

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
September, 14, 2010  
MASWCD Office, St. Paul, MN

Present: President Steve Sunderland, Vice President & South Central Area 6 Director Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Northwest Area 1 Director Ross Aigner, West Central Area 2 Director Ralph Peterson, Northeast Area 3 Director Kurt Beckstrom, Metropolitan Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Southwest Area 5 Director Ian Cunningham, Southeast Area 7 Director Bob Borchert, North Central Area 8 Co-Director Bob Albrecht; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck and Stefanie Martinez; John Beckwith, NRCS; Tabor Hoek, BWSR; and Felicia Brockoff, MACDE.

Absent: Secretary/Treasurer and North Central Area 8 Director Tom Schulz;

1. President Sunderland called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance. Motion by Cunningham, seconded by Peterson, to approve today's meeting agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Peterson, seconded by Borchert, to approve the August 10, 2010 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
2. President's Report: Sunderland reported that the nominations committee held a conference call on Friday, September 10, 2010. Those participating in the call included: Ken Pederson, East Polk SWCD Supervisor, Nancy Benson, Wadena SWCD Supervisor, Allen Marble, Blue Earth SWCD Supervisor and MASWCD staff Sheila Vanney. Committee members discussed the nominations and elections process for MASWCD President and Vice President and staff shared the names of those who submitted letters of interest in running for those offices including: for President: Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Renville SWCD Supervisor, South Central Area 6 Director and MASWCD Vice President; and J. J. Waldhalm, Pine SWCD Supervisor. For Vice President, Mark Zabel, Carver SWCD Supervisor and Metro Area 4 Director. Motion by Cunningham, seconded by Borchert, to accept the nominations committee report. Motion carried. Candidate information will be forwarded to the membership in advance of the December annual meeting.
3. Finance Committee Report: Monthly Financial Report. Sunderland presented the monthly financial report. Motion by Beckstrom, seconded by Peterson, to accept the monthly financial report subject to review. Motion carried. Sunderland reported that MASWCD Treasurer Tom Schulz presented a draft MASWCD budget for 2010-2011 during the August board meeting. The draft budget was developed by the Finance Committee during their August 9, 2010 meeting. Sunderland reported that the personnel committee will have a short meeting during the lunch break and the final vote for the budget will take place later in the agenda. Cunningham reported that the Education Committee is recommending a conference call for the committee to save money for the current fiscal year.
4. MASWCD Nonprofit Designation for Areas: Motion by Cunningham, seconded by Albrecht, for MASWCD Areas to utilize the Association's 501 C 3 designation to obtain contributions by individuals and corporations. Motion carried. If needed, an area will have to forward a resolution to request and utilize the designation. The board requested the finance committee to provide the board with guidelines for areas and potential charges to the areas for Association accounting services. Discussion also followed related to MASWCD area budgets and further review of area liability issues.

