

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2000

St. Paul, Minnesota

Attending: President Owen Knutson, Vice President Richard Zupp, Secretary/Treasurer & Area IV Director Scott Hoese, Area I Director Carol Berg, Area II Director Carl Annalora, Area III Director Bob Hoefert, Area V Director Arland Moger, Area VI Director Curt Russell, Area VII Director Clarence Anderson, LeAnn Buck (MASWCD Staff), Sheila Vanney (MASWCD Staff); Advisors: Jim Birkholz, BWSR; Roger Mussetter, NRCS. Others in attendance: Vern Wilker, Steele SWCD; Marilyn Bernhardson, Redwood SWCD; Jay Michels, Michels Environmental Resources; and Jim Main, Carver SWCD; Robyn Sykes, MCIT Executive Director.

Absent: DNR, MACDE.

1. **Call to Order** – President Knutson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led introductions.
2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes** – Russell moved to approve the agenda. Hoese seconded. Motion passed. Hoese moved to approve July meeting minutes. Annalora seconded. Motion passed. Annalora moved to approve August 18 conference call minutes. Knutson noted a change - Zupp should have been absent from the conference call, not in attendance as the minutes indicate. Motion passed with change. Hoese introduced Jim Main from Carver SWCD.
3. **President's Report – Owen Knutson**
 - a. Fifteen SWCDs, as of September 6, have indicated interest in participating in the conservation tillage program with Monsanto. Knutson reviewed the September 6 meeting with Monsanto representatives and district representatives where everyone was briefed on the details of the program and the timeline that everyone will be working under. Knutson introduced Jay Michels who will be the state coordinator of the conservation tillage campaign. He will be working from August to January to coordinate with state, federal and local folks along with Monsanto. Monsanto will be compensating MASWCD for its involvement, part of which will go to Michels for financial compensation for his work. Monsanto will also be providing districts with \$1/acre of land enrolled in the Bottom Line Booster Program. Districts may do with these funds as they choose. Moger moved and Hoese seconded to approve the contract with Michels. Hoese suggested regular reports be written into contract. Hoefert provided a friendly amendment that the contract would be official pending a signed contract with Monsanto. Moger accepted the amendment. After further discussion Moger moved and Russell seconded to table the item until a conference call can be established. Motion passed.
 - b. Knutson updated the board on a paper on the issue of Hypoxia. The paper is on the internet with a comment period deadline of September 11. EPA will be requiring a 40% reduction in nitrogen use in the near future. It is not known whether NACD has responded officially.
 - c. Knutson reported on the NACD Leadership Conference in Tuscon, Arizona. The session was focused on strategic planning development. Knutson commented that he would like to see MASWCD go through strategic planning. It can be a very valuable tool.
 - d. The NACD legislative fund is currently at \$1,450.00 with 23 districts from across the state contributing. Buck will forward the checks to NACD. Buck will send a thank you letter to the districts.
 - e. There will be three BWSR Board vacancies effective January 1. Knutson said the board has received a request for endorsement of a BWSR Board Member application. The MASWCD Board will need to decide at some point how they will address such requests. No action was taken.

- f. Joe, Newberg, NACD Great Lakes Committee chair, is still working toward establishing a NACD North Central staff position. They are still trying to work some possible funding opportunities. Newberg will be on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss the matter further with the Board. Hoefert said Area III would like to provide input if the opportunity arises to be part of the Great Lakes committee.

4. Vice President's Report – Richard Zupp

Zupp presented the 2000 MASWCD Resolutions Packet for Board approval. Hoefert moved and Russell seconded to approve the packet. Motion passed. Annalora noted that Resolution #13 is a good example how to best structure a resolution, with the clarification of intent.

5. Finance Report (Action Item) – Scott Hoese

- a. Hoese introduced Robyn Sykes, Executive Director for the Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust. Sykes was invited to discuss their invitation to MASWCD to move our offices to the building they are constructing in downtown St. Paul, near the State Capitol. Sykes went over potential costs that would be associated with leasing office space from them. The facility will be 5 blocks north of the Capitol. There will be 128 parking spaces, several meeting rooms, capacity for video and teleconferencing, and other amenities. Ground-breaking occurred this past summer. Sykes will get back to Buck with a deadline for deciding whether we want to lease with them. The MASWCD Finance Committee will need to hammer out changes in space and furniture that might add to the cost. Cost estimates on satellite time will need to be considered for video conferencing. Board members should check out how this works at the local level, with their county administrator or clerk of court.
- b. Hoese moved to approve the July 31 financial statement, subject to audit. Annalora seconded. Motion passed.
- c. 2000-2001 Budget - Hoefert said that at the Area III meeting, there was a request to change the MASWCD Forestry Committee budget to \$3,000. Knutson noted that such a change could not be made by the board at this time because each Area has already reviewed the budget as is. It can be brought to the floor at the convention. The line item for health coverage was increased. With that change, Hoese moved to approve the 2000-2001 budget. Hoefert seconded. Motion passed.
- d. Hoese led discussion of adopting a convention refund policy. At their April 14, 2000 meeting the Finance Committee developed the following recommendation for board consideration: "Cancellations received by *date* will be refunded less a \$25 cancellation fee. No refunds for cancellations after *date*. Substitutes may be sent." MASWCD staff will determine appropriate deadline dates. Hoese moved the recommendation be adopted. Moger seconded. Annalora moved to amend motion to say that the asterisked date be set by the convention planning committee each year. Russell seconded. Board voted on amended motion. Motion passed.

6. Executive Director's Report

- a. Vanney updated the board on the Merit Award given to the Association by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The award acknowledges the Association's efforts with regard to living snow fences.
- b. Vanney reported on delineation training and the issue of delineation certification. She also briefed the board on activities of the Education Committee.
- c. Vanney, Buck and Russell went over the status of convention planning.

