

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SEPTEMBER 9, 2009 BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Vice Chair, Tom Meyer.

Members Present: Tom Meyer, Vice Chair
Gary Baumann, Secretary
Rosemary Wallace, Treasurer
Sarah Hietpas, Public Relations and Information

Staff Present: Jay Riggs
Shari Larkin
Jyneen Thatcher
Wendy Griffin
Pete Young

Other Agencies: Michelle Wohlers (NRCS)

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Two items were added under New Business. Item E, Cooperative Weed Management Grant and Item F, Pillar Island Native Buffer Grant Request.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

None this month.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 12, 2009 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Gary Baumann made a motion to approve the August 12, 2009 Board Minutes. Seconded by Rosemary Wallace. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Items to note were a payment of \$4,080.00 to AMSWCD for the landscape restoration hours from 5/1-6/30/09; \$202.50, \$270.00 and \$450.00 payable to High Monkey Consulting; \$250.00 payable to Kevin Conrad for Poisonous Plant posters; \$1,720.64 payable to Washington County HRA for our half of the architect fees for new space design; \$337.81 payable to Afton House/Hudson Cruise Lines for the St. Croix Workshop; \$366.01 payable to Bob Mendlik, \$700.00 payable to the City of Lake Elmo, and \$300.00 payable to the City of Mahtomedi for weed management grant expenses that were approved at last month's board meeting; \$1,267.91 payable to Advanced Imaging Solutions for the copier lease and overages; and \$7,310.86 payable to Metropolitan Council for water monitoring lab charges. 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

Communications and Outreach Committee – Jay and Sarah met in July. Primary issue is recognition of the WCD. More planning regarding a Marketing and Outreach Plan will follow.

AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS

County Board – We will be presenting to the County Board twice in the month of September. Budget meeting will be October 6th. Board members are encouraged to attend.

NRCS – Michelle has been checking into different kinds of assistance available to immigrant farmers. Also, there were two meetings for the Conservation Securities Program this past month. Michelle also reviewed the “And Justice For All” poster.

MSWCDTSAJPB (MCD) – The contribution agreement between NRCS and the Metro Conservation District is moving forward. It is being modified to include the new name of the organization. The next meeting is September 30th.

Water Consortium – We will be hosting a tour of projects in October.

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 wished.
- b. **Clean Water Legacy Grant Program** – The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program, proposed by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and approved by the 2009 legislature, is nearing its launch date later in August. This grant program is a direct result of the decision by Minnesota voters in November 2008 to approve a constitutional amendment dedicating a portion of the state sales tax to “protect, enhance, and restore our wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game and wildlife habitat.” Projects in Minnesota will be considered for a matching grant up to a maximum of \$400,000. Approximately \$3.74 million is available for the first round of grants. Requests for proposals will be made available at the end of August. General information from the DNR website about the new grant program was included in the Board packet.

OLD BUSINESS AND UPDATES

- a. **Conservation Center** – Jay is meeting next week with HRA and the architect to go over the conceptual designs.
- b. **2010 Budget Update** – No new information at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **St. Croix Conservation Districts MOA** – The St. Croix Conservation District MOA was included in the packet. SWCD staff members from the St. Croix basin SWCDs, and water planners from several districts in the Lake St. Croix basin have been meeting to discuss this effort and the opportunities and challenges it presents. The SWCDs recognize the importance of agreement in embarking on an implementation project of this scope. This MOA is a first step in organizing this agreement and formalizing it for the mutual benefit of all SWCDs involved. Formal signature of the final MOA will probably be requested in October. The Board is comfortable moving forward with the MOA.