5. Resolution/Policy Committee Report:
  - a.) 2010 Resolution Packet: Kelly, Committee Chair, reported on the resolutions that were passed during the eight MASWCD area meetings and reviewed by the Resolution/Policy Committee during their August 23 & 24 meeting. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Cunningham, for the adoption of the 2010 Resolution Packet submitted by the Resolution/Policy committee. Included in the packet are the committee recommendations for each resolution for distribution to the member SWCDs. Motion carried. The resolution packet will be forwarded to member SWCDs. Supervisors will review all resolutions and vote their position on each resolution prior to the annual convention using the pre-convention resolution ballot process. The results of the pre-convention resolution ballot process will be distributed during the first general session of the convention. Resolutions needing further action will be brought before the membership for action during the second general session of the convention. This will provide additional time for convention delegates to study each proposed resolution.
  - b.) 2009 Resolution Priorities: Kelly reported that the Resolution/Policy Committee evaluated and prioritized the resolutions to provide guidance on how to address workload items, budget ramifications and short and long-term planning efforts. All resolutions that have been passed are ongoing policy for the Association. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Borchert, to adopt the 2009 Resolution Priorities as recommended by the Resolution/Policy committee. Motion carried.
  - c.) America's Commitment to the Clean Water Act. Kelly reported that in April of 2010, Congressman James Oberstar (D) of Minnesota introduced federal legislation entitled America's Commitment to Clean Water Act - H.R. 5088. This is the fifth bill introduced by Congressman Oberstar since 2002 that would amend the federal Clean Water Act by striking `navigable waters of the United States' each place it appears and inserting `waters of the United States'. During the August 23<sup>rd</sup> Resolution/Policy committee meeting, members reviewed background information related to federal legislation and formulated the policy statement recommendation for the board's consideration. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Borchert, to adopt the policy statement related to the Clean Water Act – H.R. 5088. Specifically, the MASWCD supports a change to federal law to create the flexibility or the mechanism for “certifying” a state wetland law as an adequate stand-in or replacement for the federal dredge and fill program. Such flexibility would provide an opportunity to more efficiently serve both the natural resources and the taxpayers with a single wetland law that meets the goals and the objectives of the federal Clean Water Act. It might also ease apprehensions that exist among stakeholders about the federal regulation of intrastate wetlands in general, and about this specific piece of federal legislation. Motion carried.
6. NRCS Report: John Beckwith, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, updated the board on various NRCS activities and programs. NRCS is currently reviewing a management plan for their staffing needs. Beckwith reported that Don Baloun, NRCS State Conservationist, is meeting with all field offices and local SWCD personnel.
7. Finance Committee Report Continued: Motion by Peterson, seconded by Cunningham, to adopt the 2010-2011 proposed budget as developed by the Finance Committee. Motion carried. The proposed budget will be sent to the membership in advance of the annual meeting. The budget will be an action item during the December annual meeting.
8. Executive Director's Report:
  - a.) Buck reported on the on the Local Government Roundtable activities. The Roundtable includes the Executive Committees from the MASWCD, Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts. The Local Government Roundtable is convening an advisory work group to address policy issues that have been assigned by the Roundtable. Each Association will have 10 member representatives to serve on this advisory work group. Steve Sunderland has confirmed the MASWCD representatives. AMC and MAWD are currently

confirming their members. The first meeting of 30 advisory members will take place on September 15, 2010.

- b.) Buck updated the board on the 2009 Resolution No. 11 requesting a change to the CRP program – specifically a request to increase the “not-to exceed rate” for the anchored mulch. The resolution was submitted by the Mower SWCD. The USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee reviewed the request and decided not to change the rate at this time.
- c.) Buck updated the board on the fund development activities and the partnership with University of Minnesota Foundation.
- d.) Buck reported that the MASWCD has posted candidate profiles from those seeking the position of SWCD Supervisor. The information is posted on the MASWCD website. Questionnaires were sent June 11th with a July 15th response deadline.

9. BWSR Report

- a.) Minnesota Buffers for Wildlife and Water Proposal: Tabor Hoek provided an overview of the Minnesota Buffers for Wildlife and Water proposal that has been submitted to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for consideration. The proposal includes funding for the RIM Reserve to establish buffers to enhance wildlife and water quality.
- b.) Minnesota’s Farm Bill Assistance Program Update: Hoek provided an overview of the partnership with SWCDs, BWSR, DNR, LCCMR and Pheasants Forever to hire technicians to promote conservation provisions of the federal farm bill and other conservation programs to landowners. Approximately 21 FTEs are working in 36 SWCD offices. The program was first implemented in 2002.
- c.) Open Fields Walk-In Program: Hoek reported as part of a new component to the farm bill, the USDA Farm Service Agency has a grant program for states to receive funding for a “walk-in” hunting program. The application submitted by DNR is for a voluntary program that would pay landowners a per-acre fee to allow public hunting access. Minnesota has proposed a pilot program for southwestern Minnesota. The initial money also will pay for signs to mark the lands. This is a similar program modeled after walk-in programs used in the Dakotas. If Minnesota’s grant is accepted, information will be shared with the SWCDs on the process.

10. MACDE Report: Felicia Brockoff, MACDE President, updated the board on their annual meeting that will be held in conjunction with the BWSR Academy. The Employees Association will be recognizing a member for their Extraordinary Service Award during the meeting. Brockoff also updated the board of the status of the State Envirothon. BWSR previously coordinated the State Envirothon, but due to budget cuts will no longer provide this service. The MACDE also provided a scholarship to Doug Bos, Rock SWCD, to attend the NACD Legislative Conference.

11. The next MASWCD Board of Directors meeting will be held November 9, 2010 at the MASWCD Office. Meeting adjourned.