

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2009
Holiday Inn, St. Cloud, MN

Present: President Steve Sunderland, Vice President & Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 1 Director Ross Aigner, Interim Area 2 Director Ralph Peterson, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Co-Director Mary Wetter, Secretary Treasurer & Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 7 Director Bob Borchert, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney; Stearns SWCD Employee Grant Pearson, Area 5 Co-Director Ian Cunningham, Association of Minnesota Counties analyst Joe Matthews, Fresh Energy Science Policy Director J. Drake Hamilton, Minnesota Farmers Union representative Thom Peterson, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation representative Staci Bohlen, and Congressman Collin Peterson staff Sharon Josephson.

1. President Sunderland 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 Lingbeek, to approve the board meeting agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Peterson, seconded by Borchert, to approve the May 26 board meeting minutes with edit. Motion carried.
3. President's Report. Sunderland reported on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Board meeting and Legislative Conference is being held in Washington, DC July 18-21. He and former MASWCD President Ken Pederson will be attending on behalf of MASWCD. They will be joined by Grant Pearson with the Stearns SWCD. During their time in Washington DC, they will be meeting with several members Minnesota's Congressional Delegation to discuss conservation program and technical assistance needs in Minnesota. One high profile issue currently being discussed in Congress is the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which will be discussed later at today's meeting.
4. Finance Report. Lingbeek reviewed monthly financial report; Sunderland accepted subject to annual review.
5. Red River Basin Commission Resolution to Support. Motion by Aigner, seconded by Kelly, that MASWCD send to the Red River Basin Commission correspondence indicating our organization's support of the Commission, and that a letter accompany this indicating that the Association would like to be more involved with the Commission and strongly urges the Red River Basin Commission add SWCDs to their board in recognition that SWCDs cover the entire state, with that SWCD representative being someone from within the Red River Basin. Motion carried. It was suggested that SWCDs might be appointed to the commission in a way similar to how county commissioners get appointed. Another suggestion was made that we communicate with the North Dakota association, suggesting they send a similar message.
6. Executive Director's Report. Buck reported that approximately \$38 million was appropriated from the Clean Water Funding to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for nonpoint source pollution grants and programs for fiscal year 2010-11. Several of the items funded were based on the policy work of the G-16 partnership. Funding for wellhead protection was also appropriated and addresses a 2008 MASWCD resolution policy request authored by the Stearns SWCD. She also spoke about the status of the current MASWCD Leadership Institute, which comes to an end this August. There is currently not a grant for another program. Buck also discussed MASWCD Area names. Motion by Peterson, seconded by Kelly, to list just the geographical identifiers in Area names with a phase out of the numbers, putting them in parenthesis after the geographical names, with a suggestion that Area bylaws just list the geographical names. Motion carried. Buck provided an overview of the MASWCD Orientation and Refresher course offered to our members.
7. Local Government Aid Unallotments and Impacts to County Budgets. Joe Matthews, General Policy Analyst with the Association of Minnesota Counties, presented information on the current and projected status of county budgets, how SWCDs might be affected, and suggestions for ways SWCDs might communicate their value to county staff and board members.

8. American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES) – Panel Discussion. Information and perspectives were offered on this bill that is currently making its way through Congress. Panelists included J. Drake Hamilton with Fresh Energy, Thom Peterson with Minnesota Farmer’s Union, Staci Bohlen with Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, and Sharon Josephson with the office of Congressman Collin Peterson. The Act establishes an agricultural and forestry offset program administered by the USDA to work with farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners to design and implement plans that reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon on their operations. The House bill originally had provisions for EPA to administer this offset provision. Landowners would be able to sell the credits to utilities, refiners, or other firms to limitations on greenhouse gas emissions. Ken Pederson, MASWCD delegate to the National Association of Conservation District, commented that the national association supported Congressman Peterson’s amendments to the bill but has not taken a position on the entire bill at this time.

9. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:20 p.m. The next board of directors meeting will be held August 25 at the Association office in St. Paul.