

# Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2002

Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis MN

Attending: President Richard Zupp, Vice President Scott Hoese, Secretary/Treasurer & Area I Director Carol Berg, Area II Director Mary Ann Scharf, Area III Director Ted Lovdahl, Area IV Director Jim Main, Area V Director Steve Sunderland, Area VI Director Greg Roiger, Area VII Director Clarence Anderson, LeAnn Buck (MASWCD Staff), Sheila Vanney (MASWCD Staff). Others in attendance: Jim Birkholz, BWSR; Steve Woods, BWSR; Faye Sleeper, MPCA.

1. **Call to Order** – President Zupp called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes** – Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Scharf to approve the agenda with amendments. Motion carried. Motion by Berg, seconded by Sunderland, to approve the February 25, 2002 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. **President's Report - Richard Zupp**
  - a. Zupp reported on the NACD Legislative Conference. Conference topics included the Conservation Security Program, lifting the Section 11 cap for the Technical Assistance, and other components of the conservation title in the 2002 Farm Bill. \$17.1 billion was the amount of funding for conservation, agreed upon by both the House and Senate. This is an 80% increase from the last Farm Bill. Meetings were conducted with ten members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation and in attendance were Hoese, Zupp, Buck, Owen Knutson, Rick Hansen and Roger Mussetter.
  - b. Zupp further elaborated on the Conservation Security Program. Senator Harkin is confident that CSP will be included in the Farm Bill, however it is not yet certain whether it will be available nationwide or as a pilot. Zupp asked each of the board members whether they had worked with their NRCS Area Conservationist to see how the proposed CSP would work on their land.
  - c. Zupp spoke about the NACD quota and benefits of NACD membership.
4. **Finance Report - Carol Berg**
  - a. Berg presented the monthly finance report and made the motion, seconded by Main, that it be accepted subject to annual review. Motion carried.
  - b. Berg reported that the yearly 990 tax report we are obligated to do as a non-profit was completed and sent in.
  - c. Berg reported on district membership dues to the Association. One of these districts has been granted hardship standing. This district offered to pay \$500, the same amount they paid last year. Berg made the motion on behalf of the finance committee, seconded by Lovdahl, to request the district pay \$750, as their financial status is slightly better than last year. Motion carried. No correspondence had been received from the other districts who did not pay in full. MASWCD by-laws state the following: *“2.6) DUES - Approval and determination of dues is made at the annual meeting; therefore, dues are payable by January 31<sup>st</sup> with invoice being sent out by December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Districts requesting relief from on time payment of dues because of financial hardship (or other reasons) must notify the MASWCD Board of Directors (in writing) no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the fiscal year, stating the reasons for the request for relief. The Board of Directors 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 Board of Directors by April 1 of the fiscal year shall be considered delinquent and will forfeit their benefits and membership in the Association.”* The board directed Buck to send to those districts a letter indicating that because they have not paid dues in full or been granted hardship status, they will be considered delinquent and will forfeit their membership privileges in the Association.

- d. As a non-profit organization, Berg noted that we are not required by law to conduct an annual audit and that last year the board decided to conduct an annual review and have the board decide when to do an audit. She presented the year end report and annual review for their consideration. The board will need to make a determination as to when they want to conduct the next audit. Main recommended to Berg and the Finance Committee that they consider a modified cash and accrual system.

**5. Office Move - LeAnn Buck**

Buck reviewed with the board the current options for office space. Motion by Scharf, seconded by Main to go forward with pursuing another office space within the Highland Office Building and to give Chad Sturm, our realtor, the authority to negotiate a lower rental fee. The rates listed on the proposal would be the highest rates the board would be willing to pay. Motion carried.

