

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2007
MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 1 Director Russ Severson, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary Treasurer Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney. Also in attendance: BWSR Assistant Director Steve Woods, BWSR Staff Jason Weinerman, MACDE President Rick Reimer.

1. President Pederson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Zabel, to approve today's agenda with additions. Motion carried. President Pederson noted the September 25 minutes were approved as read.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson
 - a. Pederson commented on the letter sent to all SWCDs via email regarding the new requirement for SWCD Supervisors to file economic interest statements with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board. Discussion followed. Information on this issue was included in a MASWCD Legislative Update during the legislative session. Information was also provided by the Association to SWCDs in July by means of a fact sheet, followed by email updates.
 - b. NACD dues. We have budgeted \$1775. Motion by Loy, seconded by Zabel to pay NACD dues in the amount of \$1775. Motion carried.
 - c. Pederson discussed the upcoming MASWCD annual meeting. He encouraged board members to visit with attendees about MASWCD and Association activities to assist and support districts.
4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek
 - a. Lingbeek presented monthly financial report. Pederson accepted subject to annual review.
 - b. Status of Certificates of Deposit. Lingbeek and Buck updated the board.
5. Executive Director's Report: LeAnn Buck
 - a. Buck noted the office building was broken into the night of October 31. The digital camera was stolen, along with checks to the money market account, and Buck's brief case. MASWCD staff immediately cancelled the money market account. St. Paul police swept for finger prints and will be conducting an investigation. MASWCD staff is following up with insurance claims.
 - b. Buck stated that the Association's fiscal year ended October 31. She reviewed the progress made over the past year on MASWCD board priorities and the status of resolutions. Discussion followed. Current resolutions that still need to be addressed include a request to survey SWCDs on their county's hard rock mining ordinances. MASWCD staff has obtained some information from Association of Minnesota Counties on various county ordinances. Board consensus was that MASWCD staff send a short email note to SWCDs asking them two questions: Another resolution requests health care for SWCDs. Consensus of board members regarding this resolution was that MASWCD staff workload associated with such an effort would be potentially unlimited and that decisions regarding SWCD health care are best made by local SWCD board members. Additional health care insurance discussions include leadership program participants addressing as listed later on the agenda. . Buck discussed the resolution on woodlot preservation. Board members noted they had some question on the intent, as they saw the resolution was very broad in its terms. MASWCD will continue to support forestry issues including forestry stewardship program and the cost share docket to include forestry practices.

5. Executive Director's Report: LeAnn Buck (*continued*)
 - c. Statement of Economic Interest Update. Buck provided board members with a copy of a recent article from the St. Paul Pioneer Press related to the statement of economic interest. She also redistributed copies of last year's report on watershed management from the Office of the Legislative Auditor. On page 65 of the report under the list of recommendations to the legislature included requiring BWSR to have greater oversight of local water management entities. The statement of economic interest was included in the oversight legislation.
 - d. BWSR Board Appointments for 2008. Terms for three BWSR board members expire in January, 2008. One of these is SWCD representative Louise Smallidge from the Washington Conservation District. Statute requires our Association to submit at least three recommendations to the Governor for the expiring term. Board members may want to consider and reflect on this and prepare to take action on recommendations at a future meeting. Smallidge has told BWSR staff that she is interested in continuing to serve.
 - e. Election Options. Buck reminded the board that by statute SWCDs have the option to reorganize their nomination districts along county commissioner nomination districts, and be elected by nomination districts as opposed to county wide. MASWCD and BWSR will be sending a joint letter reminding SWCDs of the options. SWCDs interested in making this change would need to approve the change via resolution and submit to the BWSR board for approval. BWSR approval would need to be provided prior to the filing period for SWCD candidates next summer, 2008, in order to go into effect for the 2008 election cycle.
 - f. Conservation Title Update. Buck shared information with board members to the initiative by the National Association of (FSA) County Officers to support shifting administration of conservation programs from NRCS to FSA. FSA employees have been meeting with members of Congress regarding this potential change. To date legislation does not include the change to the administration of conservation programs. NACD is following this process.
 - g. Subcommittee Report. Buck reported on the House Watersheds, Wetlands and Buffer subcommittee tour and hearing that she and Steve Sunderland, MASWCD VP attended on November 6. SWCDs in southeast Minnesota testified on flood related conservation activities.
6. Emerald Ash Borer – Mark Zabel. Zabel noted that a resolution regarding emerald ash borer was before the membership in pre-balloting. He distributed copies of the Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan for Minnesota, prepared by Mark Anderson with the state Department of Agriculture. MASWCD linked the Cottonwood SWCD and Pennington SWCD with the Department of Agriculture for SWCD input to the plan.
7. Annual Convention and Business Meeting – Sheila Vanney
Vanney reviewed the schedule of events for the annual convention and business meeting.
8. Selection of Leadership Topics for 2007/2008
Buck provided board members with a list of possible workgroup assignments for the current leadership class. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Schulz, to present to the leadership group with the list of possible workgroup items as a list to choose from, with the addition of woodlands preservation. Motion carried.
9. Conservation Technical Assistance Committee: Steve Sunderland
Motion by Sunderland, seconded by Zabel to approve the CTAC resolution. The resolution will go before the membership at the convention as an emergency resolution. Motion carried.

10. BWSR Report – Steve Woods, BWSR Assistant Director
Woods reported on the status of 2006 MASWCD resolutions related to cost-share that were forwarded to and addressed by the BWSR Cost-Share Committee. He also updated the board on Administrative Penalty Order (APO) authority that the legislature granted BWSR for enforcement of the Wetland Conservation Act. They hope to have it on line for the beginning of next construction season – April 2008. The authority will not be delegated to SWCDs. Woods discussed the SWCD performance review, and provided an overview of the legislative request SWCD demographics. BWSR has surveyed the local SWCDs and will provide information during the MASWCD annual meeting.
11. BWSR Small Acreage Forestry Report – Jason Weinerman, BWSR
Weinerman went through a PowerPoint presentation regarding forestry technical support on small tracts of land.
12. MACDE Report – Rick Reimer, MACDE President
Reimer reported on the MACDE annual summer meeting, wetland certification, increasing visibility/awareness of SWCDs at college fairs, scholarships for leadership program, training needs and job approval authority, and the MACDE web site.
13. Confirm Next Meetings and Board Retreat
The next meetings will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 2, and a brief meeting the evening of December 4 at the conclusion of the convention. The annual retreat is scheduled for January 9-10, tentative location is Alexandria. Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.