- b. AG BMP Loan Request - Flug** – On August 24, 2009, WCD received an AgBMP Loan Application from Christine Flug of Grant requesting the amount of \$11,725.00 for replacement of a failing Individual Sewage Treatment System (ISTS). WCD has established a \$15,000 maximum for loans to individuals for failing ISTS replacement projects. The proposed project consists of the removal of a failing ISTS and installation of a new system. Failing septic systems are a threat to surface and groundwater quality in Washington County. The site is located near several wetlands. A licensed septic installer has determined that the system is failing. Based on the water quality threat to the surrounding area, WCD staff recommends approving this AgBMP Loan Application as submitted. A motion to approve the AgBMP Loan Application of \$11,725.00 was made by Gary Baumann and seconded by Sarah Hietpas. Motion carried.
- c. AG BMP Loan Program Eligibility Request** – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture recently increased promotion efforts for the AgBMP loan program, specifically for failing individual sewage treatment systems (ISTS). There has been an increased level of interest in the program recently and staff has sent landowners standard packets of information explaining the program and the loan application process. One reason for the lack of applications sent back for approval could be the fact that WCD requires applicants to be “rural landowners”, defined by WCD policy as “[owning a parcel] of at least five acres in size” (*WCD Board Meeting Minutes, October 13, 2004*). The State has no requirement that landowners applying for failing ISTS replacement project loans need to be “rural” in order to qualify. The Department of Agriculture’s brochure promoting the program specifically mentions farms, rural home sites, unsewered communities, and lakeside cabins as loan-eligible ISTS locations – a copy of the brochure was included in the Board packet. The WCD Board of Supervisors has granted a variance from their rural landowner policy on three occasions: November 10, 2004 (Elston property), October 12, 2007 (McDonough property), and May 14, 2008 (Madsen). The requirement that landowners must be “rural” to be considered for ISTS loans through the Department of Agriculture’s AgBMP loan program should be removed. The following replacement board policy language is suggested: **Policy regarding loan eligibility for Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS) under the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s AgBMP Loan Program:** In order for a landowner to be eligible to apply for the AgBMP Loan Program for a failing ISTS, their property must be located in an unsewered community, or located where there is no option to connect to an existing or planned centralized wastewater treatment system. A motion to approve the replacement board policy language to follow the Department of Agriculture’s policy language was made by Sarah Hietpas and seconded by Gary Baumann. Motion carried.
- d. Training Request** – Pete Young is requesting approval for the P.E. Exam Review Online/CD Course in order to prepare for the P.E. exam. The cost is \$695.00. A motion to approve the training request was made by Rosemary Wallace and seconded by Sarah Hietpas. Motion carried.
- e. Cooperative Weed Management Request** – In July, the WCD Board authorized encumbering \$1000 for a group of riparian landowners (Contract 08-CWMA-18). That project manager has indicated that due to seasonal restriction on the proposed actions, the grant timing is not suitable, and therefore the funds may be re-allocated. We have received a request from Oak Park Heights, for funds to address the poison ivy along the

city recreation trail and City Hall Park, within a prairie remanant and restoration area. The City will be providing matching funds for the project, and will likely hire a specialized prairie management firm for the work. A motion was made by Gary Baumann, seconded by Rosemary Wallace, to approve one Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) grant allocation to implement weed management projects in Washington County. Grant funds totaling \$1,000 will be allocated according to the enclosed table. Funds are allocated from the FY2008 CWMA grant, resulting from the withdrawal of contract 08-CWMA-18. The district technical representative is Jyneen Thatcher. This allocation encumbers some of the remaining funds, and the remaining funds may be re-allocated by November 2009. Applicants will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- f. Pillar Island Native Buffer Partial Payment Request** – On June 10, 2009, the WCD Board of Supervisors encumbered \$5,000.00 in State Cost-Share funds from the FY2009 Native Buffer Grant for the Pillar Island critical area stabilization project in Stillwater Township. Installation was completed in September 2009. The district technical representative has reviewed the project and certified its completion. The total project cost, including materials, labor, and in-kind contributions from non-federal volunteers, was \$3,645.92. It is requested that the WCD Board of Supervisors approve a partial payment for \$1,150.92 to the National Park Service. This payment represents part of the contract, or 32% of the total project cost under the State cost-share program. State and federal funds, when combined for this project, cannot exceed 75% of the total project costs according to state cost-share program guidelines. In this case, non-federal volunteer labor constitutes more than 25% of the eligible project costs, and therefore the project meets state cost-share requirements. All requirements of the native buffer program, including documenting species diversity and plant sources, have been met for this project. Note that Jyneen Thatcher is now listed as the technical representative for this project. If approved, \$101,649.08 remains to be disbursed from the FY2009 native buffer grant. A motion was made by Sarah Hietpas, seconded by Gary Baumann, to approve a partial payment of \$1,150.92 for State cost-share contract 09-02NB, located in Section 1 in Stillwater Township. The district technical representative (Jyneen Thatcher) has performed a site inspection, reviewed the land occupier's receipts/invoices, and certified by signature that the work performed was completed according to standards and specifications for the critical area stabilization project. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None.

Tom Meyer moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary Baumann seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:05p.m. Next scheduled meeting is October 12, 2009 at 4:30p.m.

Secretary

Approved Date