



Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District

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Minutes of the June 20, 2023 Dodge Soil & Water Conservation District Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Larry Scherger, Board Chair, at 7:20 PM.

Members Present: Larry Scherger, Chair
Rick Alberts, Vice-Chair
Glenn Hahn, Treasurer (in at 8:34 PM)
David Livingston, Secretary
Bruce Freerksen, PR&I

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Adam King, District Manager, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District; Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Nathan Bird, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); Nancy Peterson, Dodge County Resident.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Additions to the June 20, 2023 board meeting agenda include FY24 DNR Groundwater Level Monitoring Agreement and District Cost-Share Contract 2023-02 (S Rohwer) Encumbrance. A motion was made to approve the June 20, 2023 meeting agenda, as amended.
Motion: David Livingston
Seconded: Bruce Freerksen
The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the May 16, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes: The supervisors discussed the May 16, 2023 board meeting minutes. There were no additions or corrections. A motion was made to approve the May 16, 2023 Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes, as presented.
Motion: David Livingston
Seconded: Bruce Freerksen
The motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Peterson entered the meeting at 7:26 PM.

Partner Agency Reports

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Report

David Copeland, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, was unable to attend the meeting.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Report

Nathan Bird, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), reported that program sign-ups have wrapped up, all Dodge projects have been funded, and they are continuing to look for more projects. Bird noted that a large project in Ripley township is almost complete and the others have been picking up with construction. Bird reminded the supervisors the NRCS is still seeking to fill a soil conservationist position in Albert Lea.

Dodge County Commissioner's Report

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

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

District Cost-Share Contract 2023-01 (Meirick) Encumbrance

Tim Meirick of West Concord, 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 32 of Concord Township. The estimated cost for the practice is \$11,874.50, and he is requesting to encumber 30%, not to exceed \$3,480.32. A motion was made to approve the encumbrance of cost-share contract 2023-01 for Tim Meirick to install a 412-Grassed Waterway at 30% of the total cost of the project, not to exceed \$3,480.32 using District Cost-Share funds.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

QuickBooks Payroll Service Subscription

Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional, notified the supervisors that she recently learned the district's QuickBooks Desktop Pro license does not include a payroll service subscription, and that the cost for this service was previously covered by accounting firm, Standinger LTD. Samantha explained that with this service, QuickBooks receives automatic, timely income tax table and withholding updates, and allows staff to file the quarterly payroll reports timelier and more accurately. A motion was made to approve the payment for QuickBooks Payroll Service Subscription in the amount of \$536.88, beginning in May 2023, and renewing every 12 months.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

Local Partners Agreement Between the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District and Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors Pheasants Forever Inc. has provided a Local Partners Agreement with the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District, which will allow Laura Newberg, Farm Bill Biologist II, Pheasants Forever, to continue working in the Dodge Center Service Center for FY24 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). King noted the funding source of the position has changed, and the Dodge SWCD will no longer be receiving a large Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP) grant, instead Pheasants Forever will be receiving funds directly from the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). King explained that grant will support a full-time position at \$65,000/year, and therefore requires a 10% match from the local SWCD; Pheasants forever is asking for

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\$3,250 in match. A motion was made to approve, sign, and submit the Local Partners Agreement between the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District and Pheasants Forever Inc. for the Farm Bill Biologist II position stationed at the Dodge Center Service Center, with the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District providing \$3,250.00 in matching funds.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

Glenn Hahn entered the meeting at 8:34 PM.

2024 Cover Crop Program

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors about possible concerns with competing against the private sector for installing cover crops. King would like to continue discussing the future of the cover crop program, as well as the no-till drill program, and how we want to offer them at the district in the coming years.

2024 Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Draft Preliminary Budget

Adam King, District Manager presented the 2024 draft preliminary budget, noting the changes with SWCD aid and clean water funds, as well as discussion about the annual Dodge County appropriation amount. A finance committee meeting was set for July 11th, 2023 at 7:30 AM to further discuss the 2024 draft budget.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Health Insurance

The Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District has received the Blue Cross Blue Shield Renewal Notice for 2024 (fiscal year September 01, 2023 – August 31, 2024). Adam King, District Manager, explained that staff met with Beth Hanggi, insurance administrator, on June 20, 2023, and the 2024 renewal rate for the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District for BlueAccess HSA Silver Plan 642 (current plan) is increasing from 2022, as well as deductibles / out-of-pocket maximums increasing significantly. The current plan BlueAccess HSA Silver \$3850 Plan 642 deductible is increasing from \$3,850.00 for single coverage (\$7,700.00 for family coverage) to \$4,400.00 for single coverage (\$8,800.00 for family coverage), resulting in an increase of 12.5% for the deductibles. King noted that the current plan has a Health Savings Account (HSA) that the district contributed \$1,000.00/employee HSA in 2022. King relayed that staff are concerned with the higher deductibles and increased cost, and would like to explore a similar plan with HSA and a deductible comparable to past plans. Staff and management will have a formal recommendation at the next board meeting.