**6. Executive Director's Report - LeAnn Buck**

- a. The bonding bill and budget cuts have been the two major issues this legislative session. There have been no general service cuts, due in large part to MASWCD lobbying efforts. Natural Resource Block Grant cuts may affect SWCDs, but most of the cuts have been in challenge grants. RIM is currently at \$500,000 in the House and \$7 million in the Senate as they go into conference committee. Conference committee members have been named. It's hoped that they will come to some resolution by April 15.
- b. Buck reviewed the redistricting plans for Congressional and state legislative districts.
- c. Legislation to change the governance of Hennepin Conservation District from elected to appointed board members failed in committee. Hennepin County has told the district they have funding until June and advised county staff to develop a plan for re-organization. Because of a petition that was filed for dissolution of the district, BWSR is now charged with conducting a referendum for the voters of Hennepin County on whether to dissolve the district.
- d. Buck discussed public relations for elections of SWCD supervisors. She encouraged board members to in turn encourage the districts in their Areas to announce their elections, provide candidate profiles in local papers and make sure voters are informed.
- e. A CREP Legacy Celebration will be held on June 25<sup>th</sup> in Mankato to recognize the hard work done by SWCDs and agencies in implementing the program.
- f. Vanney reported on the MASWCD Supervisor Training that will be held next week in St. Cloud and presented board members with a break-down of registration by Area.
- g. Vanney briefed the board on her efforts to assist in the development of a general record retention schedule for all SWCDs.
- h. Buck updated the board on a recent meeting she attended on the Nonpoint Engineering Assistance Program.

**7. 319 Program and TMDL Update - Faye Sleeper, MPCA**

Sleeper reported that with the recent reorganization of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, she is now a section administrator in the Regional Environmental Management Division. Her section works on nonpoint source pollution, smaller point sources and solid waste. Programs under her jurisdiction include stormwater management, ISTS, TMDL and 319. MPCA is currently holding onto 319 funds until after the budget crisis is figured out. Sleeper gave a short description of the TMDL program. Every two years, EPA requires states to provide them with a list of the impaired waters in the state (303 d list). For these impaired waters, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) needs to be determined for the pollutants entering the water body. Steps need to then be taken to help that water body reach it's TMDL. As directed by EPA, a portion of 319 funds will now be devoted solely for the TMDL program.

*The board recessed for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 1:05 p.m.*

**8. Report of BWSR Board Activities - Jim Birkholz**

Birkholz reported on this morning's meeting of the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The board voted overwhelmingly to order the referendum on the future of Hennepin Conservation District be held on or before November 5. BWSR members made comments after that vote questioning the process for establishment of a district. The BWSR also took up the issue brought before them by Washington SWCD to have their SWCD election districts match the county commissioner districts. BWSR voted for Washington SWCD to go ahead with this process. Washington SWCD will need to draw a map and present it back to the BWSR for approval. Such a change would require that all five Washington SWCD supervisors be up for election this year.

**9. District Capacity Committee Update - Jim Main, Committee Chair**

The process of involving the membership in district capacity discussions started with the survey to find out what districts wanted to do. Ninety or so responded that they would like to be contacted for follow-up. This is who the workshops were targeted at. Main reported on the workshop that was held in Bemidji. The discussion was successful with a targeted audience. The participants at the Bemidji workshop demonstrated that they were eager to offer input and be part of the process. A similar session will take place tomorrow in Mankato. Main commended Birkholz for the way the sessions were structured. Participants will get a compilation of the feedback which will also be presented to the board with a recommendation from the committee on how to move forward. Thanks should also be expressed to Ron Harnack for committing Birkholz's time to this effort. Main requested staff send the Area Directors the list of attendees at the sessions.

**10. Strategic Plan - LeAnn Buck**

Buck took the board through an exercise where they clarified their strategies/goals for the year. They are as follows: 1) Develop management plan (set priorities); 2) District and association ownership and outreach; 3) Maintain and nurture a political network; 4) Provide on-going supervisor training; 5) Create a marketing plan; 6) Investigate/identify ways of enhancing the MASWCD budget; and 6) On-going MASWCD board evaluation and education.

**11. Area Directors Reports**

Area 1 - next meeting April 4

Area 2 - next meeting April 11

Area 3 - next meeting June 7

Area 4 - next meeting June 17 in Waconia for tour

Area 5 - next meeting June 20

Area 6 - next meeting June 20 in Blue Earth. They will be considering a by-law change to make the Area Director term a two-year term.

Area 7 - next meeting not set yet. Anderson has visited all 10 SWCD offices in the Area.

**12. Future Meeting Dates & Adjourn**

Next meeting will be held April 24 at the MASWCD office. There will be no May meeting. June meeting will be held in conjunction with CREP Legacy Celebration on June 25 in Mankato. Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.