

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MARCH 10, 2010 BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Chair, Louise Smallidge.

Members Present: Louise Smallidge, Chair
Tom Meyer, Vice Chair
Gary Baumann, Secretary
Sarah Hietpas, Public Relations and Information

Staff Present: Jay Riggs
Shari Larkin
Amy Carolan
Jessica Thiel
Jyneen Thatcher
Wendy Griffin

Other Agencies: Michelle Wohlers, NRCS

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 10, 2010 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Approval of the February 10, 2010 minutes was made by Sarah Hietpas and seconded by Tom Meyer. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Items to note were a \$2,367.43 charge from Impressive Print for newsletter printing; \$1,990.63 payable to Washington County Parks for a WQCSG expense; \$526.00 to Advanced Imaging Solutions for our copier lease and overages; \$1,649.52 payable to Emmons & Olivier Resources for Lower St. Croix SWAG expenses; \$500.00 payable to the Postmaster to add postage to our bulk account; and \$1,750.00 payable to the University of Minnesota for wetland delineation training for Matt and Jessica. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, was made by Gary Baumann. The motion was seconded by Sarah Hietpas. Motion carried.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee – the Personnel Committee met prior to the Board meeting to discuss the the WCA Specialist Position and handbook policies. We will be posting volunteer opportunities on our website as they become available.

Budget and Finance Committee – the Committee did meet and approved the purchase of a vehicle and the proposed budget changes to cover the WCA Specialist position. We are going to wait to purchase the vehicle when we find out the final results of the 2009 year end financials.

Cost Share Committee – the items will be covered under New Business.

Communications and Outreach Committee – the Committee is still working on Marketing Plan updates.

AGENCY PARTNER REPORTS

NRCS – We have all of our CSP applications done and signed except for Belwin, which required a name change. We also have three high tunnel applications. High Tunnel is a new pilot practice that NRCS has put into EQIP practice this year. They essentially look like a greenhouse, only the plants are planted directly into the ground. The practice helps with season extension. Some people claim they can grow 10 months out of the year. The minimum height is 6 feet. There is a cap for maximum square feet. People can only apply for one High Tunnel since it is a pilot project. In Area IV alone, we have 41 applications. There is only \$250,000 funded for the whole state, which is about 50 High Tunnels.

Water Consortium – We have been playing a very active role in developing the agendas and presenting at the Consortium. Jay encouraged Board members to attend.

REPORTS OR PRESENTATIONS

- a. **Newspaper Articles and Other WCD Outreach** – A 3-ring binder of the past month's newspaper articles is available for the Board to look through if they wish.
- b. **Upcoming Events: (FYI)**
 - i. **Shallow Lakes Forum – April 5, 2010**
 - ii. **Protecting the St. Croix – April 8, 2010**
- c. **County Conservation Plan – Amy and Jessica** – Amy and Jessica presented on their work with the County Conservation Plan.

OLD BUSINESS AND UPDATES

- a. **2010 Day at the Capitol Debriefing** – Amy and Sarah debriefed on the Day at the Capitol event.
- b. **Seasonal Technician Positions Update** – The position announcements for both positions were included in the packet. The Seasonal Natural Resource BMP Technician position has been offered to Tara Kline. She has accepted and will be starting next Tuesday. We are interviewing for the Seasonal Water Monitoring Technician on Monday.
- c. **Draft WCA Specialist Position Announcement** – The draft position announcement for the Wetland Specialist was included in the packet. We are planning on posting for that position within the next week. The closing date will be three to four weeks after the position is posted.
- d. **Green Acres and Rural Preserves Program Update** – There are some discussions at the legislature about delaying the requirements for submittal. We are also going to come back to the Board with some final language for how the program will be managed. There should be more information at the next Board meeting. We have been working closely with the tax assessors office and anticipate half of the 900 residents may be interested. We have through May of 2013 to complete.
- e. **Conservation Center Update** – Jay met with Barb Dacy and the architect. They will be incorporating our comments and will have a revised draft design with cost estimate done soon.

