

**Minnehaha Conservation District
August 9th, 2021 Monthly Meeting
Via Zoom
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

Pfeifer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Supervisors present: Travis Entenman, Gordon Heber, Susan Kruse, Jim Pfeifer, and Jennifer Schmidtbauer

Supervisors absent: None

Advisors present: Rick Bonander

Advisors absent: Brian Alderson, Carl Eliason, Kelly Lyons, and Mark McGee

Others present: John Parker, Eric Grootenboer, Denise Fletcher, Alina Krone-Hedman, Dan Wehmeyer, Deron Ruesch, Barry Berg, Alexa Kruse, Jay Gilbertson, Brian Top, and Allen Severtson

Agenda: MSP to approve by Heber and Entenman. All ayes.

Minutes of July 12th meeting: MSP to approve by Entenman and Kruse. All ayes.

Treasurer's report: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve by Heber and Entenman. All ayes.

Bills: Reviewed at meeting. Approved to pay. MSP to approve by Schmidtbauer and Kruse. All ayes.

NRCS activity report by Dan Wehmeyer:

No changes – still at 6 employees in the department. Masks are required.

WETLANDS: We currently have 11 certified wetland determination requests in progress.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): Completed final status reviews for contracts expiring in 2022. General signup: 6 offers, waiting on acceptance. Continuous signup deadline: August 6th. Grassland signup deadline: August 20th. Working through emergency haying/grazing plans (34 requests).

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTwP): Starting to collect documentation on existing contracts.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): Minnehaha Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, under Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) – conducted meeting to discuss timeline and other details. Getting active contract practices implemented and certified. More funding (\$2.5 million) for the state, likely to fund 3 high tunnel applications under general EQIP.

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM: Signup period is from August 2nd – August 31st. This covers drought related practices, such as wells, pipelines, and tanks. 6 requests so far.

Big Sioux River Project Report by Barry Berg: Working with producers for next year's SRAM signup. Working with producers to construct portable cattle shade structures. MSP to approve Voucher #6 by Entenman and Kruse. All ayes. MSP to approve signing of 4 checks (totaling \$19,944.08) by Schmidtbauer and Entenman. All ayes.

RCPP Report by Barry Berg: Changes were made to the RCPP Supplemental Contract last month and still awaiting approval from NRCS National Headquarters.

Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman: October 22nd is the batching deadline for CIS (Urban Agriculture) applications. Top reported that 11 producers are being contacted about high tunnels for the CIS-EQIP project. 3 will get funded under general EQIP. We will have outreach measures coming – posters, tables at events, etc. Sustainability plan for the City of Sioux Falls is going well; goals and strategies are being formed. Will attend Pollinator Day at Good Earth State Park over Labor Day weekend. A youth activity is planned, as well as handing out booklets and other materials. Working on planning an update to the website for the conservation district. Working on a project to help reduce bird loss from birds crashing into windows at her office building.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes – Parker mentioned that Rick Mayko, Area Forester, died recently. Brian Scott, from the SD Dept. of Ag. Office in Sioux Falls retired this summer. He also discussed a Letter of Support that was requested from the Board to ask for more funds (\$2.5 million annually) for the NCARL (North Central Agricultural Research Lab) to build resilient soils and foster beneficial insects. Board members agreed to be listed as supporters of the fund increase request. Heber mentioned that the Lab’s Field Day was cancelled this year (second year in a row) due to the pandemic. He encouraged others at the meeting to attend meetings and tours of the facility when they are available again.

Update from Supervisors - Kruse asked about upcoming event listings for the Board. Parker mentioned that the District calendar on the website lists some events, as well as the SD Department of Ag. Website. Schmidtbauer suggested that we could have a standing Agenda item for upcoming events. Heber mentioned the Supervisor’s Handbook, online training module, open meetings law and the Conservation District Association Convention that is held in the fall as good sources of information for board members. Parker noted that hotel rooms, registration and travel expenses are paid by the District. The Convention is September 19-21 this year in Spearfish.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Service Report (bio-solids, tree planting, grass planting, Gevik Site, etc.)

Bio-solids: Waiting for corn harvest. Lots of soil sampling to do in Sept. and Oct. City is switching to cake (dehydrated) method this fall. Trees: Parker presented the Tree & Fabric Report for the year. Total number of trees sold was 22,694. 132,000 feet of fabric was applied. 2,200 tree tubes and 2,200 stakes were placed. Grass: 200 acres of CRP planned for 2022. Much mowing to complete. Fall seeding starts next week. Parker presented a map of the county that shows where various services were performed. Parker and Grootenboer plan to make videos of the tree and grass planting process and what to expect. Gevik Site: Parker met with Confluence on August 8th and has new pictures of changes suggested. He will forward this to the committee.

2. Building Remodeling Update

Framing is complete. Wiring and insulation are occurring; plumbing will happen soon. The target date for completion is the end of September. Parker presented the Building Budget. \$24,000 was budgeted and the total is now projected to be about \$22,165.00.

NEW BUSINESS

1. NRCS Civil Rights Review

Wehmeyer presented Civil Rights points: Confidentiality, County Reports, Memorandum of Understanding and Outreach. A copy of the documents will be placed on the shared drive, as well as forwarded to the board.

2. Approval of Local Resource Concerns

Wehmeyer, Ruesch and Parker met and compiled a list of resource concerns in the county. The spreadsheet of concerns and rankings was presented and discussed. Board members decided that more discussion may need to be held about how to establish the local resource concerns list and include more people in the process. This topic will be placed on next month’s meeting Agenda.

3. Future Equipment Needs

The district has only one tractor that can run the big mower, 6' and 12' drills. Parker presented information on a Bobcat (with various attachments) 3-year lease program with a buy-out residual at the end of the lease. The district currently leases a Bobcat at least 5 times a year.

4. CO-2, Capture & Sequestration Pipeline Project

Parker presented correspondence he received about a proposed pipeline that would transport CO-2 and methane from ethanol plants across 469' of the Gevik Site. The Board agreed that Parker should meet with the company to gather more information.

5. Notice of Intent to Mine

Parker discussed the notice that was received from Concrete Materials about their quartzite mining project east of highway 11, 2 miles north of Corson, SD.

Executive Session (if needed) - None

CONSERVATION PLAN REVIEW - Since the last meeting, 8 conservation plans for CRP practices were approved.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

MSP to adjourn at 5:03 p.m. by Heber and Kruse. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, September 13th, 2021 at 3:00 pm – at the Tim Wakefield Residence

Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary