



# Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District

916 2nd Street SE

Dodge Center, Minnesota 55927

Phone: 507-374-6364 ext. 3

www.dodgeswcd.org

## Minutes of the December 19, 2023

### Dodge Soil & Water Conservation District

#### Regular Board of Supervisors Meeting

*The meeting was called to order by Larry Scherger, Board Chair, at 7:21 PM.*

**Members Present:** Larry Scherger, Chair  
Rick Alberts, Vice-Chair  
Glenn Hahn, Treasurer (late – in at 7:48)  
David Livingston, Secretary  
Bruce Freerksen, PR&I

**Members Absent:** none

**Others Present:** Adam King, District Manager, Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District; Nathan Bird, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service; Nancy Peterson, Dodge County Resident.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:** There were no additions or corrections to the December 19, 2023 board meeting agenda. A motion was made to approve the December 19, 2023 meeting agenda, as presented.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the Nov. 21, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes:** The supervisors discussed the November 21, 2023 board meeting minutes. There were no additions or corrections. A motion was made to approve the November 21, 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.

### Partner Agency Reports

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

Nathan Bird, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), reported that construction on projects is wrapping up with spreading out spoil piles. There was about \$96,000 paid out in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), with approximately \$42 million statewide paid out from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), with \$4.6 million in southeast Minnesota. Approximately \$56 million in EQIP payments is expected in 2024. Most EQIP practices included roofs/covers for feedlots, cover crops, waste storage, nutrient and pest management. In Dodge County,

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top practices included grassed waterways, cover crops and water and sediment control basins (WASCOBs). There is a Civil Engineering Technician posting for the Albert Lea office.

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

Jill Sackett Eberhart, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, was unable to attend the meeting.

### **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**

Adam King, District Manager, presented the November 2023 Financial Report, including the Balance Sheet covering what is in the checking and savings accounts, revenues of \$53,697.59, expenditures of \$47,406.41, the general ledger and aging summary, with a payables total of \$4,107.58. The supervisors discussed the treasurer's report. A motion was made to approve the November 2023 Treasurer's Report and pay bills on the aging summary, for a payables total of \$4,107.58.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

*Glenn Hahn entered at 7:48 PM.*

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **2024 Final Budget**

Adam King, District Manager, presented the 2024 Final Budget to the supervisors and informed them the budget includes the Dodge County Allocation of \$150,000.00. The Finance Committee was unable to meet to review the 2024 Final Budget. The supervisors discussed the 2024 Final Budget. A motion was made to approve the 2024 Final Budget as presented.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Zumbro Watershed Cost-Share Contract 2022WAGZ-DC-03 (Biwer) Payment**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors payment for Zumbro Watershed Cost-Share Contract 2022WAGZ-DC-03 for Jack Biwer is not ready for presentation to the board; King relayed that Biwer has been unresponsive when asked to submit the requested paperwork. The approval of payment for Zumbro Watershed Cost-Share Contract 2022WAGZ-DC-03 was tabled.

#### **Cover Crop and No-Till Drill Program**

Adam King, District Manager, opened a discussion with the supervisors about the district's current no-till drill and cover crop programs. King informed the supervisors about his conversation with TJ Kartes and his thoughts around a new cover crop program for Dodge County and surrounding areas. The new program could entail the district having a contract with a contractor for covering the cost of installing cover crops. This would allow contractors to sell the practice and provide the service at no cost to the landowner. The district would require the rates, dates, maps, and methods of installing the cover crops to ensure the practice would meet standards. The

district would sell the inter-seeder. The supervisors discussed the program and instructed King to develop a Request for Interest (RFI) and start receiving quotes for the district's inter-seeder.

### **New Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Website**

Adam King, District Manager, presented information and a quote from Townsquare Media and the quote from Streamline. The supervisors discussed a new district website.

