

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MAY 9, 2023 BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

The regular Board Meeting was called to order at 3:03p.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
Matt Lundberg, NRCS
Bill Peterson, NRCS

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

One item was added under New Business. Item F for the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership Partner Agreement Amendment. A motion to approve the revised Agenda was made by Diane Blake, seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Items to approve this month are the 2023 VBWD Water Monitoring Agreement in the amount of \$74,344; the 2023-25 Chisago SWCD LSCP MSCWMO Street Sweeping Statement of Work in the amount of \$45,000; the 2023-25 Chisago SWCD LSCP Afton Street Sweeping Statement in the amount of \$13,395; and the 2023 City of St. Mary's Point BMP Maintenance Agreement in the amount of \$507. A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Tim Behrends, seconded by Diane Blake. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 11, 2023 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the April 11, 2023 minutes was made by Diane Blake and seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Items to note are Anderson & Koch Ford in the amount of \$11,436.34 for the truck purchase; Critical Connections Ecological Services in the amount of \$600.00 for a sedge workshop registration; Happy's Stillwater Automotive in the amount of \$1,928.49 for vehicle repairs; Teledyne Isco in the amount of \$681.67 for a water monitoring expense; University of Minnesota in the amount of \$9,411.41 for the Agronomist position; Jim Whiting Nursery & Garden Center in the amount of \$990.00 for a Water Steward Grant expense; Stantec Consulting Services in the amount of \$950.00 for a FY22 CPL Grant expense; Postmaster in the amount of \$2,000.00 for adding postage to our bulk meter; Happy's Stillwater Automotive in the amount of \$671.13 for vehicle repairs; Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tours in

the amount of \$3,000.00 for the Workshop on the Water boat rental; Tech Sales Company in the amount of \$5,959.00 for water monitoring expenses; and Washington County Ag Society in the amount of \$705.00 for the fair booth rental fee. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, was made by David Nuccio, seconded by Diane Blake. Motion carried. It was also noted that the audit is scheduled on June 28th.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel – Nothing to report.

Budget and Finance – Nothing to report.

Cost-Share – The Committee met, and the items are under New Business.

Communications and Outreach – Planning for the county fair is underway.

AGENCY / PARTNER REPORTS

County – Nothing to report.

NRCS – The Local Workgroup was held just prior to the Board meeting. NRCS is working on EQIP pre-approvals. CSP is being worked on as well. CRP plans are being worked on for FSA. A CNMP plan is being worked on for a landowner to complete a waste storage facility.

BWSR – Nothing to report.

MCD/Area IV – The next MCD meeting will be in August. The next Area IV meeting will be the tour on June 13th. Due to this conflict, Diane Blake made a motion to move our next Board meeting to June 6th at 3:00pm. David Nuccio seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Watersheds – Nothing to report.

MASWCD – If you have any ideas for Resolutions, please forward to Jay.

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 have had several vehicle repairs, as noted on the Treasurer's Report.
- b. **Equity Initiatives** – Angela Defenbaugh is working on applying for new funding sources through NRCS. There was an outreach event at Big Rivers Farm this past Saturday to introduce farmers to our programs.
- c. **Program Updates** – Nothing to report.
- d. **Tree Sale Debriefing** – Tree handout was held on April 28th and 29th.
- e. **2024 County Budget Request** – The letter was sent to the County. The next step is taking the request to Kevin Corbid at the County.
- f. **Legislator Tour** – The meeting with Representative Lillie will be scheduled after this legislative session is over.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **AIS Big Marine Sign Purchase Request** – Approval was requested to spend up to \$800.00 to replace an AIS sign at Big Marine Park, due to damage. A motion to approve the sign purchase was made by Diane Blake, seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.
- b. **FY23 East Miss WBF Encumbrance Request – Hardwood Creek Waste Storage Basin** – The WCD received \$257,796 from the BWSR FY23 East Mississippi Watershed Based Implementation Funding pool for the installation of a waste storage facility project on Hardwood Creek/JD2 (Fran Miron's property, 15250 Homestead Avenue N, Hugo). WCD staff requests the encumbrance of \$257,796 from the FY2023 East Mississippi Watershed Based Implementation Funding grant for the installation of the waste storage facility. The primary

practice is a waste storage facility, with multiple supporting practice components (earthen diversion, fence confinement, heavy use area protection, subsurface/perimeter drain, underground outlet). The project would temporarily store manure from an existing barn until the manure could be appropriately applied to neighboring farm fields. The project removes an estimated 29 lbs TP/year, 84lbs nitrogen/yr, 337 lbs BOD 5 (MinnFARM). The latest project cost estimate (\$373,437) does not include recent updates to the design plans, and actual construction cost is expected to be much higher. The project will be put out for bid for an accurate construction cost that reflects current market rates.

