



629 NORTH 11TH STREET
COURTHOUSE Suite 7
MONTEVIDEO, MINNESOTA 56265

Telephone 320-269-2696

**Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
January 10, 2024**

Minutes of the Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District, Courthouse, NRCS/SWCD office, Montevideo, MN 56265.

1. Meeting was **called to order** by Board Chair Jerry Schwitters at 1:30 p.m.
 - Members **present**: Steve Jacobson, Jerry Schwitters, Calin Eisenlohr, Michelle Overholser, Aaron Ahrenholz
2. Others **present**: SWCD staff: Desirae Jarett, Zach Bothun, Tom Sletta
3. M/S/P Jacobson, Ahrenholz approve the agenda with amendments. All in favor.
4. **Annual Business:**
 - **Rotation of Officers**
 - Board Chair: Calin Eisenlohr
 - Vice Chair: Michelle Overholser
 - Secretary: Steve Jacobson
 - Treasurer: Aaron Ahrenholz
 - Public Relations & Information: Jerry Schwitters
 - **Committee Assignments:**
 - **Personnel Committee**
 - Steve Jacobson and Jerry Schwitters
 - **WCTSA Joint Powers Board**
 - Steve Jacobson with Michelle Overholser as alternate
 - **Chippewa River Watershed Association**
 - Michelle Overholser with Calin Eisenlohr as alternate
 - **Central Minnesota River Watershed Partnership**
 - Jerry Schwitters with Aaron Ahrenholz as alternate
 - **Local Water Plan**
 - Jerry Schwitters with Calin Eisenlohr as alternate
 - **WCA Appeals Committee**
 - Michelle Overholser and Steve Jacobson
 - **Monthly Meeting Date/Time**
 - Usually First Monday of the month (see meeting calendar) at 3 p.m. in the Commissioner's Room
 - Meeting calendar
 7. January 10, 2024 1:30 p.m.
 8. February 5, 2024
 9. March 4, 2024
 10. April 1, 2024
 11. May 6, 2024
 12. June 3, 2024
 1. July 1, 2024
 2. August 5, 2024
 3. September 9, 2024*
 4. October 7, 2024
 5. November 4, 2024
 6. December TBD*



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- **Supervisor Compensation Rate:** \$100 per meeting under 4 hours and \$125 for anything over 4 hours (including drive time) + mileage and reimbursable meals
 - **Mileage Rate:** 2024 IRS Standard Mileage Rate
 - **Official Depository:** Minnwest Bank
 - **Official Newspaper:** Montevideo American News
 - **Agenda:** emailed
 - M/S/P Jacobson, Overholser approve annual business assignments as discussed. All in favor.
 - Following approval of reassignment of officers, the meeting was then turned over to 2024 Board Chair Calin Eisenlohr.
5. M/S/P Overholser, Ahrenholz approve the December meeting minutes. All in favor.
6. Bills were presented for ratification & payment.
7. **New Business**
- Desirae gave a grant balance update.
 - Zach and Desirae went over Employee Handbook and Cost Share Policy Updates. Earned Safe and Sick Time and Annual Review information were added to the Employee Handbook. Board requested adding unpaid leave information as discussed. Cost share rates were discussed and changed in the working cost share policy document and Zach presented additions and deletions.
 - M/S/P Overholser, Jacobson approve policy updates with changes and additions as discussed. All in favor.
 - Zach presented the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program Contract for Services.
 - M/S/P Schwitters, Ahrenholz approve contract for services with Stearns SWCD to provide MAWQCP programs and technical services.
 - District Manager back pay and December 2023 meeting pay raise motion were discussed. County Commissioners request that it be noted that the SWCD Board negotiates, proposes, and approves/denies all district employee wage changes. The county board of commissioners does not have any authority over these wages. The SWCD board amended the motion from December 2023 regarding the District Manager's 15% pay increase to state that District Manager will receive a 9% increase for job position and duty changes that were made effective 8/14/23. The amendment also included the District Manager will incur 9% pay raise back pay from 8/14/23 to 12/31/23. The District Manager, District Technician, and Office & Financial Coordinator will receive a 6% performance and cost of living increase effective 1/1/24.
 - M/S/P Ahrenholz, Overholser approve back pay and amended motion regarding 2024 wage negotiations as discussed.
 - District Manager permissions were discussed.
 - M/S/P Jacobson, Schwitters approve to delegate updated permissions to new District Manager retroactive to August 14, 2023.
 - Zach presented and discussed Funding Opportunities, Shared Services, and Capacity. Soil Health Phase 1 was also discussed.



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- M/S/P Overholser, Schwitters approve to apply for Soil Health Phase 1 and to pursue a partnership with Kanati Land Management and Renville SWCD as discussed.

8. **Staff Reports-**

- **District Manager:** monthly activities and updates reported include but are not limited to: Annual Convention attended with staff, Jerry, Michelle, George Kluempke, and Roy Denne; CRWA--TAC meeting to put final touches on the Chippewa River Comprehensive Plan before submitting for the 60-comment period, beginning phases of drafting cost share policies and other items that need to be in place for implementation of WBIF funds; CMRWP--TC meetings to review and work through work plans for FY22 supplemental funding, and FY24-25 WBIF's; cost share policy updates; reviewed a new tracking tool called MS4 Front; BWSR operational facilitated discussion to review roles and responsibilities with contracted services, JPB roles, Staff roles, and contracting with WBIF funds; WCA site visits; multiple site visits on a restoration order. A successful restoration was completed by the deadline; site visits, Teams meetings, and issued NOA's for Northern States Power Company (Xcel) coal ash projects near Granite Falls; reviewed projects for wetland impact that may occur during the removal and restoration of a coal ash landfill site; drainage requests as they come in; meetings to discuss partnerships and shared services revolving around the soil health grant, education, and outreach; soil health contract meeting/training put together with Andy Albertson; Performance Evaluations were conducted on staff; Zach noted that Desirae has been working to clean up our old website for migration to our new website and that reporting season is upon us. Des has submitted reports for grants, and I will be submitting the 2023 WCA report soon.
- **District Technician:** monthly activities and updated reported include but are not limited to: raingarden project in Clara City has had gas lines flagged and GPS, unable to hook into town storm drain so redesigning plans and still moving forward; waiting on a bid for another project and for the design on another; attended Kanati Land Management meeting; put equipment in building for winter; attended Annual Convention; worked on buffer reviews; conducted tree site visits and worked on tree plans and orders; working on a RIM easement and mapping potential projects. Tom also noted that tractor brakes will be worked on mid-February.

9. **M/S/P** Overholser, Schwitters approve to close the board meeting for District Manager Performance Evaluation. All in favor.

10. **M/S/P** Overholser, Jacobson approve to re-open the board meeting.

11. **Adjourn.**

- M/S/P Ahrenholz, Schwitters approve adjournment of meeting. All in favor.

Next Meeting: February 5, 2024 –Commissioner's Room, Courthouse 3:00 P.M.

*****PLEASE LET OFFICE STAFF KNOW A.S.A.P. IF YOU WILL NOT MAKE IT TO THE MEETING*****