



**Minutes of the March 19, 2020 Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's  
Regular Board of Supervisor's Meeting**

Dodge Center USDA Service Center Conference Room  
Dodge Center, Minnesota

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Larry Scherger at 7:19 P.M.

**Members Present:** Larry Scherger, Chair  
Bill Thompson, Vice-Chair  
Glenn Hahn, Treasurer  
David Livingston, Secretary  
Bruce Freerksen, PR&I (in at 7:52 P.M.)

**Members Absent:** none

**Others Present:** Adam King, District Manager, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District;  
Gary Kurer, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

**Approval of Meeting Agenda** – Additions to the March 19, 2020 agenda include approval of the Cedar-Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Implementation Memorandum of Agreement, and Cost-Share Contract RR2020-01 (Kyllo). A motion was made to approve the March 19, 2020 meeting agenda as amended.

Motion: David Livingston  
Seconded: Glenn Hahn  
The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the February 20, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes** – Corrections to the February 20, 2020 board meeting minutes include removing the word “none” after Larry Scherger under Members Absent on page 1, change Tim “Walls” to Tim “Walz” under the Public Comments on page 2, change from “will we going” to “will be going” under the Dodge County Commissioner's Report on page 2, and change “Larry Scherger, Chair” to “Bill Thompson, Vice-Chair” under Adjournment on page 6. A motion was made to approve the February 20, 2020 Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion: Glenn Hahn  
Seconded: David Livingston  
The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

There was no members of the public at the meeting.

## **Partner Agency Reports**

### **Dodge County Commissioner's Report**

Rhonda Toquam, Dodge County District IV Commissioner, was unable to attend the meeting.

### **Natural Resource Conservation Service Report**

Gary Kurer, District Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), introduced himself as the new District Conservationist of the Conservation Service Team Area that includes Dodge, Freeborn, Mower and Steele Counties, and reported that the NRCS is now operating under the re-organizational plan, even though it has not been fully approved. Kurer presented a written report, and informed the supervisors that the NRCS is looking at hiring a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist within the service team, most likely stationed in the Owatonna Field Office. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) deadline was Friday, March 13, 2020, and Dodge County received 22 applications. Kelly Burke, Soil Conservationist out of Owatonna, Joel Hernandez, Soil Conservationist out of Albert Lea, and Kurer will handle the planning portion of those projects. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has one contract to pay, and three are eligible for renewal, with a deadline of March 20, 2020. There currently is a CSP Classic sign-up, with a May 29, 2020 deadline. The General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up deadline was February 28, 2020, with no application in Dodge County as it is not in the priority area. Contentious CRP has 11 new sign-ups, and 18 are up for renewal and will need feasibility determinations by April 30, 2020. The Local Work Group for Dodge County has been scheduled for May 21, 2020 at 6:45 P.M. at the Large Conference Room in the USDA Service Center in Dodge Center, MN. There is a NRCS COVID-19 conference call on March 20, 2020.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Bruce Freerksen entered at 7:52 P.M.

**Approval of the Treasurer's Financial Statements and Payment of New Bills** – Glenn Hahn, Treasurer, presented the January 2020 Balance Sheet, Revenues of \$24,331.50, Expenditures of \$20,634.96, General Ledger, and Aging Summary with a payables total of \$1,907.20. The supervisors discussed the Treasurer's Report. A motion was made to approve the February 2020 Treasurer's Report, approve payment of the bills on the Aging Summary, for a payables total of \$1,907.20.

Motion: Bill Thompson

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Unfinished Business**

There was no Unfinished Business

### **New Business**

#### **2020 Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees Dues**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors that 2020 Dues for the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees are set at \$25.00 per employee. With three

employees, 2020 dues total \$75.00. A motion was made to authorize payment of \$75.00 to the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees for 2020 dues.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **2020 Dodge County Free Fair**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the 2020 Dodge County Free Fair is to be held from July 15 – 19, 2020 at the Dodge County Fairgrounds in Kasson, MN. The cost of a booth at the Dodge County Free Fair is \$150.00, and a \$100.00 will be required to ensure all booths remain up throughout the fair. A motion was made to approve payment of \$150.00 for a booth at the Dodge County Free Fair, and to pay the deposit of \$100.00.