Funding sources for this project:

- NRCS EQIP (still in pre-approval, amount not finalized, federal): estimated \$325,000
- WCD BWSR FY2023 East Mississippi Watershed Based Implementation Funding (state): \$257,796
- MDA AGRI Livestock Investment Grant (state) - \$25,000
- MAWQCP (state): \$5,000
- RCWD (local): \$30,000

WCD staff requests approval to enter into the contract for FY2023 East Mississippi Watershed Based Implementation Funding, Contract #23-01 BWSR EM WBIF, once the draft contract has been reviewed and approved by BWSR. The contract would be between the WCD and Mr. Miron. A motion was made by David Nuccio, seconded by Tim Behrends, to approve an encumbrance of \$257,796 and enter into the contract for FY23 East Mississippi Watershed Based Implementation Funding, Contract #23-01 BWSR EM WBIF. The district technical representative (Rebecca Nestingen) has performed a site inspection, concept plans, and cost estimate. Applicant will be notified of Board's decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- c. **FY23 LSCP CWF Soil Health Encumbrance Request - McManus** – Lower St. Croix Watershed (LSCW) partners applied for and received a \$200,000 BWSR Clean Water Fund (CWF) Soil Health grant. The goal of the grant is to provide technical and financial assistance to agricultural landowners in vulnerable groundwater areas to increase long-term implementation of soil health practices where there are direct benefits to public water supplies. The WCD was allocated \$65,100 to cost share soil health agricultural BMPs in priority areas:

- Tier 1: Vulnerable Groundwaters - DWSMA vulnerability is moderate, high, or very high; or Pollution sensitivity to wells is high or very high; or Pollution sensitivity to near surface materials is karst or high; or Well testing show ≥ 5 mg/L nitrate.
- Tier 2: Lower St. Croix Watershed Basin - The high incidents of vulnerable groundwater in conjunction with the geography and groundwater flow indicate the necessity to implement practices on a basin-wide scale.

WCD staff requests encumbrance of \$7,000 from the LSC CWF Soil Health grant to convert 20 acres of agricultural land to prairie at the McManus property (15526 Oakhill Road N, Scandia). The agricultural land is in a water table aquifer vulnerable area (medium) and a groundwater recharge priority area, making it a Tier 2 project. Following the WCD's locally adopted policy for this grant, the contract would be \$350/acre with a 10-year practice lifespan. The project would reduce nitrate by 900 lbs (90 lbs/year). WCD staff requests approval to enter into the contract for FY2023 LSC CWF Soil Health, Contract # CWF SH W 23-07. A motion was made David Nuccio to approve an encumbrance of \$7,000 and enter into the contract for FY2023 LSC CWF Soil Health, Contract # CWF SH W 23-07. No second to the motion is required. The district technical representative (Tara Kelly) has performed a site inspection, concept plans, and

cost estimate. Applicant will be notified of Board’s decision within 15 days. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- d. **FY22 Lawns to Legumes Demo Projects Encumbrance Request - Bulera** – WCD staff are requesting the encumbrance of up to \$1,500 for the installation of one 500ft2 native pollinator garden project located at 16787 & 16777 16th St S, Lake St. Croix Beach, MN 55043 in Lake St. Croix Beach as a component of the WCD’s FY22 Washington County Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grant (C22-1300). This project will be completed by two cooperating landowners, Stacey and Dawn Bulera. The \$40,000 Lawns to Legumes Phase 2 Demonstration Neighborhood program provides funding to install pollinator-friendly practices at a neighborhood scale to showcase ways of supporting Rusty-patched Bumblebee and other at-risk insects. The proposed project is located within one of the three Demonstration Neighborhoods selected by WCD staff based on habitat suitability and equity criteria, including proximity to Rusty-patched Bumblebee High Potential Zones (USFWS) and key wildlife habitat corridors identified in the Districts’ Landscape Protection & Stewardship Framework (LPSF), and the potential to work in partnership with underserved or underfunded communities in the county. Additional projects will be completed in 2023.

The projects to begin installation in 2023 include:

- Bulera Native Pollinator Pocket Planting – 16787 & 16777 16th St S, Lake St. Croix Beach, MN 55043
 - a. 500 ft2 native pollinator garden
 - b. \$1,500 L2L allocation with \$250 MSCWMO matching grant.

A motion was made by David Nuccio to approve an encumbrance of up to \$1,500.00 in grant funds for the project outlined above and for District Manager to sign cost share agreements. No second to the motion is required. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

- e. **MDA Nitrogen Fertilizer JPA Extension** – The WCD has been working with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to implement MDA’s Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in Washington County. The WCD has been operating under a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the WCD and the MDA, which was originally signed in 2018. WCD and MDA signed a JPA extension in June 2021 to extend the JPA until June 30, 2023. There are still funds remaining under the JPA, and the MDA wishes to extend the JPA with the WCD to continue work implementing the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in Washington County. The MDA is putting together another JPA extension amendment, which will need to be signed by both the MDA and WCD by June 30, 2023. A motion to approve the WCD Manager to sign the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan JPA extension amendment with the MDA was made by Diane Blake. The motion was seconded by Tim Behrends. Motion carried.
- f. **Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership Partner Agreement Amendment** – Approval is requested to amend our current Agreement with Chisago for Activity 3 from \$125,000 to \$150,000. David Nuccio made a motion to approve the amendment to the Agreement. Diane Blake seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None.

Diane Blake moved to adjourn the public meeting. David Nuccio seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is June 6, 2023 at **3:00p.m.**

Secretary

Approved Date