

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2026,
MASWCD Office St. Paul MN

Present: President Chuck Rau, Vice President and Southeast Area 7 Director Randy Smith (remote), Secretary/Treasurer and Northeast Area 3 Director Jake Janski, Northwest Area 1 Director Randy Schellack, West Central Area 2 Director Tom Gregory, Metro Area 4 Director John Rheinberger, Southwest Area 5 Director Mona Henkels, South Central Area 6 Director Bob Nielsen, North Central Area 8 Director Ken LaPorte, MASWCD Executive Director LeAnn Buck, MASWCD Assistant Director Sheila Vanney, MASWCD Conference and Events Manager Michele Asmussen, BWSR Assistant Director Justin Hanson, NRCS State Conservationist Troy Daniell, Benton SWCD Supervisor Wade Bastian, MACDE representative and Isanti SWCD Manager Tiffany Determan.

Call to Order. President Rau called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Approval of Board Meeting Agenda. Motion by Gregory and seconded to approve the board agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes. Motion by Rheinberger and seconded to approve the board meeting minutes from February 24, 2026. Motion carried.

President's Report. President Rau led board discussion on the following:

- a. Policy Adoption: Climate Change Guiding Principles (Resolution 8-23). Board members reviewed and discussed the draft guiding principles. Motion by Rheinberger and seconded to adopt the guiding principles. Motion carried.
- b. Nominating Committee and 2026 President and VP Election Process. Motion by Rheinberger and seconded to authorize Rau to put together a nominating committee. Motion carried.
- c. SWCD Supervisor Appointment to BWSR Board. Rau noted that South St. Louis SWCD Supervisor Paul Fish was appointed by Governor Walz to the BWSR Board. Fish will hold the seat previously held by Wadena SWCD Supervisor Tom Schulz, who chose not to seek reappointment.

Finance Committee Report. Janski reviewed the finance report and noted that all dues have been paid. Motion by Janski and seconded to accept the financial report subject to annual review. Motion carried. Janski also discussed options for looking at our finances. After review, motion by Janski and seconded, to move forward with an annual compilation of financial statements with the accounting firm Schechter, Dokken, Kanter, Ltd. Motion carried.

Executive Director's Report. Buck provided information to the board on the following items.

- IMPLAN Conservation Delivery Economic Assessment
- MASWCD/NRCS Agreements
- MASWCD/BWSR/USDA Advancing Markets for Producers Alliance Program Agreement
- DNR Stream Restoration & Enhancement Stakeholders Project
- MASWCD Workplan Update

MASWCD Legislative Report. Vanney provided information related to MASWCD's 2026 Platform and outcomes of the 2026 Session, along with an update on our Advocacy Campaign around SWCD Aid.

Local Government Water Roundtable Collaboration Initiatives Clean Water Fund Appropriations: (Resolution E1-22). Buck provided information related to ongoing partnership work with Association of Minnesota Counties and Minnesota Watersheds as the entities collectively communicate to the Clean Water Council about funding priorities in the Clean Water Fund, including Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF).

Minnesota USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report Information. NRCS State Conservationist Troy Daniell provided an update pertaining to NRCS conservation program and technical assistance items including: NRCS program updates; Regenerative Pilot Program; One Farmer, One File' data system, and mobile tools/digital platforms for field use.

The board recessed for lunch at noon and reconvened at 12:45 pm.

Woodland Management Activities and Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Integration (Resolution 7-25) Information. BWSR Assistant Director Justin Hanson provided an update on SWCD/BWSR conservation program delivery items including WBIF and woodland management.

National Association of Conservation District (NACD) Report. Randy Smith, MASWCD delegate to the NACD Board; Randy Schellack, MASWCD alternate to the NACD Board and LeAnn Buck, Executive Director, all shared information, recent and upcoming participation and activity at the federal level:

- **Washington DC March 25, 2026, Fly-In Summary;** An overview of the MASWCD meetings with congressional offices was provided. National policy advocacy included federal FY27 Congressional Appropriations Requests (NRCS, USFS and EPA); and Farm Bill conservation title policies and program requests. (Resolution 10-25)
- **NACD Conservation District Position Data Collection Tool.** A national data collection effort was launched focusing on conservation district capacity and the use of federal office space and IT. NACD is working with State Associations to assist with the data collection.
- **NACD 2026 Summer Conservation Forum and Tours; Grand Rapids, MI; July 17-22.** MASWCD Representation. Motion by Rheinberger and seconded to authorize expenses for up to 3 MASWCD representatives to attend the Grand Rapids, MI meeting. Motion carried.

MASWCD Area Meeting Agenda Development. Buck led the board through discussions around upcoming Area meetings. Area directors confirmed dates for June meetings, reviewed the 2026 Resolutions and Process Timeline, and discussed preliminary meeting content.

MASWCD Supervisor Election Guide Information. Vanney noted that MASWCD shared the 2026 guide to SWCD elections to districts as a resource for supervisor elections and discussed the elections timeline.

MASWCD Supervisor Video Production (Resolution 18-2023). Asmussen, previewed a draft of the video with the board and shared the expected timeline for its use.

Confirm Next Board Meeting Date (June 16, 2026) and Adjourn. Rau adjourned the meeting at 2:38 pm.