

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
September 23, 2008  
MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary/Treasurer and Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer; MASWCD Executive Director LeAnn Buck, Assistant Director Sheila Vanney. Also in attendance: Winona SWCD Manager Tim Terrill; Wright SWCD Supervisor Mary Wetter; Wright SWCD technician Colleen Allen.

Absent: Area 1 Director Russ Severson, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz.

1. President Pederson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Lingbeek, to approve the August 26 minutes. Motion carried. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Zabel, to approve today's agenda with amendments. Motion carried.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson, MASWCD President
  - a. Policy/Legislative subcommittee on SWCD elections. Board members were provided a handout on the mission, purpose, scope of work. Meeting scheduled for yesterday was postponed. Individuals with the Secretary of State's Office are interested in participating but are currently busy with a state recount on a judge election. Board members discussed the work of the subcommittee.
  - b. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Report. Pederson was appointed to the NACD awards committee. Pederson and Sunderland are on the Communications Committee and have provided input toward a new newsletter called "The Resource." As NACD North Central Region Chair, Pederson has been participating in conference calls with other state associations in the region.
  - c. NACD Conference Call with Districts. A different set of conference calls than those previously referenced, these calls would entail NACD national officers and staff providing outreach and a method of input for districts. Pederson sought input from the board as to whether this is something we'd like to do in Minnesota. January was suggested as an appropriate month to conduct a conference call open to Minnesota SWCDs.
  - d. MASWCD appointment to Shade Tree Advisory Committee. The Shade Tree Advisory Committee has contacted the MASWCD office and requested we appoint a member to this committee. Pederson has appointed Anne Oldakowski, forestry technician with the Wadena SWCD as the MASWCD representative.
4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek, MASWCD Secretary/Treasurer
  - a. Lingbeek presented the monthly financial report. Pederson accepted subject to annual review.
  - b. MASWCD 2008/2009 Proposed Budget. The Finance Committee met last week to put together the proposed budget. The proposal does not increase dues, but plans for pulling funds out of the fund balance to make the budget balance. Sunderland expressed concern that in another year or two the NRCS contribution agreements, which have been such a big part of the Association's budget, will likely no longer be available. Sunderland cautioned against continuing a policy of deficit spending and suggested that incremental increases in dues now and in the coming years would be better than a sudden large dues increase down the road. Expenses haven't gone down, yet office staff is maxed-out and there is interest in developing a communications position. Lingbeek noted that the Committee had considered the fund balance, and chose not to address a

communications position within the budget process until we get to the point of hiring a person. Loy stated this is not the time to ask for more dues when the fund balance is at the level it's at. Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Loy, to accept proposed budget as submitted by the Committee. Motion carried.

- c. Area Meetings – Finance Committee Members. Members of the Finance Committee will be presenting the proposed budget.

5. Nominations Committee Report – Sheila Vanney

This is an election year for MASWCD and the offices of President and Vice President will be up for vote at the annual meeting. The deadline for SWCD Supervisors to submit a letter of interest in running was August 25, 2008. The Nominations Committee held a conference call September 18, 2008 to discuss the nominations received and the elections process. Nominations Committee members include: Chair Carol Berg, Hubbard SWCD Supervisor; Chuck Uphoff, Stearns SWCD Supervisor; and Ian Cunningham, Pipestone SWCD Supervisor. Consensus of the committee was to recommend the following names to the MASWCD Board of Directors for placement on the printed ballots to be distributed at the convention:

- for President
  - Steve Sunderland, Chippewa SWCD Supervisor
  - Loyal Fisher, Renville SWCD Supervisor
- for Vice President
  - Kathryn K. Kelly, Renville SWCD Supervisor.

Motion by Zabel, seconded by Spitzer, to accept the Nominations Committee recommendation on candidates to be placed on the ballot at the annual convention. Motion carried.

6. Director's Reports on 2008 Area Resolutions

Board members discussed resolutions that were passed out of their Area meetings. The resolutions that will be passed by the member will direct Association policy and workload issues for the next several years.

7. 2007/2008 Leadership Program Assignment: SWCD Role with Carbon Trading Credits – Colleen Allen and Mary Wetter, Wright SWCD

The MASWCD board assigned this topic to the 2007/2008 leadership institute cohort to provide recommendations for the board's consideration. Wetter and Allen presented their report which included a background on carbon credit programs. The report included an overview of the Chicago Climate Exchange, a trading system to reduce emissions from all 6 major greenhouse gases. Wetter also contacted North Dakota Farmers Union, and the three state associations serving as verifiers. Wetter provided information on the role of aggregator and verifier. Organizations serving as a verifier are required to have at least \$1 million net worth and \$2 million professional liability insurance. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Lingbeek, to accept the report. Motion carried.

8. 2007/2008 Leadership Program Assignment: SWCD Role with Bioenergy and Conservation – Tim Terrill, Winona SWCD

The MASWCD board assigned this topic to the 2007/2008 leadership institute cohort to provide recommendations for the board's consideration. Terrill presented a slide-show outlining policy areas including development and legislative support for bioenergy programs, research, demonstration projects and having SWCD implement standards of sustainability. This is an emerging issue for SWCDs and the leadership cohort recommends continued support for this area. MASWCD has participated in the proposed RIM Clean Energy program development and will continue to address bioenergy issues including educational opportunities for the membership. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Lingbeek, to accept the report. Motion carried. Terrill also presented a video on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Winona SWCD.

9. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck

Buck reported to the board on the MASWCD Annual Meeting and Trade Show, Living Snow Fence MOU and the outlook on the State of Minnesota budget. Buck reported on the status of RIM Reserve/WRP. The Association's '08 legislative platform included working with the legislature to obtain funding for the Rim Reserve program. The Legislature appropriated \$25 million for RIM Reserve to leverage federal Wetland Reserve Program Funding. SWCD and Local NRCS field offices worked with landowners and will be restoring 13,000 acres of wetlands and upland under this local, state and federal partnership. This is the first phase of the program and BWSR will be working out the details for future phases of the bonding appropriation. Buck discussed possible policy assignments for the 2008/2009 leadership institute cohort. Topics are based on resolutions on emerging program issues.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Lingbeek, to provide four options to the 2008/2009 leadership cohort: Forestry Easement Program, Feedlot Cost-Share Priorities, Sharing SWCD Technical Assistance Across SWCD Boundaries, and Leadership Development training: The Next Step. Motion carried. Buck will present board recommendations to the leadership participants during their September 24 training session in Duluth.

Motion by Zabel, seconded by Kelly, to direct staff to submit letters to the Start Tribune and Pioneer Press related to including SWCD candidates in their general voters guides. Motion carried.

10. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Next meeting will be held November 6 at the MASWCD office.