

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2005

Ramada Limited & Suites, St. Cloud, MN

Attending: President Carol Berg, Vice President Loyal Fisher, Area I Director Ken Pedersen, Area II Director Mary Ann Scharf, Area III Director Ted Lovdahl, Area IV Director Mary Wetter, Area V Director Clark Lingbeek, Area VI Director and MASWCD Secretary/Treasurer Greg Roiger, Area VII Director Ralph Breuer, Area VIII Representative Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney; Steve Woods and Tabor Hoek BWSR; Ann English, NRCS; Bill Penning, DNR; Matt Holland, Pheasants Forever.

1. **Call to Order** – President Berg called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes** – Motion by Breuer, seconded by Pedersen, to approve the agenda with changes. Motion carried. Motion by Scharf, seconded by Breuer, to approve the November 4 meeting minutes. Motion carried. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Scharf, to approve the December 5 meeting minutes. Motion carried. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Pedersen, to approve the December 7 minutes. Motion carried.
3. **President's Report – Carol Berg**
 - a. Berg reported on correspondence received from Aitkin SWCD and presented a draft letter of response. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Breuer, to send the letter from Berg to the chair of Aitkin SWCD. Motion carried.
 - b. Berg reported on a diversity conference she attended in Dallas, Texas just prior to the MASWCD annual convention. The diversity conference was put on by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and other federal conservation partners. Berg brought back materials from the conference and they may be integrated into Area meetings in the coming year.
 - c. The NACD North Central Region Meeting scheduled for January 6-7 in Chicago was cancelled due to weather. Instead, a conference call was held with region leaders on January 7 to discuss resolutions being submitted at the annual meeting and other business. Minnesota has four resolutions that pertain to federal conservation policy. Two of them will be combined, so there will be three Minnesota resolutions going through the process at the NACD annual convention.
 - d. Berg noted that she, Fisher and Buck will be attending the NACD annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia February 5-9. She asked board members to notify her if they will be attending or if they know anyone who will be attending so they can help support Minnesota resolutions as they move through committee.
 - e. Berg reminded the board that there are three vacancies on the BWSR Board – a citizen member, a county commissioner and an SWCD representative. By statute, the MASWCD may submit a recommendation to the Governor as he fills these vacancies. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Breuer, to submit a letter of support for Steve Sunderland to be appointed as an SWCD representative on the BWSR Board. Motion carried.
 - f. Berg and Buck referred to the annual calendar of events in the board members packets.
 - g. Roiger asked Berg and the board to clarify the protocol for the Vice President to participate in board discussions. Consensus of the board is that although bylaws indicate the Vice President does not have a vote, his input and comments are valued and welcome.

4. Finance Committee – Greg Roiger

- a. Roiger noted the new IRS approved mileage rate of 40.5 cents per mile. In accordance with MASWCD policy to adopt the current mileage rate, this is the amount that will be used to calculate mileage reimbursement costs for board members, staff and committee representatives, etc.
- b. Roiger presented an overview of last year's MASWCD income and expenses. He handed out diagrams and charts and extended a thank you to Stefanie Martinez in the MASWCD office for her work on this. Roiger also discussed the balance sheet and budget. In reference to the convention, Lovdahl thanked Vanney for all her work during the convention planning process. Berg accepted the finance report subject to annual review.
- c. The board discussed some issues related to dues payments. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Scharf to allow Mille Lacs and Kanabec to submit quarterly dues payments as requested. Roiger noted that so far, about half of the dues payments have been received in the MASWCD office.
- d. Roiger noted the finance committee members have been tackling the issue of fund development. One idea is to develop a foundation. Another is a large scale raffle. Breuer has been in contact with a Polaris 4-wheeler dealer to see if they can negotiate a reasonable price on one, with the idea of raffling it off with \$10 tickets. Roiger and Breuer are still in the early stages and will update the board at the next meeting.

5. 2005 Partnership to Accelerate Farm Bill Assistance to Landowners

Tabor Hoek (BWSR), Bill Penning (DNR) and Matt Holland (Pheasants Forever) were in attendance to outline a proposed memorandum of understanding (MOU). The proposed MOU addresses the Farm Bill Assistance Project, aimed at accelerating enrollment in continuous CRP, CREP and other conservation provisions of the Federal Farm Bill. Soil rental rates may be increasing, which will make enrollment in CRP more acceptable to landowners. Buck will look into the MOU further. She raised the question of whether the MOU was something for MASWCD to sign or whether it was more appropriate for a local SWCD to sign. As a grass-roots driven organization, MASWCD cannot obligate SWCDs to participate.

6. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck

- a. Buck updated the board on the status of resolutions. She handed out copies of the legislative update and highlighted the 2005 MASWCD Legislative Platform. She discussed supervisor elections, grants and conference activities, the Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol to be held February 22-23, and the SWCD Supervisor Orientation Conference to be held March 22-23.
- b. Buck solicited input from the board on a proposed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with BWSR and DNR Forestry. She asked whether such an MOU would more appropriately be signed by an individual SWCD as opposed to the state Association, or whether the role of the state Association might be to facilitate discussion on a model MOU for individual districts to sign. There was some question as to whether such an MOU has already been established between BWSR, DNR Forestry and the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association. MASWCD does not want to compete with but rather complement the efforts of the MN SWCD Forestry Association. More will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 11:30 a.m. at the Radisson City Center Hotel in St. Paul, in conjunction with the Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol. Berg asked board members to please notify Vanney of upcoming Area meeting dates so they can be posted on the web site. Motion by Lovdahl, seconded by Breuer, to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.