Present: President Roland Cleveland, Vice President and Northwest Area 1 Director Paul Krabbenhoft, West Central Area 2 Director Chuck Rau, Northeast Area 3 Director Paul Hoppe, Metro Area 4 Director Doug Schoenecker, Southwest Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, South Central Area 6 Director Mark Schnobrich, Southeast Area 7 Director Bill Thompson, North Central Area 8 Director Ken LaPorte, MASWCD Executive Director LeAnn Buck, BWSR Assistant Director Doug Thomas, Stearns SWCD Project Manager Nathan Hylla, Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff Jeff Berg, Renville SWCD District Manager Holly Hatlewick, Soil Health Coalition representatives Grant and Dawn Breitkreutz, BWSR Chief Engineer Al Kean, and Ecosystem Services Exchange Director of Conservation Planning Paul Sweeney.

President Cleveland called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and led the board with the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Agenda - Motion by Schoenecker and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda - Motion by Rau and seconded to approve board meeting minutes from March 5 and include a reference to National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) annual meeting update. Motion carried.

President’s Report – Cleveland reported that the MASWCD Personnel Committee conducted an annual performance review of the Executive Director on April 2, 2019. Motion by LaPorte and seconded to approve the personnel committee’s report that follows the MASWCD budget for base salaries. Motion carried. Cleveland presented information for the board’s consideration and action on committee appointments. Motion by Krabbenhoft and seconded to approve appointments to MASWCD Awards, Finance and Resolution standing committees and Association representation to the Local Government Water Roundtable, NRCS State Technical Committee and BWSR Drainage Work Group. Motion carried. Cleveland reported that he will finalize appointments for remaining committee area vacancies at a future board meeting.

South Central Area 6 Director Mark Schnobrich entered the meeting at 10:34 am

Finance Report – Lingbeek presented the monthly financial statement. Motion by LaPorte and seconded to approve the March 2019 finance report subject to annual review. Motion carried. Lingbeek presented an update on membership dues. In accordance with Association by-laws, Pine SWCD is not a member at this time.

Executive Director’s Report – Buck provided information on several board focus areas. SWCD capacity funding bills have been introduced in the House and the Senate. The Local Government Water Roundtable advisory workgroup will be meeting to discuss future watershed funding policies that will be forwarded to Roundtable members and the BWSR board for consideration. The workgroup discussions are furthering existing recommendations developed by MASWCD, Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts and BWSR. The recommendations are focused on the One Watershed One Plan program funding activities. MASWCD representatives to the workgroup include Susan Shaw (Mille Lacs SWCD), Brian Watson (Dakota SWCD), Darren Newville (East Ottertail/Wadena), Justin Hansen, (Mower SWCD) and Buck. The new MASWCD Public Administration Training Cohort has been launched and training is taking place from March through June, 2019. Buck worked with University of Minnesota and NRCS on the MASWCD April Leadership
Institute training session in Washington DC and scheduled appointments with various speakers and branches of government. Buck reported that DNR has invited MASWCD to participate in a stakeholder process to develop the 2019 Duck and Pheasant Plan. Buck and Aaron Larsen, West Ottertail Project Manager, will be participating on behalf of MASWCD. Buck attended the National Association of Conservation Districts Fly-in in Washington DC. MASWCD, NACD Board member Ian Cunningham (Pipestone SWCD) and members of the conservation partnership met with members of Minnesota’s congressional delegation and the USDA NRCS’s Chief Matt Lohr. Discussion items included farm bill implementation, the CRP and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, field office services and the 319 Program. Buck reported that the MASWCD Call for Resolutions has been mailed to the SWCD offices.

Minnesota Office for Soil Health (MOSH) Stakeholder Event - Doug Thomas, BWSR Assistant Director, reported that MOSH is a collaborative created by the BWSR and the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. The mission of MOSH is to build local expertise to promote soil health and soil and water conservation. The focus will also include research and outreach to expand the tools and skills of Minnesota’s local conservation delivery community, and promote understanding of the economic impacts of soil and water management practices. MOSH is conducting a stakeholder event on April 16 and Buck has been invited to provide a short overview of SWCDs. Cleveland congratulated Thomas on his upcoming retirement. The board thanked him for his years of service as an advisor to MASWCD and his work to advance district capacity.

Soil Health Coalition - Holly Hatlewick, Grant Breitkreutz and Dawn Breitkreutz provided an update on the recently formed Soil Health Coalition. The purpose of the coalition is to promote the principles of soil health practices through producer driven education, outreach, and adoption. The coalition is modeled after a similar non-profit in South Dakota. Discussion followed on potential partnerships with the MASWCD. The coalition will provide a written request for future board consideration.

North Central Area 8 Director Ken LaPorte left the meeting.

Water Storage: Scales, Practices and Partnerships – Al Kean, BWSR Chief Engineer discussed MASWCD 2018 Resolution #2 pertaining to SWCD leadership roles with surface and subsurface water storage. Discussion included various conservation practices at different scales from field to watershed. Local water planning, as well as state and federal technical and financial assistance programs, often involve SWCDs and landowners in partnerships with drainage authorities. An overview of the practices and SWCDs roles were provided. Kean presented information at the MASWCD 5 meeting in February and will be presenting at the MASWCD Area 6 meeting on April 22nd.

Drainage Water Management Technical and Engineering Assistance - Paul Sweeney, Ecosystem Services Exchange, reported that his organization has entered into an agreement with NRCS to provide technical and engineering assistance on drainage water management, saturated buffers and bioreactors. Sweeney described how they are providing this assistance to producers to accelerate implementation of these conservation practices. The focus of their work is in southern Minnesota and SWCDs technical staff have participated in recent training. Sweeney presented information during the MASWCD Area 6 meeting November 2018 meeting.

Confirm Next Board Meeting. The next MASWCD Board of Directors meeting will take place May 8 at the MASWCD office in St. Paul. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.