

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Rock County Soil and Water Conservation District
Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

A meeting of the Rock County Soil and Water District Board , was held Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 8:00 AM at the Prairie Service Center with the following members present: Roger Hoff, Gene Cragoe, , Josh Ossefoort, Russ Hoogendoorn, SWP TSA, Dylan Bartels, NRCS, Director Eric Hartman, Assistant Director Doug Bos, Office Manager Mary Thompson. Absent: County Commissioner Stan Williamson, Dave Esselink, Jim Veldkamp

Chair Hoff called the meeting to order and asked for any additions to the agenda. With no additions, motion to approve by Ossefoort, second by Cragoe. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

NRCS Update

Bartels stated NRCS staff leads met and developed the Investigation and Examination sheets for work being done between the SWCDs and NRCS. This form documents explorative information that has been done on a project.

Bartels stated, through the Inflation Reduction Act, Minnesota will receive 2.7 for EQIP; CSP is unknown at this time. Project must be located in a priority watershed. Application needs to be signed by November 18 for both EQIP and CSP. Rock County currently has 15-20 cover crop applications in pre-approval for EQIP.

Bartels requested the date be set for the Local Work Group meeting. Goals set in this meeting have helped to receive more EQIP funding. Date was set for July 14 following the Rock SWCD regular meeting.

2022 SW Prairie TSA Year End Report

Hoogendoorn presented the 2022 year-end report summarizing the 2022 accomplishments for all 11 counties they serve. The SWPTSA utilized funds to pay for an engineer and 2 technicians. The SWPTSA provided technical services for 11 SWCD's using EQIP, 1W1P, Local Cost Share and 319 grants to pay for projects. The total project cost for these projects was approximately \$4,750,000. \$1,600,000 of which was spent on projects that were constructed. \$1,250,000 worth of projects are ready for construction so far with another \$1,700,000 still in the planning process. Technical assistance money was encumbered through a NACDTAG grant to work on EQIP projects and charging for services on 1W1P projects. The SWPTSA follows the BWSR billing rate policy and does time tracking for all the projects. They provided services for 22 projects in Rock County in 2022.

Along with these accomplishments, TSA oversees projects for staff working toward their Job Approval Authority. The types of individual skill trainings include Investigation & Evaluation of a site, RUSLE2, Watershed Analysis, ArcMap, Waterway and WASCOD design, Ecological Conservation Science, file assembly and notes, surveying, soil health planning and application, and conservation plan development. Trainings included Organic Ag101 courses for new employees, assisting in 2 different soil health field days, and 9 other technical training field days.

One Watershed One Plan Update

Bos stated the Missouri River Watershed grant (One Watershed One Plan) will have a PRAP (Performance Review and Assistance Program) review. This is done every few years. BWSR prepares an annual PRAP report for the Minnesota legislature containing the results of the previous year's program activities as well as a general assessment of the performance of LGUs that provide land and water conservation services and programs.

MS4Front Tracking Program

Bos stated MS4 Front is a tracking program for the One Watershed One Plan programs. The Joint Powers Board opted to sign-on for this tracking tool as a way to improve tracking for the 1W1P projects and give counties the availability to see information on their projects. Arlyn Gehrke has been working on the modules with Houston Engineering along with a group of user giving input from SWCDs within the Missouri River Watershed. This program will allow each county to enter their own project information.

Cost Share Funds Available

Thompson presented the cost share dollars available currently available for Rock County. One Watershed One Plan currently has \$10,607.13 for cover crop, \$551,006.99 for structural practices. These funds are available to all 6 counties in the Missouri River Watershed. Rock SWCD currently has \$57,815.96 combined from State Cost Share and Local Capacity funding. Conservation Use Acres has approximately \$30,000.00 available.

Cons Agronomist Position

Bos provided an update stating this is a position is through New Vision. New Vision approached Rock SWCD with hopes of further promoting soil health and cover crop incentives. Rock SWCD provides a portion of the position wages through the Missouri River Watershed grant and will be assisting with this position. Rock will receive \$10,000 for doing so. Job description and application are currently posted on the Rock SWCD website. One interview is scheduled for February 22.

Bills for Approval:

Thompson presented the bills for approval. Motion to approve by Cragoe, second by Ossefoort. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

City of Luverne - \$59.00

Rock County Land Management - \$347.52

Total \$405.52

Financial Statements

Hartman presented the January financial statements. After review, motion to approve by Ossefoort, second by Cragoe. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

Return Funds

Thompson presented the supporting documentation showing the funds for the \$1,189,848.00 in cost share for the 2022 Wellhead Protection Partner Grant – Rock County Rural Water West had been returned. Staff approached two landowners for a project to implement this money and both declined. Unfortunately, that left us with no place to use the money. The board had been apprised of this action within review of the Financial Statements at the January meeting. Motion to approve by Ossefoort, second by Cragoe. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

2021 Audit

A copy of the 2021 audit was included in the board packets at the January meeting to allow board members time to review. Hartman presented an overview of the audit and asked for any further questions or discussion. Hearing none, motion to approve by Ossefoort, second by Cragoe. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

Minutes

January 17, 2023 minutes were reviewed. With one correction noted, motion to approve by Ossefoort, second by Cragoe. All ayes, no oppose, motion carried.

Upcoming Meeting

Monday, March 20, 2023

Motion to adjourn by Cragoe, second by Ossefoort. All ayes, no opposes, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Thompson".

Mary Thompson
Office Manager

