



# Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District

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## Minutes of the December 20, 2022

### Dodge Soil & Water Conservation District

### Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting

*The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Larry Scherger at 7:15 PM.*

**Members Present:** Larry Scherger, Chair  
Rick Alberts, Vice-Chair  
David Livingston, Secretary  
Glenn Hahn, Treasurer

**Members Absent:** Bruce Freerksen, PR&I

**Others Present:** Adam King, District Manager, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District; Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District; Dave Copeland, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:** Additions to the December 20, 2022 board meeting agenda include the 2023 Dodge Cover Crop Program under Other New Business. A motion was made to approve the December 20, 2022 meeting agenda, as amended.  
Motion: Rick Alberts  
Seconded: Glenn Hahn  
The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the November 15th 2022 Board Meeting Minutes:** The supervisors discussed the November 15, 2022 board meeting minutes and found no changes. A motion was made to approve the November 15, 2022 Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes, as presented.  
Motion: David Livingston  
Seconded: Glenn Hahn  
The motion carried unanimously.

## Partner Agency Reports

### Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Report

David Copeland, Board Conservationist, BWSR, reported attending the MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation District Annual convention earlier in the month, and felt that optimism is high for SWCD funding to begin coming from the state general fund, as opposed to through Clean Water Funds. Copeland explained that essentially, money would come from the MN Department of Revenue, twice per year, as opposed to being sent from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Copeland added that another takeaway he had from the MASWCD convention was the astounding amount of potential federal funding coming from the next three to four years of the Farm Bill. Lastly, Copeland added that a major topic in many areas during this time of year is wages and benefits, and he stressed that the policies surrounding them should be meeting high enough standards to obtain and maintain quality employees.

## **Natural Resource Conservation Service Report**

Gary Kurer, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), was unable to attend the meeting. Adam King noted that Jarrod Matzke and Nathan Bird have joined the office as of December 5<sup>th</sup>, with Nathan Bird still filling in for the NRCS in Goodhue until the position there is filled.

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

John Allen, Dodge County District I Commissioner, was unable to attend the meeting.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Approval of the Treasurer's Financial Statements, Payment of New Bills**

Glenn Hahn, Treasurer, presented the November 2022 Financial Report, including the Balance Sheet, Revenues of \$46,009.83 Expenditures of \$36,612.58, the General Ledger and Aging Summary, with payables total of \$8,657.48. The supervisors discussed the treasurer's report. A motion was made to approve the November 2022 Treasurer's Report, and payment of the bills on the Aging Summary, for payables total of \$8,657.48.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **2023 Final Budget**

Adam King, District Manager, presented the FY2023 Final Budget, including the county allocation of \$148,000.00. A finance committee meeting was held on December 15<sup>th</sup> to further discuss and finalize the final budget. King answered the supervisor's questions and explained the changes from the preliminary budget, including the FY23 Soil Health Cost-Share grant, and an increase to the Dodge Cover Crop Program and the Employee Expenses categories. A motion was made to approve the Finance Committee's 2023 Final Budget Recommendations, as presented.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Policy Handbook**

Adam King, District Manager, explained that work continues on the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District policy handbook. King hopes to have a full draft for the supervisors to review at the next meeting.

## **New Business**

### **2023 Cost of Living Allowance**

Adam King, District Manager, presented information on possible 2023 cost-of-living increases, including an 8.7 percent increase for Social Security, and 2.25 percent for Dodge County, with an additional 5% step increase added to their wage scale. The supervisors discussed the options for a cost-of-living increase. A motion was made to set the 2023 cost of living increase at 4 percent.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Personnel Committee Recommendations**

Adam King, District Manager, presented the Personnel Committee's recommendations as a result of the meeting held on Monday, December 19, 2022. King explained the Personnel Committee recommends a step increase for Jessica Klingfus,

District Technician, from Step 2 to Step 1, and a step increase for Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional, from Step 4 to Step 3. Adam King, District Manager, is currently at Step 1. A motion was made that the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District approve the Personnel Committee recommendations of a step increase for Jessica Klingfus, District Technician, and a step increase for Samantha Rojo.

Motion: Rick Alberts

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Letter of Support for Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

Adam King, District Manager, shared that Keely Cervantes, Food and Agriculture Program Manager with Conservation Minnesota, has reached out on behalf of a nonpartisan, multisector alliance seeking to renew funding for Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). King explained that the ENRTF was founded through a popular constitutional amendment in 1988, with funding from a portion of the net proceeds of the state lottery and as the expiration of the ENRTF's lottery dedication nears, Conservation Minnesota is working to reconvene this coalition and put the reauthorization of the ENRTF's lottery dedication back on the ballot for voters in 2024. The supervisors discussed the letter of support and agreed that they would like to support the efforts of the ENRTF. A motion was made for the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District to approve and sign the Letter of Support for Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Motion: Rick Alberts

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **No-Till Drill Storage at Betty Janes**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors he has been working with Randy Janes setting up winter storage for the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's no-till drill. King explained that although Betty Janes passed away very recently, Randy did confirm storage is available at the Janes's Farm, and that the district will need to cut them a check in the amount of \$100.00 for the winter. A motion was made to approve the payment of \$100.00 for winter no-till-drill storage at the Janes farm.