Motion: Bruce Freerksen

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously

### **2020 – 2023 Lease Agreement with Ron Carlsen**

Adam King, District Manager, presented a lease agreement with Ron Carlsen running through 2023. The lease runs concurrent with the USDA lease, and increases rent from \$16.75 sq. ft. to \$18.50 sq. ft. The supervisors discussed the lease agreement. A motion was made to approve, sign, and submit the 2020 – 2023 lease agreement with Ron Carlsen.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Cost-Share Policy Changes for FY16 Middle Fork Zumbro River Critical Source Area Restoration Clean Water Fund Grant**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors that the cost-share policy for the FY16 Middle Fork Zumbro River Critical Source Area Clean Water Fund Grant is to provide 75% cost-share, and bring any Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) projects up to 75% cost-share. Staff is recommending to increase the percentage to 90% on any projects with EQIP funding. A motion was made to change the FY16 Middle Fork Zumbro River Critical Source Area Clean Water Fund Grant cost-share policy and increase the cost-share rate from 75% to 90% on projects that are matched with Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds.

Motion: Larry Scherger

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **District Cost-Share Contract 2020-03 (Kubat) Encumbrance**

Donald Kubat of Claremont, MN is requesting financial assistance for District Cost-Share Contract 2020-03 for a well decommissioning in Section 32 of Ripley Township. The total eligible cost of the well decommissioning is \$1,375.00 and Kubat is requesting 50%, not to exceed \$687.50. A motion was made to approve the encumbrance of District Cost-Share funds for District Cost-Share Contract 2020-03 in the amount of 50% of total eligible costs, not to exceed \$678.50 for a well decommissioning for Donald Kubat.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: Bill Thompson

The motion carried unanimously.

### **District Cost-Share Contract 2020-06 (Staub) Encumbrance**

Chris Staub of West Concord, MN is requesting financial assistance for District Cost-Share Contract 2020-06 for a well decommissioning in Section 25 of Ellington Township. The total estimated cost of the well decommissioning is \$1,825.00 and Staub is requesting 50%, not to exceed \$912.50. A motion was made to approve the encumbrance of District Cost-Share funds for District Cost-Share Contract 2020-06 in the amount of 50% of total eligible costs, not to exceed \$912.50 for a well decommissioning for Chris Staub.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

### **COVID-19 Response**

With the worldwide pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, Adam King, District Manager, explained actions taken by partnering entities, including Dodge County's new sick leave policy, Pope County's policy on sick leave during a public health emergency, and Pope County's policy on employees working remotely. The supervisors discussed a new sick leave policy, and policies regarding employees working remotely. A motion was made to adopt Dodge County's new sick leave policy of allowing staff to be advanced sick leave, up to 80 hours (10 days / 2 weeks), earning back the sick leave later, and taking the leave out of the employees last paycheck if the employee leaves before the advanced sick leave is made up.

Motion: Bill Thompson

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

The supervisors discussed employees working remotely. A motion was made to reimburse employees cell phone and internet use based on the employees estimated use of cell phone and internet for district purposes.

Motion: Bill Thompson

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The supervisors continued to discuss how to reimburse employees for district use of personal cell phones and internet.

The motion was withdrawn by Bill Thompson.

A motion was made to reimburse employees, starting April 01, 2020, \$10.00 per month per employee for use of the employee's personal cell phone and internet for purposes of supporting activities of the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District.

Motion: Bruce Freerksen

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Other New Business**

#### **Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Memorandum of Agreement**

The Policy Committee of the Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan has reviewed and approved a Memorandum of Agreement to implement the plan. The supervisors discussed the Memorandum of Agreement. A motion was made to approve and sign the

Memorandum of Agreement for the Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

Motion: David Livingston  
Seconded: Bruce Freerksen  
The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made to appoint David Livingston to the Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Policy Advisory Committee.

Motion: Bruce Freerksen  
Seconded: Glenn Hahn  
The motion carried unanimously.

### **Cost-Share Contract RR2020-01 (Kyllo) Encumbrance**

Raymond Kyllo of Hayfield, MN is requesting financial assistance for Cost-Share Contract RR2020-01 for a grassed waterway in Section 31 of Vernon Township. The total estimated cost of the grassed waterway is \$6,303.00 and Kyllo is requesting 90%, not to exceed \$5,672.70. This funding is coming from the Root River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Watershed Based Implementation funding Grant. A motion was made to approve the encumbrance of Cost-Share funds for Cost-Share Contract RR2020-01 in the amount of 90% of total eligible costs, not to exceed \$5,672.70 for a grassed waterway for Raymond Kyllo.

Motion: Glenn Hahn  
Seconded: Bruce Freerksen  
The motion carried unanimously.