- f. **Tree Program Update and Promotional Mailing** – Tree sales are down for the year, even though we have less trees for sale this year. We may end up returning trees. A promotional mailing is going out to promote site visits and we are hoping to be able to promote the tree program and increase sales.
- g. **LCCMR St. Croix Grant Update** – We are working in collaboration with the DNR and St. Croix River Association and multiple other partners to help put together a rather large application to the LCCMR to do basin planning and implementation of the St. Croix.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **BWSR Annual Report and Plan** – A draft of the 2009 Annual Report and 2010 Annual Plan was presented to the Board. Having this Report/Plan is a requirement of BWSR.
- b. **BWSR Training Survey** – BWSR sent an email survey regarding training.
- c. **BWSR Budget Projections and Potential Reductions** – Included in the Board packet was information from BWSR regarding potential implications of the state budget deficit. At this time, we only have information regarding 2011. Nothing is finalized at this point.
- d. **Employee Handbook Funeral Leave Policy** – Jay drafted some revised language for the Funeral Leave Policy. After discussion, the Personnel Committee has decided to keep the Funeral Leave policy language as it was previously.
- e. **SCS Encumbrance Request – County Parks Native Buffer Project** – Washington County Parks (WCP) will convert 105 acres of current farmland into native prairie and savanna buffer. Farmland is located in two areas: St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park (SCBRP) and Lake Elmo Park Reserve (LEPR). SCBRP farmland drains directly to the St. Croix River through a series of ravines. LEPR farmland drains either directly to Lake Elmo (one field is adjacent to the lake), or indirectly to other surface water. Replacing farmland with buffers will stabilize soils, reduce stormwater runoff volume, diversify the ecosystem, improve habitat, sequester green house gases, and provide the public with enjoyment and education. WCP will analyze the area soils, climate, and topography and utilize existing information on presettlement plant communities to determine the most appropriate plant community (minimum 25 species) to establish on the sites. After planting, the fields will be mowed 1-3 times annually for 2 years, depending on growth and infestation of nuisance plants. Prescribed burns will be used every 3-5 years after establishment. This project qualified for funding through BWSR's native buffer cost-share grant and will be installed and maintained over the course of the next 3 years. This contract will cover the next three years of the project. The overall project cost estimate for this phase of the project is \$15,000.00. The District Technical Representative recommends encumbering a total of \$11,250.00 in State Cost-Share native buffer grant project funds, or 75% of the total eligible cost, whichever is less. If funding for this project is encumbered, \$48,037.50 in project funds remains to be encumbered from the FY2009 native buffer grant. A motion was made by Tom Meyer, seconded by Gary Baumann, to approve contract number 09-05NB to construct Critical Area Stabilization (D1) in Section 27 in Denmark Township at 75% of the total cost estimate or \$11,250.00, whichever is less. Project funds totaling \$11,250.00 are encumbered from the FY2009 native buffer grant. The total cost estimate to construct the practice is \$15,000.00. The district technical representative is Pete Young. Project design developed by the WCD and County Parks. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.
- f. **SCS Encumbrance Request – Frogner Grassed Waterway Project** – The landowner is proposing to install grassed waterway in an area of active erosion within an agricultural

field. The proposed project will stabilize the waterway and improve water quality by reducing the sediment load to wetlands within the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake watershed. This project meets BWSR's high priority erosion problem definition. Based on the potential to improve water quality, the District Technical Representative recommends encumbering a total of \$2,300.00 in FY2009 (\$1531.71) and FY2010 (\$768.29) state cost-share base grant project funds to this project, or 75% of the total eligible cost, whichever is less. If funding is encumbered, \$0.00 remains in the FY2009 base grant fund and \$10,288.64 remains in the FY2010 base grant fund. A motion was made by Tom Meyer, seconded by Gary Baumann, to approve a contract to construct Grassed Waterway (D5) in Section 2 in Scandia at 75% of the total cost estimate or \$2,300.00, whichever is less. Project funds totaling \$2,300.00 are encumbered from the FY2009 and FY2010 base grants. The total cost estimate to construct the practice is \$3,100.00. The district technical representative is Pete Young. Project design was developed by WCD staff. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Karen's presentation on TMDLs will be next month. In addition, we are hoping that Erik will be able to present on the State of the Waters if the water monitoring reports are completed.

Sarah Hietpas moved to adjourn the meeting. Tom Meyer seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:34p.m. Due to Jay's absence the second week of April, the next scheduled meeting is April 7, 2010 at 4:30p.m.

Secretary

Approved Date