OUTCOME DOCUMENTS FROM THE November 14, 2017 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

SUPERVISORS: Jan Anderson, Paul Hoppe, Joyce Sawatzky, Kevin Belkholm

STAFF: Deanna Pomije, Anne LeRoy

OTHERS: Shannon Rasinski – NRCS, Dennis McNally – Kanabec County

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Hoppe called the meeting to order at 4:12 pm.

2. Pomije presented the website ‘My St. Croix Woods’ put together by the St. Croix River Assn. My St. Croix Woods is a partnership of multiple public and private organizations working together to serve the forestry needs of Minnesota and Wisconsin landowners in the St. Croix watershed. The Kanabec SWCD is listed as a partner on the www.mystcroixwoods.org website.

3. **NRCS Report** Shannon Rasinski provided the District Conservationist’s Report. Rasinski reviewed recent NRCS activities that included conservation planning for 9 new applicants to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) program, contract reviews, modifications, and site visits. The EQIP eligibility and screening deadline is January 19th. The deadline for application into the Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is March 2. The RCPP here is funding the MN Ag. Water Quality Incentives Program – project work and warbler forestry habitat improvement. Payments for the FY2017 Conservation Stewardship Program are starting. Rasinski also presented the updated NRCS Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners. She requested that the board members sign the agreement and acknowledgement of the NRCS policy. Rasinski also reviewed the section 1619 compliance, dealing with the client’s private information in which the SWCD is responsible for safe guarding. Here the chair is asked to sign the 1619 policy document.

4. **Consent Agenda** (no discussion unless Supervisor requests)
   Pomije requested adding a discussion regarding the approval to purchase two computer monitors.
   Belkholm requested that the board review notes from the October strategic planning meeting.
   Anderson requested additional review of the current status of the project on the Tentis property.
   **M/S/Approved – Sawatzky/ Belkholm** to approve the agenda with the addition of discussions about purchasing two computer monitors, review of the strategic planning meeting, and review of the project status on the Tentis property.

2.1. Financial – receipts & disbursements
2.2. Outcomes Document
2.3. Staff Reports
2.4. Upcoming Staff Meetings/Outreach/Training

5. **Approve Disbursements**
   Treasurer’s Report
   **M/S/Approved – Sawatzky / Belkholm** to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Disbursements as presented.
Pomije reviewed briefly the highlights of the treasurer’s report.

6. Business

5.1. **MASWCD Convention:** Which supervisors wish to attend and which days? The SWCD has adequate budget for those who would like to attend.

Hoppe, Belkholm, and Pomije will attend the convention. Sawatzky is not available to attend. Anderson would need to verify. Pomije requested confirmations no later than 11/17/17 so registration could be submitted by the deadline. Rasinski stated that she will attend. She requested copies of the registration information.

**M/S/Approved – Anderson / Belkholm to approve registration payment for the board members and SWCD staff who are able to attend the MASWCD Annual Convention that will be held on December 3-5.**

5.2. **2018 District Budget – 1st review**

5.2.1 Capacity 2018 work plan

Pomije reviewed a draft budget for 2018. She reviewed the formatting of the budget. It lists the proposed income and expenses for the District, including all the current and proposed grant funds expected for 2018. The columns on the left start with the District funds, County allocation, BWSR base grants, Capacity funding and then the individual grants in the remaining columns. The beginning balances at the top will be updated at the end of 2017. This will also recalculate the ending balance totals at the bottom. After the updates are made, the final budget will be brought to the Jan. board meeting. This budget sheet works well in that it is linked to another sheet that allows the time spent by each employee toward the various grants to be summarized and recalculated as needed. This employee time is incorporated into the personnel expenses on this budget. Pomije is still tweaking the budget; updating the facility costs and the employee’s time compared to actual time spent in 2017.