Motion: Rick Alberts

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

### **District Cost-Share Contract 2022-01 (Fay) Amendment**

Marlin Fay has requested an amendment to the District Cost-Share Contract 2022-01. The changes to his contract are outlined below:

- Extending of the original due date of the contract from December 31, 2022 to November 30, 2023
- Adjust the source of funding from Dodge SWCD district cost-share to the Zumbro Watershed Implementation Funding (New contract number: 2022WAGZ-DC-06)
- Updated cost-share percentage of 75%, also resulting in an encumbrance of \$5,746.13 from the WAGZ Watershed Implementation Funding (and unencumbering of \$4,979.98 of district cost-share funds)
- Addition of the following narrative on Page 2 of the contract: "The organization board has authorized the following for financial assistance, total not to exceed \$5,746.13 of the total cost to establish the conservation practice plus the pre-construction cover total amount if utilizing the Flat Rate Payment option."

A motion was made to approve the amendment of District Cost-Share Contract 2022-01 for Marlin Fay, extending his contract install date to November 30, 2023, changing the funding source from district cost-share to WAGZ Watershed Implementation Funding, increasing cost-share percentage to 75%, updating the contract number to 2022WAGZ-DC-06, encumbering \$5,746.13 from the WAGZ Watershed Implementation Funding, unencumbering \$4,979.98 to the district cost-share fund, and lastly to include the narrative as described above on page 2 of the contract.

Motion: Rick Alberts

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Watershed Cost-Share Contract 2022WAGZ-DC-05 (Rohwer) Encumbrance**

Charlie Rohwer of Dodge Center, MN has requested cost-share assistance from the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District for the installation of a 412-Grassed Waterway to be installed in Section 21 of Concord Township. The estimated cost for the practice is \$31,295.00, and Rohwer is requesting to encumber 90% using WAGZ Watershed Implementation Funding, not to exceed \$28,165.50. A motion was made to approve the encumbrance of cost-share contract 2022WAGZ-DC-05 for Charlie Rohwer, to install a 412-Grassed Waterway at 90% of the total cost of the project, not to exceed \$28,165.50 from WAGZ Implementation Funding.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Other New Business**

#### **Dodge Cover Crop Program**

Adam King, District Manager, presented staff-recommended changes to the 2023 Dodge Soil & Water Conservation District Cover Crop Program, and explained that the district has been providing cover crops for farmers in Dodge County since 2020 at no cost to the landowner. The proposed changes are outlined below:

- A signed contract would be required with the farmer and would expire on December 31, 2023.
- Cover crops would be FREE for the first 20 acres, and \$5.00/acre for all additional acres over 20.
- No fall tillage would be permitted, to allow the cover crops to work through the autumn months
  - Exceptions to this would include instances where canning crops were taken out leaving large ruts and an exception would be permitted in headland areas

King added that contracts would be developed & sign-ups beginning in January 2023. The farmer would be invoiced after the seeding is complete, and tillage inspections would be conducted in November. The supervisors discussed the proposed Cover Crop Program for 2023 and feel that knifing in manure and fertilizer should be added to the list of exempted fall tillage practices. A motion was made to approve the 2023 Dodge Soil & Water Conservation District Cover Crop Program, as amended to include knifing in manure and fertilizer as an acceptable fall tillage practice.

Motion: Rick Alberts

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Correspondence & Staff Report**

Adam King, District Manager, presented a 2022 Local Work Group Response from the MN Natural Resource Conservation Service State Technical Committee. The supervisors discussed the response. King informed the Supervisors that he attended the MASWCD Annual Convention December 12-14 and found the Franklin Covey leadership seminar to be interesting, and enjoyed the Minnesota Managers meeting that was conducted with Justin Hanson from BWSR.

### **Supervisor Reports**

#### **Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor**

Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, did not provide a report.

#### **David Livingston, District IV Supervisor**

David Livingston, District IV Supervisor, reported attending the most recent Cedar River Watershed District (CRWD) Meeting, where James Fett was leading the meeting, and Cody Fox joining remotely due to illness. Livingston noted they are working on three 319-grants currently, with one having association with cover-crops.

#### **Larry Scherger, District III Supervisor**

Larry Scherger, District III Supervisor, did not provide a report.

**Bruce Freerksen, District II Supervisor**

Bruce Freerksen, District II Supervisor, was not present to provide a report, however, Adam King, District Manager, noted that when he last spoke to Bruce, Bruce relayed the possibility of a dissolution of the Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) organization, and that the Executive Director was leaving.

**Rick Alberts, District I Supervisor**

Rick Alberts, District I Supervisor, did not provide a report.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors will be held Tuesday, January 17, at 7:15 p.m. in the conference room of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center, 916 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE, Dodge Center, MN.

**Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Larry Scherger, Chair, called for a motion for adjournment at 09:54 P.M.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

Approved:	Date:	Recorder:
<i>Larry Scherger</i>	<i>1-17-23</i>	Samantha Rojo