Recessed for lunch at 12:05 p.m. and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

- d. Buck led a discussion of amending the by-laws to address nonpayment of dues. Annalora moved to adopt Hoese's proposal. Hoese seconded. Motion passed. By-laws change will be brought to

convention for vote as a new business item. The change in language that is being proposed addresses item 2.6 of the MASWCD By-laws as follows:

- (2.6) Dues – The income of the Association and maintenance of the budget is mostly dependent upon the prompt payment of dues by the member districts. Approval and determination of dues is made at the annual meeting; therefore, dues are payable by January 31st with invoice being sent out by December 23rd. Districts requesting relief from on time payment of dues because of financial hardship (or other reasons) must notify the Association Finance Committee (in writing) no later than March 1st of the fiscal year, stating the reasons for the request for relief. The Finance Committee may request documentation, depending on each individual case. Those districts that have not paid their dues in full and/or have not been given exemption by the Finance Committee by April 1 of the fiscal year shall be considered delinquent and will forfeit their benefits and membership in the Association.
- e. Buck updated the board on the draft Conservation Security Act being sponsored by Congressman David Minge. She attended a meeting in Lambert on July 17 where components of the draft bill were discussed. This bill is intended to be the House version of a bill drafted by Senator Harkin. The Conservation Security Act would utilize Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds to establish Conservation Security Contracts and Plans with landowners/operators who would receive payments in order to potentially augment producer income and support environmentally sound conservation practices on their farms. The bill is expected to be introduced some time this month. Hoefert moved and Hoese seconded to send correspondence to Minge’s office supporting the bill, at least in concept. Motion passed.
 - f. Hoefert moved and Russell seconded to go forward with planning for a third “Leadership for the Next Century” training program. Buck will make arrangements with University of Minnesota Extension Service, to once again use their services.
 - g. Buck updated the board on the new staff person hired for the MASWCD office. Stefanie Miller will be the new administrative assistant. Miller will work part time.

7. 2001 Legislative Agenda – Marilyn Bernhardson, Redwood SWCD (Action Item)

Bernhardson presented the MASWCD Legislative Committee’s recommendation for the 2001 Legislative Agenda. Board discussed. Annalora moved to accept the legislative agenda as laid out by the Legislative Committee. Anderson seconded. Motion passed.

8. Nonpoint Engineering Assistance Update – Arland Moger and Carl Annalora

Annalora reported that he, Moger and Buck put together a questionnaire for the Joint Powers Boards in order to determine the exact financial state of the Nonpoint Engineering Assistance program. A subcommittee consisting of representatives from all the Joint Powers Boards will be meeting on September 13. After that meeting, Annalora and Moger will bring back to the Board a recommendation on how to proceed with NPEA funding.

9. Leadership Partnership Report – Julie MacSwain, NRCS Stillwater

MacSwain reported to the Board on the special research project she completed on 319 funding. MacSwain worked with MASWCD staff on this project, as part of the Midwest USDA Leadership Program. She requested authorization to send the report to NACD. Moger so moved and Hoese seconded. Motion passed.

10. Board of Innovation Grants – Jim Birkholz, BWSR

Birkholz updated the Board on the status of Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation Grants. More information can be obtained through the BWSR website. The Minnesota Legislature in 2000 authorized the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation (BGIC) in consultation with BWSR, to fund pilot projects for the development and implementation of alternative models for managing natural resources at the local level. The BGIC

is interested in funding innovative and cooperative approaches for the management of land and water resources. Birkholz also went over the BWSR Board vacancies.

11. Partnership Reports

MPCA – The Board welcomed Faye Sleeper. She reported that there are a lot of opportunities for partnership between our organizations. MPCA is in the middle of a grant application period that will end on October 16. 319 and Clean Water Partnership grant application periods are running simultaneously this year and MPCA will be looking for feedback regarding the process and the application form. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is located on MPCA’s website. Sleeper discussed the TMDL program. MPCA may be looking at using the incentive approach, in which case working with SWCDs would be beneficial. The first annual State of the Environment Report has been completed and Sleeper will bring copies to the November Board meeting.

NRCS – Mussetter reported that Minnesota NRCS is low on dollars but will make it through the end of the fiscal year. Next year’s budget doesn’t look any better. Vacant district conservationist positions are considered critical to re-fill. The Lake of the Woods/Koochiching district conservationist position has been re-advertised. There are also vacancies in Norman and Pennington. There will be a CREP “survey” meeting on Tuesday to see how the program is working.

12. Area Director’s Reports –

Area V – Moger reported that the next Area V meeting will be on September 27 in conjunction with the Environmental Fair in Windom.

Area VII – Anderson reported that an Area VII meeting will take place Monday. Representatives from Gutknecht’s office and Kuisle’s office have been invited.

Area II – Annalora reported that an ambitious effort is under way to get most of the legislators in Area II to the November 16 meeting to be on a panel.

Area IV – Hoese reported the next Area IV meeting will be November 13.

Area VI – Russell reported that the Area VI meeting was held yesterday at Lake Crystal. Representatives were on hand from DNR, MDA, NRCS, BWSR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The next Area VI meeting will be November 21, hosted by Renville SWCD.

Area III – Hoefert reported that the Area III meeting was held yesterday and the day before. Elections were held. Ted Lovdahl will be the new Area III Director, Rollie Cleveland, Co-Director, Carol Hauck, Secretary, and Steve Richardson, Treasurer.

Area I – Berg reported that the next Area I meeting will be in Grygla on October 25.

13. Adjourn – Hoese moved and Annalora seconded to establish November 2 as the next Board meeting date. Motion passed. Annalora moved to adjourn. Hoese seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.