### **New Business**

#### **2024 Cost-of-Living Increase**

Adam King, District Manager, presented information on cost-of-living increases from those receiving Social Security, Dodge County employees, and potential federal employees. King also presented salary ranges from current position postings in Minnesota and Wisconsin, along with the current district wage scale and at various percentage increases. A motion was made to approve a 3.5% cost-of-living increase for Dodge SWCD Employees.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Glenn Hahn

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Personnel Committee Recommendations**

The Personnel Committee met on Thursday, December 14, 2023 to conduct an exit interview for Samantha Rojo, Administrative Professional. Rojo submitted her letter of Resignation on Monday, December 11, 2023 with her resignation effective Friday, December 15, 2023. The board discussed the options for the Administrative Professional position. A motion was made to post the Administrative Professional position with a closing date of January 12, 2024.

Motion: Bruce Freerksen

Seconded: David Livingston

The motion carried unanimously.

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

Adam King, District Manager, presented updates to the Compensated Time Off section of the handbook, under Holidays and Sick Leave. The updates would include the addition of Juneteenth to be held on June 19<sup>th</sup> of each year, and changing the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, and changing Sick Leave to Earned Sick and Safe Leave, expanding what the leave can be used for. Both changes are due to updated statute changes the past legislative session. The supervisors discussed the changes. The supervisors expressed their discontent with the new laws and the proposed changes to the policy handbook, but understand the changes to the policy handbook are needed in order to stay in compliance with MN state statute. A motion was made to approve the updates to the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District Policy Handbook in the Compensated Time Off section under Holidays and Sick Leave.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **District Cost-Share Contract 2023-08 (Fancsali) Payment**

Bradley Francsali of Hayfield, MN has requested payment from the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District for District Cost-Share Contract 2023-08 for the installation of a 340-Cover Crops (50 acres) in Section 17 of Vernon Township. Francsali was authorized to encumber \$4,930.50; the total cost for practice installation was \$4,930.50 and is requesting 100% of the total project cost, not to exceed \$4,930.50. A motion was made to approve payment of District Cost-Share Contract 2023-08 for the installation of a 340-Cover Crops (50 acres) in Section 17

of Vernon Township at 100% of the total cost of the project, not to exceed \$4,930.50 using funds from the FY21 Local Capacity Services Grant (P21-2699).

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Rick Alberts

The motion carried unanimously.

### **District Cost-Share Contract 2023-15 (Sybesma) Payment**

Adam King, District Manager, informed the supervisors payment for District Cost-Share Contract 2023-15 for Troy Sybesma is not ready for presentation to the board. The approval of payment for District Cost-Share Contract 2023-15 was tabled.

### **Other New Business**

There was no Other New Business.

### **Correspondence & Staff Report**

Adam King, District Manager, presented a letter from the MN DNR notifying the district that payments for well level monitoring will be increasing from \$30/well to \$60/well and will come with a new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). King has sent the JPA to Paul Kilten for review and passed along Kilten's comments to the MN DNR. King also presented a Notice of Environmental Assessment Availability, Public Hearings, and Comment Period for the Dodge County Wind, LLC project, and a notice on changes to the Economic Interest Statement Disclosure requirements from the Minnesota Campaign Finance Board. Staff updates include attending the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Convention, updating position descriptions, and Jessica Klingfus, District Technician, is still on leave.

### **Supervisor Reports**

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

Glenn Hahn, District V Supervisor, reported that the Root River Watershed's 5-year assessment is complete and provided a one-page handout, and that the Root River Watershed Policy Committee found it interesting that there was no significant trend in Nitrate Nitrogen found in streams.

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

David Livingston, District IV Supervisor, did not provide a report.

#### **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, 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, January 16, 2024 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.

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**Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Larry Scherger, Chair, called for a motion for adjournment at 11:01 PM.

Motion: David Livingston

Seconded: Bruce Freerksen

The motion carried unanimously.

Approved:	Date:	Recorder:
<i>Larry Scherger</i>	<i>1-16-24</i>	Adam King