### **Correspondence & Staff Report**

Adam King, District Manager, reported working on all of the comprehensive watershed management plans, and looking into the COVID-19 responses. King presented a letter from the Carlton Soil and Water Conservation District on a pilot program for taxing authority, and the information on the NRCS Local Work Group.

### **Supervisor Reports**

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) – Bruce Freerksen, District II Supervisor, reported that the next RC&D meeting was going to be held on Monday, March 23, 2020, but has been canceled.

Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – David Livingston, District IV Supervisor, reported attending the Policy Advisory Committee held on Wednesday, March 04, 2020 where they approved the implementation Memorandum of Agreement, and reviewed the workplan and budget for the Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Watershed Based Implementation Funding. The draft sub-agreements between the entities and the Fiscal Agent were reviewed, and the next Cedar – Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Policy Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 06, 2020.

Cedar River Watershed District (CRWD) – David Livingston, District IV Supervisor, reported attending the March 18, 2020 board meeting with Dale Krystosek, Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Coordinator, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, and

Dave Copeland, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources attending the meeting remotely through Zoom. Krystosek and Copeland reviewed the performance review with the board, reporting that 76% of partners responding that the CRWD is doing acceptable work, and is considered an entity that will get work completed. The performance review stated the CRWD is one of the highest performing watershed districts in the state. Areas that are lacking are Board of Managers education and participation. The Treasurer's report stated that they have received funds, and that there is \$696,000 in their account. They used a drone to capture photos/video of trout fishing in Todd Park. Mike Merten, Kevin Kiser, and Steve Kraushaar have all been re-appointed to the CRWD Board of Managers. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Managers is allowing the Managers to spend up to \$800.00 for equipment in order to hold their next meeting remotely.

Root River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, reported attending the Policy Committee meeting on Monday, February 24, 2020, where the FY18-19 and FY20-21 Watershed Based Implementation Funding workplans were reviewed. The Crooked Creek Capital Improvement Project is running into roadblocks with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Kevin Kuehner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, presented on the Field to Stream Partnership, and Karin Sonneman, Winona County Attorney, reviewed the Joint Powers Agreement with the Policy Committee.

I-90 Soil Health Event - Stewartville – Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, reported attending the I-90 Soil Health Event in Stewartville, MN. Hahn felt it was a good event that focused on the economics of cover crops, and Hahn liked how the event brought the information back to be used locally.

Entomology and Economics – Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, reported attending the Entomology and Economics Event in Austin, MN where Jonathan Lundgren, current producer from Brookings, SD, and former USDA ARS employee, presented. Hahn felt Lundgren didn't have much good to say about organic farmers.

One Watershed One Plan – Greater Zumbro – Larry Scherger, District III Supervisor, reported attending the Policy Committee meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2020, where the priorities of the plan were reviewed, and the maps of the targeted areas were introduced. The draft goals table was presented, and there was a discussion on an organizational structure for implementation.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Directors – Bill Thompson, District I Supervisor, reported attending the MASWCD Directors meeting, and provided a written report. Thompson informed the supervisors that there was a water storage workgroup meeting with Justin Hanson and Cody Fox of Mower SWCD in attendance. The water storage workgroup may lead to Soil and Water Conservation Districts holding flowage easements, but that would require a change in statute. Our Ecosystem Based Services resolution passed, and is now on the legislative platform. The NRCS can't keep up with staff turnover and there continues to be gaps in NRCS staffing in Minnesota and Iowa. Thompson had a phone call with Minnesota State Representative Jeff Brand, and Nicollet SWCD on soil carbon, ecosystem services, and water storage.

Southeast District Managers Meeting – Bill Thompson, District I Supervisor, reported attending the SE Managers meeting on Monday, March 09, 2020 where the  
March 19, 2020 Dodge SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting minutes Page 6 of 7

**Supervisors: Bill Thompson – Bruce Freerksen– Larry Scherger – David Livingston – Glenn Hahn**

TSA shortfall was discussed. Many options were looked at, including any billable hours from districts, and a dues increase not to exceed \$2,500.00.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Dodge SWCD Board of Supervisors will be Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. in the conference room of the USDA Service Center building, 916 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE, Dodge Center, Minnesota, with an option to participate remotely.

**Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Larry Scherger, Chair, called for a motion for adjournment at 10:33 P.M.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

Approved:  Date: 5-21-2020 Recorder: Adam King  
March 19, 2020 Dodge SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting minutes Page 7 of 7

**Supervisors: Bill Thompson – Bruce Freerksen– Larry Scherger – David Livingston – Glenn Hahn**

