

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2006

MASWCD Office, St. Paul MN

Attending: President Carol Berg, Vice President Loyal Fisher, Area 1 Director Ken Pederson, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Bill Saumer, Area 4 Director Mary Wetter, Secretary/Treasurer & Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Director Greg Roiger, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck, Sheila Vanney; Area 7 Co-Director Jim Gebhardt; BWSR Executive Director Ron Harnack; BWSR Engineer Al Kean; NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Ann English; and State Representative Rick Hansen.

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 Spitzer, seconded by Schulz, to approve today’s agenda. Motion by Pederson, seconded by Lingbeek to approve the January 24, 2006 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. **President’s Report – Carol Berg**
 - a. Mission Statement. Motion by Saumer, seconded by Roiger, to adopt changes to the MASWCD Mission Statement as noted on board memo. Discussion. The suggestions stemmed from fund development discussions of Finance Committee. Further debate and dialogue took place. Motion for friendly amendment by Pederson, seconded by Schulz, to change placement of the word “leadership.” Roiger called the question. Motion for amendment carried. Vote on amended motion, 3 for 5 against. Motion failed. Motion by Wetter, seconded by Spitzer to accept mission statement as discussed at retreat. Motion carried. The mission statement now reads as follows: *MASWCD is a nonprofit organization which exists to provide leadership and a common voice for Minnesota’s soil and water conservation districts and to maintain a positive, results-oriented relationship with rule making agencies, partners and legislators; expanding education opportunities for the districts so they may carry out effective conservation programs.*
 - b. Ad Hoc Fund Development. Berg requested that prior to the March board meeting board members provide her with names of individuals from their Areas that could serve on a Fund Development Task Force. Berg would like to establish the Task Force at the next meeting. Mission of the Task Force will be to seek non-dues revenue for the Association.
 - c. Letters from MASWCD to Governor Pawlenty in support of BWSR’s supplemental budget requests for technical assistance. Berg reviewed with the board.
 - d. NACD Annual Convention & MN Resolutions. A small delegation from MN attended the NACD annual meeting in Houston, Texas, including Mike Pliml (Dakota), Orvin Gronseth (Swift), Steve Sunderland (Chippewa) along with Berg and Fisher. Olin Sims was elected as President-Elect (Wyoming), Steve Robinson was elected second vice president (Ohio). Terry Davis from Illinois was elected as Robinson’s replacement as the NACD North Central Region Chair. Several resolutions that were passed at the December, 2005 MASWCD Annual Convention were forwarded to the NACD Annual Meeting for action. Those that were approved at the national meeting include: Resolution #10 Small Woodlot Cost-Share Program (passed with amendment); Resolution #18 Eligibility of Certain Lands for Federal Continuous Conservation Reserve Program; Riparian Grazing Lands and CCRP (passed with amendment) and Resolution #27 Multiflora Rose. These will now be supported by NACD at the national

level. Those resolutions that failed include: Resolution #14 Conservation Security Program Restructuring; Resolution #21 Protection of Sensitive Areas Lacking Crop History; and a 2004 resolution that was re-submitted that related to NRCS as CRP Technical Agency. Two resolutions were deemed existing NACD Policy including Resolution #15 Conservation Security Program Eligibility and Resolution #26 Support of Federal Funding for the Resource Conservation Development Councils.

4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek

- a. Lingbeek presented the monthly finance report. Berg accepted subject to annual review.
- b. Hardship Requests. Membership dues payments have been received by all but eight of the ninety-one SWCDs, some of which have requested hardship status. The Finance Committee will be conducting a conference call to further address these issues.

5. Personnel Committee Report – Loyal Fisher

Fisher presented committee report. Motion by Pederson, seconded by Aigner to approve the proposed salary changes based on the budget approved at the annual convention. Changes go into effect retroactive to staff anniversary dates. Motion carried.

6. Area Directors Reports

Buck and Wetter attended a Wetland Summit held in St. Paul. Wetter reported on the information presented and views and opinions expressed by those in attendance. Schulz reported on his attendance at the Million Acres Conference which included forestry topics.

7. Executive Director’s Report – LeAnn Buck

Buck spoke with the board about: retreat follow-up, BWSR’s response to 2005 resolutions, CWL web site / communications, BWSR’s WCA assessment process, and a communications publication. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Wetter, to partner with BWSR and provide up to \$2500 toward a communications supplement for a media publication on a trial basis (this year, only). Motion carried. Other issues discussed included the upcoming NACD Spring Legislative Conference, Buck’s attendance at a recent NRCS State Leadership Meeting, CSP Contribution Agreements, and LCMR.

Berg deferred to BWSR Executive Ron Harnack for a short report on BWSR activities. This included an Envirothon problem with a magnet school student; un-named ditches on the Impaired Water List; Buffer Study finished but committee will continue; Feedlot Cost-Share; CREP and RIM round-out – sign-ups are moving forward.

Board recessed for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 1:05 p.m.

8. 2006 MASWCD Legislative Platform – Judy Erickson

Erickson reported on the MASWCD 2006 Legislative Platform which includes: Clean Water Legacy, CREP, and Tax Levy Option. The legislative session hasn’t started yet, but discussions are occurring among legislators and the Governor’s administration. She also noted there will be continuing discussion and debate over the “fractions” funding initiatives relating to constitutionally dedicated monies – 3/16, 1/4 cent of sales tax for conservation. There are several different positions among legislators and it is unclear what final bills/proposals might be and whether they will include something for SWCDs.

- 9. Small Woodlot Cost-Share (2005 Resolution #10) – Tom Schulz**
Schulz had a powerpoint presentation which outlined discussions of the MN SWCD Forestry Association regarding small woodlot cost-share. Discussion took place. Motion by Saumer, seconded by Roiger, to submit a letter of support to BWSR to allow districts to use their cost-share monies for forestry technical assistance as laid out in the MN SWCD Forestry Association’s proposal. Motion carried.
- 10. Drainage Buffer Report – Al Kean, BWSR & State Rep. Rick Hansen**
Kean and Hansen presented an overview of the background on drainage buffer issues, along with the current status of the Public Drainage Ditch Buffer Study conducted by BWSR. Motion by Roiger, seconded by Schulz to urge the legislator to hear the Public Drainage Ditch Buffer Report during this legislative session. Motion carried.
- 11. NRCS Report – Ann English**
English reported on NRCS certified wetland determinations. A task force has been formed with representatives from other states in “pot-hole” country to develop recommendations on how to move forward on the issue. CSP sign-up is currently underway and closes at the end of March. There are concerns about the low acceptance rate, along with adequate funding at the national level as the program continues to be administered as an entitlement program. English also noted the hurdle to overcome regarding EQIP dollars that aren’t getting on the ground. Even though MN is third in the country in statewide allocations, we are towards the bottom in getting those dollars on the ground through implemented conservation practices. English encouraged districts to sign up as Technical Service Providers to assist with this workload.
- 12. Next Meetings & Adjourn –** The next board meeting will take place March 20 at the Holiday Inn St. Paul East. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Aigner to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.