

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2009
MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Steve Sunderland, Vice President & South Central Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, West Central Area 2 Director Ralph Peterson, Northeast Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Metropolitan Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary Treasurer & Southwest Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Southeast Area 7 Director Bob Borchert, North Central Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Sheila Vanney; Kasey Taylor, NRCS Acting Assistant State Conservationist; Dan Steward, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Steve Hughes, Aitkin SWCD Manager; Brad Matlack, Carlton SWCD Manager.

Absent: Area 1 Director Ross Aigner

1. President Sunderland called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Borchert, to approve the board meeting agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Borchert, seconded by Loy, to approve the July 14 board meeting minutes. Motion carried. Zabel abstained as he was not in attendance at the July meeting.
3. President's Report. Sunderland reported on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Board meeting and Legislative Conference that was held in Washington, DC July 18-21. He and former MASWCD President Ken Pederson attended on behalf of MASWCD. They were joined by Grant Pearson with the Stearns SWCD. During their time in Washington DC, they met with staff of several members of Minnesota's Congressional Delegation to discuss conservation program and technical assistance needs in Minnesota. Sunderland noted that NACD North Central Region employee Beth Mason is in the process of calling a couple Minnesota SWCD offices a week to get feedback on NACD. Sunderland reported on the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, a proposal currently in Congress. Sunderland and Schulz reported to the board on an invitation to participate in a Great Lakes Meeting in Pennsylvania in late September. The board discussed the history of the committee and its current status as an offshoot of the NACD Natural Resources Committee. Motion by Borchert, seconded by Merrill, to cover the expenses for Schulz to attend the meeting as an SWCD representative from Minnesota. Motion carried. Schulz abstained from the vote. It was noted that this item was not a budgeted expense. It is hoped that the Great Lakes Commission will cover half of the expenses, as in the past. Sunderland notified the board that the MASWCD staff will be sending out self-evaluations for the board members to complete and return to the office for tabulation and report at a future meeting.
4. Finance Report. Lingbeek reviewed monthly financial report; Sunderland accepted subject to annual review.
5. Resolution Committee Report. Kelly briefed the board on the recent work of the resolutions/policy committee and presented the 2009 Resolution Packet for review and approval. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Lingbeek, to accept the packet of 20 resolutions and approve its distribution to the membership for pre-convention balloting, along with the separate sheet of committee recommendations. Motion carried. Kelly distributed a handout which outlined the resolutions that are set to sunset in December and she and Buck discussed the work accomplished on them.
6. Selection of 2011 MASWCD Convention Site Location. Vanney presented to the board a summary of facility proposals for the 2011 MASWCD Annual Convention. Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Kelly, to accept the proposal submitted by the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel Minneapolis South. Motion carried. The 2011 convention will take place December 4, 5, and 6. There was consensus among the board that Area 4 would be the host of the 2011 event.

7. Executive Director's Report. Buck reported on recent Professional Input Meetings that were conducted around the state by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. She reported on the RIM Reserve/Wetland Reserve Program, reviewed activity related to the Board's priority issues, and discussed her work on setting up a meeting with the Association of Minnesota Counties. Buck informed the board that the graduation session for members in the 2008-2009 MASWCD Leadership Institute was held August 5-6. There are currently no plans on a future institute due to the lack of contribution agreement funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. She reported on the success of the MASWCD Supervisor and Employee Orientation and Refresher Conference held in St. Cloud July 14-15. She also noted that this past legislative session, the legislature approved a study be conducted to analyze and evaluate Minnesota drainage law. Buck also discussed fund development issues for the association.

8. MASWCD Priority Issue: Forestry Easement Proposal. This issue was identified by the board as a priority issue at the board retreat in January. Schulz introduced the guest speakers and gave some history of the work done up to this point by the "Tree Team" members in the north central and northeastern part of the state. Steward, Hughes and Matlack presented the framework for the proposed forestry easement program, including specific sites in Aitkin and Carlton SWCDs which would benefit from such a program. The program would be intended to keep forested land from being developed in sensitive riparian areas, and to manage the land as a "working forestland." MASWCD has been assisting with the development of the proposal and is coordinating activities related to sharing information with key partners and BWSR management. The proposal is a work in progress.

9. MACDE Report. Matlack reported on the recent activities of the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees. They held a meeting July 30. Sunderland extended his thanks to MACDE for funding the scholarship that was provided to Grant Pearson from Stearns SWCD to accompany MASWCD representatives to the national legislative conference. Matlack reported that there have been improvements to the MACDE web site, including a frequently asked questions page. They are trying to make the web site a good resource for employees. Matlack noted that the employees association did not conduct an annual meeting and conference this year but instead put their support behind the Board of Water and Soil Resources Academy, which will provide training opportunities for employees in November.

10. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:20 p.m. The next board of directors meeting will be held September 22 at the Association office in St. Paul.