



2008 Mahogany St Ste 3
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Outcomes Documents – Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday November 15, 2023, 2:00 pm

Location: SWCD Conservation Office 2008 Mahogany St., Ste #3 Mora MN 55051

SUPERVISORS: Jon Sanford, Kim Johnson, Kevin Belkholm, Gene Cards

STAFF: Deanna Pomije, Jerah Mattson, Emily Larsen, Josh Tank

***Remote Attendees** **Others:** **Absent:** Norma Heggernes

1. 2:09 Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Acting Chair - Belkholm

2. ***Approval of the Agenda**

Motion by Sanford, second by Johnson to approve the agenda as presented

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** Belkholm

3. ***Consent Agenda** (no discussion unless Supervisor requests)

3.1. Financial – receipts & disbursements, balance sheet, profit & loss reports

3.2. Outcomes Document:

Kanabec SWCD Board Mtg. – October 18, 2023

3.3. Staff Reports

3.4. Upcoming Staff Meetings / Outreach / Training

3.5. AIS funding requests

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to approve the Consent Agenda as presented

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

4. ***Approve Treasurer’s Report**

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to approve the October 2023 Treasurer’s Report as presented by Johnson

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

The idea of investing some of our cash balance into short-term CDs was discussed.

Motion by Johnson second by Sanford to approve Mattson and Johnson to research short-term investment opportunities the District may have.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

5. NRCS Report (Shannon Bodle)

EQIP-24 applications are received on an ongoing basis. These include: comprehensive nutrient management plans, waste storage facilities, cover crops, prescribed grazing systems, high tunnel systems, pasture and hay

plantings, windbreaks, pollinator plantings, livestock shelter structure, early successional habitat management and development and forest stand improvement. EQIP training was held October 26th.

CD/CART ranking training was held November 1st and 2nd.

A Premier Soil Health Event will be held December 5 - 6 by the MN Soil Health Coalition in Mankato

Funds are being requested by NRCS for a landowner's (Whited twp. Sec. 16) livestock watering system on a prescribed grazing system. Funds are being requested for conservation practices such as: well, livestock pipeline and watering facilities. NRCS will bring bids the next month's board meeting.

At the Dec. board meeting Pomije will provide an overview of the funding available for Best Management Practices (BMPs).

6. Project Updates, in consent agenda – any questions

6.1. Update on progress on our 5-Year Strategic Plan Goals - postponed discussion, due to time.

6.2. Forester – YouTube videos on buckthorn control and identification. Links on videos will be sent to the Board for viewing. Tank provided the board a summary of these videos, some explaining identification, restoration techniques, chemical and mechanical control methods.

6.3. *Arthur Twp. sec. 30, seeded down a 2-acre pollinator meadow this fall. Requesting payment of \$1,500. Cost estimate \$2,258 contract #L2L.2023.05 - \$1,500, verifying the seeding and processing the payment voucher

Motion by Johnson, second by Sanford to authorize Deanna to sign off on this payment voucher for \$1,500 on contract #L2L.2023.05.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

7. Public Input -none present

8. Business Section

8.1. Clarify logo apparel approved – per year or one-time approval. Staff \$75, Supervisors \$25
Staff were encouraged to purchase apparel this year yet. This is a great low-cost marketing option. Pomije clarified the preferred option for Supervisors to submit their apparel expenses, using their same quarterly per diem request forms with paid receipts attached. The board was ok with the District covering the \$3 overage on Belkholm's last apparel purchase.

Motion by Johnson, second by Sanford to approve the amounts are annual. If allowance isn't spent the money will not roll over to the next year.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.2. Snake Watershed Partnership Update (Pomije)

Input has been requested on final comments on the draft service contracts. A comment was expressed to remove the employee withholding verification requirement for subcontractors. The Watershed Program Coordinator position has been placed into Grade 12, per the County HR company. The BWSR watershed grant agreement could be ready for the Partnership to sign at the end of Nov. The watershed staff in the

next Steering meeting are planning to delve deeper into proposed cost-share and project vetting recommendations for the Partnership board.

In reviewing the new watershed position's hiring process; it was suggested to seek input from watershed staff instead of other partnership board members. Reason being that the staff will be working more intimately with this new position vs. partnership board members. The Kanabec SWCD board agreed with a preference for Pine SWCD staff to participate.

Motion by Sanford, second by Johnson to authorize Kevin to sign our Kanabec SWCD Snake Partnership service agreements once ready for signature after the 11/27 Snake Partnership meeting.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.4. *Final 2022 approval

The audit's management summary letter to the board was commented as being fairly standard with some discussion on separation of duties for increased financial protection.

Motion by Carda second by Sanford to accept the Final 2022 audit

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to pay Peterson \$3,675 for completion of the 2022 audit.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.5. *Unfunded Cooperative Agreement with NRCS for signature

This contract was reviewed briefly and ready for the SWCD board signature. NRCS asked if NRCS management had reviewed the contract for approval. Not yet. Pomije will send this to NRCS for their review.