Other New Business

FY24 DNR Groundwater Level Monitoring Agreement

Adam King, District Manager, presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Groundwater Level Monitoring Agreement which dictates that Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District is to be paid \$30.00 per well-reading, with 1 well to be measured eight times throughout the year, and seven wells to be measured four times throughout the year, of which there are three nested wells resulting in only one payment for the two wells, for a total of \$720.00. Historically, staff time spent on this practice in prior years ranged from \$1,300.00 – \$1,960.00. A motion was made to allow Adam King, District Manager, to sign the Groundwater Level Monitoring Agreement with the MN DNR via DocuSign and renew for the current year.

Motion: Glenn Hahn

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

District Cost-Share Contract 2023-02 Rohwer (Encumbrance)

Scott 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 26 of Concord Township. The estimated cost for the practice is \$9,867.00, and is requesting to encumber 75%, not to exceed \$7,400.25. A motion

was made to approve the encumbrance of cost-share contract 2023-02 for Scott Rohwer to install a 412-Grassed Waterway at 75% of the total cost of the project, not to exceed \$7,400.25 from district cost-share funds.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

Conservationist of the Year

Adam King, District Manager, presented the staff recommendation to nominate Mike Trom of Westfield and Ripley Townships, explaining that Trom has shown great attention to conservation by implementing cover crops and strip till farming, as well as utilizing saturated buffers. Input for the nomination was given from district staff, Natural Resource Conservation Service staff in the office, and the Farm Service Agency staff in Dodge as well. A motion was made to approve nominating Mike Trom of Westfield/Ripley Township for the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District's Outstanding Conservationist of the Year.

Motion: Bruce Freerksen

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

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

Glenn Hahn, Treasurer, presented the May 2023 Financial Report, including the Balance Sheet covering what is in our checking and savings, Revenues of \$107,781.27, Expenditures of \$37,644.22, the General Ledger and Aging Summary, with a payables total of \$9,414.35. The supervisors discussed the treasurer's report and recognized that the Dodge County appropriation was received in the amount of \$93,500.00. A motion was made to approve the May 2023 Treasurer's Report and bills on the Aging Summary, for a payables total of \$9,414.35.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence & Staff Report

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors that he has been working on the 2024 draft budget and getting landowners signed up for cover crops, Jessica Klingfus, District Technician, has been very busy in the field, while Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional, has been working on the 2022 audit, monthly financials, and preparing for the county fair. King relayed that Mia Makovsky, MN Conservation Corps, has been taking field trips with staff when possible and has been able to attend various partner meetings. King also communicated that the former MASWCD board president, Roland Cleveland, passed away recently.

Supervisor Reports

Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor

Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, informed the supervisors that he was unable to attend the Root River Watershed Policy Advisory Committee meeting on Monday, May 22, 2023 at the Hokah Fire Department.

David Livingston, District IV Supervisor

David Livingston, District IV Supervisor, reported attending the Cedar River Watershed District meeting May 17, 2023 where the administrator was given approval for sign-offs, payables were approved, and no income was noted. Livingston also reported attending the June 7, 2023 Local Work Group Meeting in Blooming Prairie, noting that he appreciated Adam King's assistance with fluidity of the meeting, as well as recognizing Gary Kurer received some heat regarding the NRCS hiring practices.

Bruce Freerksen, District II Supervisor

Bruce Freerksen, District II Supervisor, did not provide a report.

Larry Scherger, District III Supervisor

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

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, July 18, 2023 at 7:15 p.m. in the conference room of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center, 916 2nd Street SE, Dodge Center, MN.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Larry Scherger, Chair, called for a motion for adjournment at 10:20 PM.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously

Approved:	Date:	Recorder:
<i>Larry Scherger</i>	7-18-23	Samantha Rojo