Pomije also presented the work plan for 2018 Capacity funding. It is very similar to the 2016 & 2017 Capacity work plans. It mostly funds staff time and training, outside of specific grant funding. Pomije’s position is not funded through Capacity, only her promotional increase from 2017. These funds help fund all computer upgrades and our previous vehicle purchase. Last year some community projects such as conservation practice demonstration sites and the culvert inventory where added to the Capacity funds in order to bring some of the added County funds back to benefit the County. These community project funds are still to be utilized completely. Capacity funds are also planned for the infrastructure costs associated with bringing on a District Forester. We are planning on applying for an Accelerated Implementation Grant in 2018 to assist with bringing on a forester. Currently we are just starting to spend down our 2017 Capacity funding. Pomije is looking at shifting some of the 2017 Capacity funds around. Such as moving a new vehicle purchase into the 2018 Capacity and a few of the community project funds.

**M/S/Approved – Sawatzky / Anderson to approve the 2018 draft budget and the work plan for the 2018 Capacity funding.**

5.3. **New Renter – District Land:** we are tax exempt – renter is due to pay taxes on cropland, past error

Conservation Education options: 3 fields – 3, 5 & 8 acres; 16.2 total acres
-2 fields in Kernza / small grain – Kelly Kelling, charge rent for land maintenance?
-offer 1 field (control comparison) conventional corn/soybeans to Colton Marohn
Pomije explained that she has made preliminary contact with Kelling and Marhon to explain that the 16.2 acres of cropland is meant to be used for conservation educational purposes and demonstrations. Proposed rent will not be charged beyond any required taxes. There is some question if seed is available to plant Kernza in 2018. More seed is expected for 2019. The operator needs to complete an on-line license agreement with ‘Plovgh’ to get the seed. Crops other than Kernza would be acceptable until Kernza seed is available. Marhon may farm one of the fields using conventional tillage with a corn/soybean rotation. How the fields are operated over time can be documented comparing the conventional field to the small grain fields with conservation demonstrations held occasionally.

**M/S/Approved** – Belkholm / Sawatzky to approve offering the district land to these two operators with the agreement that they will pay the cropland property taxes. It was also agreed that crops other than Kernza would be acceptable if Kernza seed is not available.

### 5.4. Contract with The Nature Conservancy ($20,000)

Planning for a contract forester for more forest stewardship planning and forest management practices in the Snake & Kettle watersheds. Grant Pomije signature authority on this contract, which is due to be obligated by 12/31/17. Later more funding may become available through a US Forest Service Grant with the St. Croix River Assn.

**M/S/Approved** – Sawatzky / Anderson to approve Pomije signing approval for a $20,000 contract with The Nature Conservancy to go towards funding a contract forester working within the Kanabec’s Snake Watershed Areas.

### 5.5. AIS funding

Pomije requested approval for payment to the Knife Lake Improvement District for Curly Leaf treatment and a plant survey in the amount of $6,090.02 done by Central MN Aquatics in July, 2017 (total cost $18,414).

**M/S/Approved** – Anderson / Belkholm to approve payment of $6,090.02 to the Knife Lake Improvement District for the completed work.

### 5.6. AIS 2018 Budget

Pomije reviewed the draft ~$50,000 Aquatic Invasive Species annual funding for 2018. We have been working toward reducing the available funding for curly leaf treatments as this is an annual maintenance for curly leaf/weed control and may not be good use of tax payer dollars. Working towards using the funds more for AIS educational and prevention activities. For 2018 we are proposing using this funding for a SWCD summer intern who would work on boat inspections at the public accesses throughout the County. The intern would also work on starting a culvert inventory and assisting in the final year of SWAG water quality monitoring. In previous COLA meetings, members of the COLA were agreeable to this funding change. $5,000 of the annual funding would also be earmarked to go towards an AIS decontamination unit for the County. The decontamination unit is a heated and pressurized boat cleaning unit, meant to remove Aquatic Invasive Species. This proposed 2018 AIS funding plan would reduce the lake association’s allocation by 30% from last year’s.

**M/S/Approved** – Sawatzky / Anderson to approve the 2018 AIS budget; reducing the amount spent on curly leaf treatments, in favor of boat inspection activities done by a SWCD summer intern and reserving $5,000 of the funds to go towards the purchase of an AIS decontamination unit.

### 5.7. Year End Financials

Pomije requested signing authority to contract with Peterson Co. (budget $925) to conduct our year-end financials.

