

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DECEMBER 5, 2023 BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

The regular Board Meeting was called to order at 2:00p.m. by Chair, John Rheinberger.

Members Present: John Rheinberger, Chair
Tim Behrends, Vice Chair
Diane Blake, Treasurer
David Nuccio, Public Relations and Information

Staff Present: Jay Riggs
Shari Larkin

Other Agencies: Lizzie Dawson, NRCS

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

One item was added to the Consent Agenda for the SWWD Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$236,600. A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Tim Behrends, seconded by Diane Blake. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Items to approve this month are the 2024 CMSCWD Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$227,508; the 2024 MSCWMO Administrative and Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$120,362; the 2024 CSWCD Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$20,000; the 2024 Washington County Core Services Agreement in the amount of \$291,200; the 2024 Washington County WCA Agreement in the amount of \$59,551; the 2024 Washington County Public Works Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$32,400; the 2024 Washington County Public Health and Environment Agreement in the amount of \$25,000; and the SWWD Technical Services Agreement in the amount of \$236,600. A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by David Nuccio, seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the November 14, 2023 minutes was made by Diane Blake and seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Items to note are MN State Forest Nursery in the amount of \$2,175.00 for trees for the tree program; Joe Dvorak in the amount of \$1,384.47 for a grant expense; Steve Miller in the amount of \$7,845.00 for a grant expense; Sunny Moosai in the amount of \$10,000.00 for a grant expense; Whitney Wessels in the amount of \$1,347.05 for a grant expense; and Jill Zimmerman in the amount of \$8,753.55 for an EMWREP expense. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, was made by Tim Behrends, seconded by David Nuccio. Motion carried.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel – Nothing to report.

Budget and Finance – We are still waiting to hear about the Soil Health funding. The committee will meet January 4th at 8:30.

Cost-Share – Nothing to report.

Communications and Outreach – The new stormwater model was displayed at the open house.

AGENCY / PARTNER REPORTS

County – There are a number of Agreements on the Consent Agenda.

NRCS – Nothing to report.

BWSR – Nothing to report.

MCD/Area IV – MCD met on November 1st. The Agreement for Children’s Water Festival was ratified.

Watersheds – Nothing to report.

MASWCD – The annual convention is next week. Day at the Capitol will be March 13th, with the Briefing the evening before.

EMPLOYEE REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. **WCD and EMWREP Outreach** – *See Attached and Newspaper Article Binder.*
- b. **Presentation** – None this month

OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Office and Vehicles** – We need to patch and stripe the parking lot in 2024. The new Maverick truck has arrived at the dealership.
- b. **Equity Initiatives** – We are doing follow-up on our ag program outreach.
- c. **Program Updates** – The Metro Convening group will be meeting to determine how the Metro WBF funds will be distributed. The WCD Board continues to support consolidation of the funds. Also discussed was the Lower St. Croix 1W1P Workplan. Board approval was requested for the Workplan. Tim Behrends made a motion to approve the Workplan. Diane Blake seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- d. **2024 Budget and Workplan** – Workplans for 2024 are being reviewed with staff.
- e. **Board Tour** – The annual Board Tour was held on November 17th.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **2024 COLA** – We have not received an update from the County for their 2024 COLA amount.
- b. **Employee Handbook Update – ESST Policy** – The proposed policy for Sick and Safety Leave was included in the packet. Approval is requested to add the policy to the handbook. David Nuccio made a motion to approve the policy and add it to the Employee Handbook. Tim Behrends seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- c. **Training Request – Blake Arborist Certification** – Approval was requested for Cameron Blake to attend Arborist Certification, at a cost of \$469.95 for the exam and study guide. Tim Behrends made a motion to approve the training request. Diane Blake seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- d. **Training Request – Stolpestad Landscape Architecture Registration Examination** – Approval was requested for Brett Stolpestad to complete the Landscape Architecture Registration Examination, at a cost of \$2,270.00 for the four exams. David Nuccio made a motion to approve the training request. Diane Blake seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- e. **FY24 BWSR CWMA Grant Application Request** – The WCD Staff and partners are planning to apply for funding for the Washington County Cooperative Weed Management Area with funding from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The BWSR Cooperative Weed