Motion by Johnson second Carda by to approve a signature on this agreement. If there are changes to the agreement; it will come back to our board for re-signing.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.6. *Conservation Technician, new cost calculated at \$3,225 computer proposal, previously approved up to \$2,500

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to approve to amend the original amount of \$2,500 to \$3,225 for the purchase the Conservation Technician's laptop computer. (*expected to arrive now the 2nd week in Jan.*)

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.7. *NRCS staff request for 3 new plat books, \$108

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to approve 3 new plat books to be donated to NRCS

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

8.8. *Request Emily Larsen to sign SWCD checks and remove Stephanie Paulsen

Motion by Johnson second by Carda to approve Emily Larsen as a check signer for the District and remove Stephanie Paulsen.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

- 8.3. *Staff benefits proposal options for 2024 (this item was moved to the end of the agenda's business section, to allow adequate time for discussion)

There was a review of the 2024 health premium costs with three options listed to increase coverage for staff.

Motion by Johnson, second by Carda to approve \$704 per month per full time staff to be applied to health/dental benefits. The remaining amount is to be applied to an HSA account.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

- *Cost of living increase for 2024

Reviewed options and discussed.

Motion by Johnson, second by Sanford to give staff a 3% COL increase for 2024.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

- *Life Insurance

Discussed the option for the District to pay for a base level of \$10,000 life insurance premium for staff. Over this amount of coverage would be optional for staff.

Motion by Johnson, second by Sanford to offer staff a \$10,000 life insurance policy to be covered by the district.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

- *Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) as per a new MN state requirement (*effective 1/1/2026, with notice provided to employees by 1/1/2024*) Pomije and Mattson reviewed these new changes and our options on how to provide this benefit for temporary staff, up to 80 hours / year. The District's sick leave policy for full-time staff already complies with this new state requirement. It was recommended to share this information with the AIS-COLA group as it will impact the summer boat inspector position's salaries.

Motion by Johnson, second by Sanford to offer part time or temporary employees 1 hour of ESST earned for every 30 hours worked with a maximum hour earned of 80 hours per year. Part time or temporary employees may carry over (capped at 80 hrs.) this leave from year to year. If a seasonal employee does not return within 6-months of leaving their leave balance will no longer be available.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

9. Discussion Session:

*SWCD Elections – County-Wide (currently) or by individual District (as time permits) - No motion was needed, as the board consensus was to leave the voting structure as is, using the County-Wide based voting.

Kurt Beckstrom Benefit 2/10/24 - donations will be taken up until the benefit. This was generally supported by all.

Carda expressed a possible withdrawal from SWCD board in a couple of months' time, due to health reasons.

The winter storage of the no-till drill was brought forward. Belkholm plans to store the drill and possibly use it prior to storage. The board agreed to this trade-off with no expense to Belkholm. It was requested for Pomije to check into the insurance risk with this winter storage. Who would cover any lose?

The proposed new tree planter to possibly be shared with Isanti was reviewed. Belkholm has agreed to also provide winter storage as needed for this unit. Funding for this is through a large multi-watershed BWSR LCCMR grant, including the Rum Watershed part of Kanabec County.

10. Set Next Meeting Dates / Committee Reports – next meeting dates

- 11/8-9 – Leadership Training, Mankato (Pomije)
- 11/9/23 – Kettle PC Meeting, 9am, Sandstone (Johnson)
- 11/16/23 – Forestry Assn. Meeting, 10am, McGregor (Carda or Sanford, Tank)
- 11/27/23 – SRWMB Meeting/Public Hearing on Dissolution, 9am (Pomije, Belkholm)
- NEW 12/4/23 – The MCIT insurance trust has invited us to a meeting in Mpls. to update us on their operations.
- 12/11-12/13/23 – MASWCD Convention, (Supervisor, staff)
 - 12/11/23 – workshop SWCD human resources topic
 - 12/12/23 – plenary sessions, vendor exhibits, awards luncheon, afternoon breakout sessions, evening reception
 - 12/13/23 – business meeting, morning SWCD breakout sessions, exhibits, outstanding conservationist

***MASWCD Convention**

Belkholm expressed interest in attending Tues – Wed. with his spouse.

Motion by Sanford second by Carda to send all staff and supervisors who wish to attend the convention.

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

- 12/14/23 – COLA/AIS Meeting, 5pm (Pomije, Sanford)
- **12/20/23 – Regular SWCD Board Meeting, 2pm**
- 12/28/23? – Rum Partnership (RRWP) Meeting, 4:30pm, Milaca (Johnson)
- 1/24/24 – TSA Area 3 Meeting, 10am remote (Johnson, Pomije)

*Seeking Supervisor report on meeting attended

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

Agenda items for next month

12. 4:59pm Adjourn Regular Meeting

Motion by Sanford second by Johnson to adjourn Regular Board Meeting at 4:59pm

Affirmative: Sanford, Johnson, Belkholm, Carda

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

13. 5:05 Closed Session: District Manager – Annual performance review

The board met privately and then called Pomije in to review her 2023 performance. Any personnel actions will be placed on the Dec. board meeting's agenda.

The closed session ended at 5:48 pm.

***Seeking Board Decisions**