

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2003

MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Attending: President Scott Hoese, Vice President and Area I Director Carol Berg, Area II Director Mary Ann Scharf, Area III Director Ted Lovdahl, Area IV Director Rick Hansen, Area V Director Steve Sunderland, Secretary/Treasurer and Area VI Director Greg Roiger, Area VII Director Ralph Breuer, Area VII Co-Director Rudie Spitzer, MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck, Sheila Vanney and Stefanie Martinez. Others in attendance: Bryan Malone, MACDE; Doug Thomas, BWSR; Tim Koehler and Ann English, NRCS; Vic Ormsby, Winona SWCD Supervisor and BWSR Board Member.

1. **Call to Order** – President Hoese called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes** – Motion by Scharf, seconded by Hansen, to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Lovdahl, to approve MASWCD August 26, 2003 board meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. **President's Report – Scott Hoese**
 - a. Hoese informed the board that the Area I representative to the Legislative Committee, Maggie Leach from the Pennington SWCD, has resigned from the SWCD and relocated to the Brainerd area. Tanya Hanson, an employee from the Red Lake SWCD has expressed interest in filling this vacancy and Hoese requested approval from the board for Tanya to fill this position. Red Lake SWCD has not submitted dues payment for this year, but has indicated they will be able to submit full payment of dues for next year. The next meeting of the legislative committee will be November 18, 2003. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Roiger to ratify the appointment of Tanya Hanson to the legislative committee pending full payment of dues from her SWCD, with the stipulation that she can attend the November 18, 2003 meeting of the legislative committee but since her district has not paid 2003 dues, she will not have voting privileges and will not be reimburse for expenses for that meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Upon direction from the board at a previous meeting, Buck has been communicating with AMC staff about setting up a meeting between the two associations to discuss County-SWCD relations and common issues of concern. The first step may be to meet with the BWSR Administrative Advisory Committee and MASWCD Executive Committee to discuss broad issues affecting SWCDs and their budgets. This is tentatively scheduled to take place within the next month.
 - c. Hoese led the board in a discussion of the proposed Area boundary changes. If the membership votes to adopt this proposal during the annual convention, there needs to be an identified effective date for when the new boundaries will be in place. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Lovdahl, that if boundary changes are passed by the membership, the effective date for Area boundary changes would be January 1, 2004. Motion carried unanimously.
 - d. Hoese reviewed with the board that one of the changes to SWCD statute this past legislative session was the option for SWCDs to opt for their nomination districts to follow county commissioner districts. For those counties which have seven commissioners, this would allow for an SWCD to also have seven board members. Hoese shared comments that were expressed at the Area I meeting on this issue. The board discussion included supervisor voting process for the Association.
 - f. Hoese reviewed NACD quota payments by Minnesota's SWCDs. He again encouraged payment of NACD quota and reiterated the new NACD policy which will allow more of these monies to come back to the NACD North Central Region.

3. President's Report – Scott Hoese (continued)

- g. Lovdahl and Hoese reviewed with the board an emergency resolution submitted by South Saint Louis SWCD. Board members reviewed the criteria for emergency resolutions. Several board members felt the issue was being addressed by resolutions already included in the pre-balloting process. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Breuer to approve the emergency resolution. Motion defeated.

4. Finance Report – Greg Roiger

- a. Roiger presented the monthly finance report and balance sheet. Hoese accepted subject to annual review. Roiger noted that this year-end budgeting and accounting will be done on a cash-cash basis. In the future, adjustments to the current year period and beyond will be set-up to reflect the accrual method.
- b. Roiger reported on the presentations of the budget at Area meetings.
- c. The annual national meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) will be held in Minnesota in summer 2004. SWCS is seeking support for the conference. Hansen noted that the event is an opportunity for professional development as well as showcasing Minnesota's SWCDs to the nation. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Hansen, to submit a letter or resolution of support for the conference to SWCS and Minnesota's SWCDs. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Lovdahl, that MASWCD support the SWCS annual conference at a contribution level of \$250 to be achieved by providing them a free both at the MASWCD convention. Motion carried with a 4-3 vote. Board members requested a letter come from MASWCD President Scott Hoese and NRCS State Conservationist Bill Hunt explaining the Earth Team volunteer effort and how it relates to the SWCS conference.
- d. Vanney presented a request for sponsorship of an upcoming land drainage conference being held January 8-9 in Crookston and January 22-23 in Willmar. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Sunderland, to send a letter of support, noting that due to budget constraints we cannot provide a monetary contribution, and that we will encourage SWCD attendance. Motion carried.
- e. Roiger updated the board on Kanabec SWCD's dues status.
- f. Roiger submitted a draft letter to Beltrami SWCD in response to a letter they wrote to the Association. Discussion on this item was postponed until after lunch.

5. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck

- a. Buck commented on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Further discussion was postponed until later in the meeting.
- b. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Sunderland to ratify the MASWCD and NRCS grant agreement for support of the MASWCD leadership program and leadership lite. Motion carried.
- c. Two other grants between MASWCD and NRCS relating to training and the Farm Bill will be discussed at a future meeting.
- d. Vanney updated board members on the convention. Planning is proceeding well. Area IV SWCDs were recognized for all the work they did in developing the convention program.
- e. Buck highlighted calls and expressions of concern from several districts. Several of these issues will be part of the discussion between the BWSR Administrative Advisory Committee and MASWCD Executive Committee during their November meeting.

Board recessed for lunch at noon, and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

6. Impaired Waters Initiative – LeAnn Buck

Buck presented an overview of the impaired waters initiative that she has been participating in on behalf of MASWCD.

5. **Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck** *(continued from earlier in the meeting)*
 - a. Doug Thomas reviewed the timeline that the Governor's CREP proposal is now under. It has been submitted by Governor Pawlenty to the Secretary of USDA – Ann Veneman – who will take about 30-45 days to review. At that point, a meeting will likely be scheduled in Minnesota to try to develop an agreement between the State of Minnesota and USDA on the specific details of the program. Buck presented a draft position statement for the board to review. She noted that as negotiations for the program continue, MASWCD will be asked what our position is, and having a formal board policy statement on CREP will be very important. Currently MASWCD has a resolution that requests that the CREP program be extended beyond the Minnesota River Basin to other parts of the state and that it offer a non-permanent option. Board members provided input on the policy statement on CREP. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Scharf to approve the policy statement as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **BWSR Board Appointments – Doug Thomas and Scott Hoese**

The terms of three of the BWSR board members will expire this year. One of those is an SWCD representative. MASWCD has the opportunity, via state statute, to submit recommendations to the Governor on BWSR Board appointments. MASWCD board members recommended a letter be sent to SWCDs notifying them of the BWSR Board vacancies and process for applying.

8. **Overview of Minnesota Cost-Share Programs – Doug Thomas (BWSR) and Tim Koehler (NRCS)**

Doug Thomas and Tim Koehler presented overviews of the state and federal cost-share programs. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has several changes to the program that are now different from the State Cost Share. EQIP had participation from 89 of the 91 SWCDs and there was a total of \$15.7 million allocated. Board members offered input on how the cost-share rates and processes are being accepted in their Areas of the state. The EQIP cost share rate was 50% and the State cost share rate is 75%. Consensus of board members was there should be a joint letter from Hoese and Bill Hunt reminding SWCDs about continuation of the local work group process, to go out in January or February of 2004. Discussion also included that the BWSR cost share committee assess cost share programs.

9. **CRP Cost-Share Procedures – Greg Roiger**

Roiger expressed concern to the board members about the way CRP cost-share payments are being handled in Brown County. There appears to be some question between NRCS and FSA about who should be signing off on CRP practices. The confusion over the process is holding up cost-share payments to landowners. Other board members indicated there were problems in other parts of the state as well. Motion by Roiger, seconded by Hansen to authorize Hoese to make contacts with the Minnesota Congressional Delegation to help resolve the problem. Hoese suggested Roiger also pursue an emergency resolution on this issue so that it may be forwarded to NACD and raise the profile of the issue. Concern was also expressed about the calculations of land rental rates and that figures from 2000 instead of more recent figures, are being used. Hansen may pursue an emergency resolution on this issue. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Breuer, that MASWCD contact our Congressmen about updating the land rental rates from 2000, and send copies to leadership from FSA, NRCS and BWSR. Motion passed.

10. **Area Directors' Reports**

Board members reported on activities and meetings at the Area level. Area meeting dates can be viewed on the MASWCD web site at www.maswcd.org, under "Meetings and Events."

11. **MACDE Report – Bryan Malone**

Malone informed the board about the MACDE raffle which will take place in conjunction with the MASWCD annual convention. MACDE will have a booth there. The employees have been wrestling with what to do about their annual meeting. A survey form will be available at the MACDE booth for employees to provide input on this issue.

12. Future Meeting Dates and Adjourn

Future meetings will take place in conjunction with the MASWCD Annual Convention at the Radisson Hotel South: 6:00 p.m., November 29, and immediately following the closing banquet on December 2. The board also discussed potential retreat dates in January and decided to tentatively hold the dates of January 12, 13 and 14. The retreat would be approximately a noon to noon meeting over two of those days. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Sunderland, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.