

# Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2006

MASWCD Office, St. Paul MN

Attending: President Carol Berg, Vice President & Area VI Loyal Fisher, Area 1 Director Ken Pederson, Area 2 Co-Director Glen Matejka, Area 3 Co-Director Rollie Cleveland, Area 4 Director Mary Wetter, Secretary/Treasurer & Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck, Sheila Vanney; NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Ann English; BWSR Assistant Director Doug Thomas; MACDE President Brian Watson.

Absent: Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Bill Saumer and Area 6 Director Greg Roiger.

1. **Call to Order** – President Berg called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda and Board Meeting Minutes** – Motion by Pederson, seconded by Spitzer, to approve today's agenda. Motion by Wetter, seconded by Spitzer to approve March 20, 2006 meeting minutes. Motion carried. Berg noted that Fisher will be a voting member today as he will be sitting in for Area 6 Director Greg Roiger.
3. **President's Report – Carol Berg**
  - a. Fund Development Task Force appointments. Berg presented suggestions for individuals to appoint to the task force including: Dorothy Waltz, Ramsey CD; Joe Fox, Ramey CD; Ralph Stadick, Brown SWCD; Scott Hoese, Past President and Vern Wilker, Past President. Objective of task force is to investigate long term funding opportunities, including a possible endowment. Motion by Pederson, seconded by Lingbeek to accept Bergs recommended appointments. Further discussion was held. Motion carried. Matejka suggested the board consider giving specific assignments to co-directors to further make use of their talents. There will probably be three or four task meetings in a given year. Buck will re-send information to the board that she sent out about the task force in February.
  - b. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Fisher to approve sending a letter to BWSR related to SWCD forestry services with amendment. Motion carried. For the purposes of the forestry pilot program we are suggesting a tentative cap of \$1,000 per district be considered.
  - c. SWCD Vacancy on BWSR Board has still not been filled. Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay SWCD Supervisor, is not seeking reappointment for a new term. Buck has been in contact with Governor's Appointment Office. The Governor's office will be conducting interviews with potential candidates including SWCD supervisors.
4. **Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek**
  - a. Lingbeek presented the monthly finance report. Berg accepted subject to annual review. Schulz asked whether checking account for raffle can be eliminated – yes. Also questioned what the interest rate is on the account at the Highland Bank. Buck noted staff is looking into alternatives like CDs, etc and will be an agenda item for the next finance committee meeting.
  - b. Hardship Requests. Committee held conference call. Lingbeek outlined the committee's recommendations regarding the requests received. Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Schulz to accept the finance committee's recommendations. Cleveland asked how these reduced dues figures would affect our total dues income/lost revenue. Buck noted we were anticipating not collecting \$13,000 in dues. Motion carried. Berg pointed out the committee's request for an MASWCD board member to meet with any districts who have requested hardship more than 3 years in a row, as noted in by-laws. This may apply to one or more districts in the next budget cycle. This can be done in November or December, 2006. Schulz noted a member on the Finance Committee visited with him regarding re-looking at dues formula. Discussion followed regarding the role of the membership and the committee to propose changes to the formula. In the past the committee didn't make the change, they applied the policy change approved by the membership.
5. **2007 MASWCD Annual Meeting** – motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Pederson, to have Area 6 host the 2007 annual convention. Motion carried. Motion by Pederson, seconded by Spitzer, to select Rochester as the site of the 2007 annual convention. Motion carried.

**6. VP & Area Director Reports**

Reports were presented regarding activities around the state. The 2006 State Envirothon will be held at Lake Bronson State Park May 17.

**7. NRCS Report – Ann English**

English updated the board on USDA offices and FSA structural review plan. The White Earth Band has formed a tribal conservation district. MASWCD has been invited to speak at the Minnesota Tribal conference in August. The national CRP general sign-up is going on and the deadline has been extended. Sign-up is lower than usual all over the country. Minnesota's CSP sign-up was taking place in the Red Lake Watershed. Fifty to sixty applications may be approved in Minnesota. The NRCS national headquarters is requesting states to finalize and close-out various contracts. This includes open contribution agreements with NRCS and a few districts that either need to be acted on or closed out. NRCS is scheduling a Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) ceremony near Albert Lea to recognize 50,000 acres enrolled into WRP. English thanked Berg for her participation in the Earth Day event at Glacial Ridge in northwestern Minnesota. Annual computer security training is required for everyone who uses the USDA computer system including partnering SWCDs. Discussion included landowner requirements related EQIP follow-through. Schulz expressed his concerns about how landowner-district relationships might be impacted due to NRCS's position on liquidated damages related to EQIP contracts.

**8. Legislative Update – LeAnn Buck**

Buck updated the board on the status of the Association's legislative platform and activities at the Capitol.

**9. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck**

Buck reported on a research/report effort being conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor to review local government roles in watershed management, MASWCD activities to increase local SWCD election awareness, the fifth MASWCD Leadership Institute, MASWCD sponsored supervisor conference, MASWCD's participation in BWSR's WCA Assessment, and association staff training.

**10. Farm Bill Policy Statement**

Motion by Schulz, seconded by Cleveland, to adopt the MASWCD Farm Bill Policy Statement as presented by staff. Motion carried. The statement includes policy language that was adopted via the resolution process.

**11. BWSR Process for Allocating Proposed CWL Funding for SWCDs – Doug Thomas, BWSR**

Thomas explained some of the programs and distribution methods that will be involved in implementing the Clean Water Legacy initiative if approved by the legislature. The Clean Water Legacy proposal includes funding for targeted non point restoration cost share, technical/engineering assistance, eLINK, and lakeshore, streambank and lakeshore protection and restoration.

**12. 2005 Resolution No. 3 Affirmation of Legislative Intent to Fund SWCDs**

Discussion was held on how to get clarification on the legislative intent to fund SWCDs. This was a resolution was submitted by the Beltrami SWCD and passed by the membership at the 2005 Annual Convention. Motion by Matejka, seconded by Schulz, to first try to work directly with the Attorney General's office to get an official opinion on the issue. If that is not possible because of the Association's non-profit standing, the next preferred option is for MASWCD to request BWSR to seek an opinion from the Attorney General's office. Motion carried.

**13. MACDE Report – Brian Watson**

Watson reported on the MACDE Summer Conference that will be held June 27-29 in Granite Falls, Minnesota as well as other issues of interest and concern.

**14. NACD Spring Conference & MASWCD Congressional Office Visits**

Berg, Fisher and Buck reported on their participation in the NACD Spring Legislative Conference held in Washington DC, and their meetings with various Congressional offices.

**15. Schedule Next Meeting & Adjourn**

The next meeting will be held June 27 at the MASWCD office. Motion made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.