date

SECRETARY:   
Lynn Goodrich, Secretary