**M/S/Approved** – Anderson / Sawatzky to approve contracting with the accounting firm Peterson Co to complete our 2017 year-end financial preparations.
5.8. **Testing of Nitrate in Private Wells – South Fork Twp.** – The MN Dept. of Ag. (MDA) requests our assistance in coordinating well nitrate testing in 2018 via a joint powers agreement for $8,654.12. We would subcontract with RMB labs for the work and pass through the funds from MDA to pay the lab. The lab does most of the work; the mailings and water testing. We do outreach, compile the mailing list and submit quarterly invoices for reimbursement.

**M/S/Approved** – Sawatzky / Belkholm to approve to entering into a joint powers agreement with the Department of Agriculture to complete outreach activities and coordinate lab testing for water testing in South Fork Township.

5.9. **Computer Monitors** - Pomije requested approval of spending $300 to get two additional computer monitors for office use. Two screens are helpful when working between multiple spreadsheets. One is a second screen for Pomije and the other is a first monitor for the intern’s lab top.

**M/S/Approved** – Anderson / Sawatzky to approve the expense not to exceed $300 for the purchase of two computer monitors.

6. **Project Updates** – Tentis Project

Pomije discussed the history of the SWCD’s involvement on the Tentis property. The sinkholes are continuing to be an issue. The SWCD has worked with TSA to develop project a design that will utilize a clay liner over the potential sinkhole areas. The clay liner will divert runoff to the planned intake and preventing future sinkholes. Tentis’ have had issues in getting a contractor to do the work in 2017 with no luck. Anderson explained that the township installed a new culvert the fall of 2016. The culvert was left long with the intent that during our project construction it would be cut at a length that would work with our project. The township has expressed safety concerns over this extended culvert in regards to snowmobile traffic. The culvert will now either be staked or trimmed with the project to be completed in the spring of 2018.

7. **General Discussion / Public Input**

Belkholm requested review and discussion of the meeting minutes from the SWCD Strategic Planning meeting that was held on 10/17. Pomije reviewed some of the highlights from the Strategic Planning Session. Jason W. of BWSR attended. Initially Pomije and Kelzenberg reviewed the 2017 SWCD work activities for the year. Pomije reviewed the grant 2018 proposed and existing grants. An activity took place where the supervisors rated the top 4 SWCD priorities based on our current activities. The consensus was that not enough energy is spent on improving water quality. The rest of the results were mixed. There was discussion over whether the District should have a focus for 2018. After a bit of discussion it was decided that the Ann River area would be a focus with the current existing good working relationships and the completed Ann Lake study, preparing for a lake phosphorus treatment. Continued discussion occurred over our current funding situation and whether we have enough funds to bring on a needed SWCD Forester. We will look into applying for an Accelerated Implementation Grant to bring on a forester. Jason mentioned the idea of contracting out forestry services for the interim. This was decided as a good option to pursue. As a follow up to a previous COLA-AIS meeting we discussed the option of bringing on a SWCD summer intern to work 60% on AIS boat inspections. This was previously voted on as a recommendation by the COLA group. The intern could also work on starting a culvert inventory and helping with the final year of SWAG water quality monitoring. Overall this planning session was agreed to be a worthwhile endeavor.
8. Set Next Meeting Dates / Committee Reports

8.1 COLA – AIS Next Meeting 11/16, 5pm in Courthouse (Kelzenberg) Sawatzky will attend.

8.2 Forestry Association Report – next meeting will be 11/16 – Hoppe will attend.


8.4 Regular SWCD Board Meeting: Dec. 12, 4:00 PM - POTLUCK

9. Evaluate the Meeting – What worked? What needs further discussion?

10. Adjourn - M/S Approved Sawatzky/Belkholm Adjourned at 6:36 pm.

Civic Governance is a new approach to organizing to facilitate change for the common good, creating effective and stable organizations. The purpose of Civic Organizing is to organize people to the obligation of being an active citizen; providing the opportunity for them to impact decision making in their role and in day to day work; learning what is good and growing in that knowledge.

- To broaden governing responsibility to include those impacted but not replacing existing governing responsibilities of board members and supervisors. We need to work together; no one group can alone solve our environmental concerns.
- Organizing comes with the obligation of active citizenship.
- Active citizenship is developed in the way institutions and projects are governed in the process of carrying out their mission/purpose/achieving goals.

Approved: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________