Management Area (CWMA) Program was developed in 2008 to promote the collaborative and efficient control of invasive species and protection of conservation lands and natural areas across geographic boundaries. The grant application would be for up to \$15,000 with 25% match provided from the County Technical Services Agreement. The grant would focus on the management of “Emerging and Eradication Species in Washington County.” A motion was made by Tim Behrends, seconded by Diane Blake, to approve using WCD staff resources to apply for FY2024 BWSR Cooperative Weed Management Area Grant. Up to 25% Match provided from County Technical Services Agreement All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- f. BWSR Soil Health Grant Applications Request** – BWSR announced the first phase of the soil health programming to support additional local capacity to work with landowners on increasing utilization of practices and systems that advance the principles of soil health. Up to \$25 million will be available via a competitive statewide RFP that opened on November 15, 2023 and closes on February 8, 2024 for four-year grants to fund positions through December 2027. WCD staff are coordinating with multiple partners to apply for this phase 1 funding. Potential partnerships include a collaboration between Chisago and Isanti County as well as with multiple watershed entities within Washington County. Chisago SWCD would likely be the host for the multi-county position. This grant application request includes:
- A joint application for a shared position between Chisago, Isanti, and Washington County. This position would be hosted by Chisago SWCD and WCD would enter into an agreement with them for a portion of this full time position (likely around 25% time).
 - An application for enhanced capacity at the WCD to support soil health initiatives. This would include the equivalent of a new FTE worth of work. Cost estimate based on BWSR rates would be an application of approximately \$150,000/yr.

A motion was made by Diane Blake, seconded by Tim Behrends, to approve the Grant Application Requests. Motion carried.

- g. FY22 BWSR HELP Partial Payment Request – Lake and Middleton Schools** - The WCD Staff and partners received funding for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Pilot from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The program is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota to benefit populations of pollinators and beneficial insects as well as overall plant and animal diversity. WCD worked with partners to identify projects that would meet the criteria and benefit from this grant funding. WCD is partnering with the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) to enhance 13 acres of prairie at Lake Middle School and Middleton Elementary School in Woodbury. WCD staff requested the encumbrance of \$12,000 to support this work. WCD staff is requesting a partial payment of \$5,109.21 from the FY2022 BWSR HELP grant to SWWD (2302 Tower Dr., Woodbury, MN 55125). A motion was made by David Nuccio, seconded by Tim Behrends, to approve a partial payment of \$5,109.21 of FY22 BWSR HELP grant funds to South Washington Watershed District for the Lake and Middleton Prairie Enhancement. The district technical representative (Tara Kelly) has approved partial payment. Applicant will be notified of Board’s decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.
- h. FY22 BWSR HELP Partial Payment Request –Carpenter Nature Center** - WCD encumbered \$6,990 from the FY2022 BWSR HELP Grant to enhance 4 acres of grass dominate prairie. The prairie was interseeded in November 2023 with purchased seed and seed collected on site with volunteers. WCD staff have determined the project seeding meets the intent and approve of the request for partial payment. WCD staff are requesting partial payment of \$2,527.00 from the FY2022 BWSR HELP grant to Carpenter Nature Center (12805 St. Croix Trail S Hastings, MN 55033). A motion was made by Diane Blake, seconded by Tim Behrends, to approve a Partial Payment of \$2,527 for contract BWSR HELP FY22-03 to Carpenter Nature Center for the Carpenter Nature Center Prairie Enhancement. The district

technical representative (Elissa Thompson) has approved partial payment. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- i. **FY22 BWSR HELP Partial Payment Request – Jackson Meadow** - The WCD Staff and partners received funding for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Pilot from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The program is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota to benefit populations of pollinators and beneficial insects as well as overall plant and animal diversity. WCD worked with partners to identify projects that would meet the criteria and benefit from this grant funding. WCD is partnering with the Jackson Meadow Neighborhood Association (JMNA) to enhance 5 acres of prairie in the Central Meadow and Greenway in Jackson Meadow. WCD staff requested the encumbrance of \$7,020 to support this work. WCD staff is requesting a partial payment of \$2,151.25 from the FY2022 BWSR HELP grant to the Jackson Meadow Neighborhood Association (insert payment address here). A motion was made by Tim Behrends, seconded by David Nuccio, to approve a partial payment of \$2,151.25 of FY22 BWSR HELP grant funds to Jackson Meadow Neighborhood Association for the Central Meadow and Greenway Prairie Enhancement. The district technical representative (Tara Kelly) has approved partial payment. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.
- j. **FY22 BWSR Lawns to Legumes Partial Payment Request – Drinkwine** - On April 11th the WCD encumbered \$1,000 from the FY2022 Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grant to install a 750 square foot pollinator pocket planting at the residence of Kathy Drinkwine in Lake St. Croix Beach, MN. The project was partially completed in October, 2023. The landowner is seeking partial reimbursement for eligible project expenses to date, including Minnesota native plant material purchased and installed through Outback Nursery. The landowner will resume installation in early spring. WCD staff are requesting partial payment of \$897.08 from the FY2022 Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grant to Kathy Drinkwine at 1590 Riviera Avenue S, Lake St. Croix Beach, MN 55043. A motion was made by David Nuccio, seconded by Tim Behrends, to approve Partial Payment of \$897.08 to Kathy Drinkwine for the Drinkwine L2L Pollinator Pocket Planting project. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None.

Diane Blake moved to adjourn the public meeting. Tim Behrends seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is January 9, 2024 at 3:00p.m.

Secretary

Approved Date