

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH
LOWER LEVEL BOARD ROOM
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2022**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Jayne Hager Dee, Kurt Beckstrom, Carly Johnson, Rich Sve, Gerald Van Amburg, Ted Winter, LeRoy Ose, Eunice Biel, Todd Holman, Ronald Staples, Mark Zabel, Melissa Lewis, MPCA; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Thom Petersen, MDA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Jess Richards, DNR

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Neil Peterson, Kelly Kirkpatrick

STAFF PRESENT:

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Dave Weirens, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Marcey Westrick, James Adkinson, Lucy Dahl, Peter Jordet, Julie Westerlund, Rita Weaver, Annie Felix-Gerth, Mike Nelson, Ryan Hughes, Melissa King

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeff Berg, MDA; Emily Javens, MAWD; Lizzie McNamara, Jan Voit, Lucas Sjostrom, Alex Trunnell, Julie Blackburn

Chair Gerald VanAmburg called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

22-29 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Ron Staples, seconded by Joe Collins, to adopt the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

22-30 **MINUTES OF MAY 25, 2022 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Todd Holman, to approve the minutes of May 25, 2022, as circulated. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Marcey Westrick introduced James Adkinson, Grants Coordinator and Lucy Dahl introduced Peter Jordet, Easement Development Specialist Sr.

Chair Van Amburg introduced new Metro City Board Member Carly Johnson.

REPORTS

Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Chair Gerald Van Amburg reported the North Central Region Water Network is having a climate interactions conference in Duluth, July 12-14, 2022.

Executive Director’s Report - John Jaschke reported EQB’s Executive Director position is open as Katie Pratt has moved on to the Dept. of Administration. Stated SWCDs are having Area meetings this spring and early summer. John attended the Minnesota River Congress on June 15 in Mankato with Commissioner Strommen and Commissioner Kessler along with others from the basin. Rita Weaver presented on Water Storage, the concepts behind it, and an understanding of engineering factors involved. Stated it is pollinator week and there are a number of pollinator events taking place. BWSR staff are working with SWCDs to determine flood damage in the Red and Rainy River Basins. There is no legislative news.

Joe Collins asked if a bonding bill passed. John stated it did not pass.

John reviewed the Day of Packet that included Snapshots.

Todd Holman asked if there was an update on Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI). John stated they are working on a plan and will give an update or presentation at a future meeting.

Audit and Oversight Committee – Joe Collins reported they have not met.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Rich Sve reported the committee has not met. They have a meeting scheduled for August 31. On July 18 they will be having a committee workshop to go over the understanding of roles and responsibilities and the purpose for the upcoming meeting.

Travis Germundson reported there are nine appeals pending.

File 21-4 This is an appeal of a WCA restoration order in Otter Tail County. The appeal regards the alleged wetland impacts associated with the placement of fill. No decision has been made on this appeal.

File 22-3 This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Benton County. The appeal regards the alleged wetland impacts associated with the excavation of two drainage ditches. No decision has been made on the appeal.

Travis stated they have been reaching out to gather information on the status of noncompliant parcels and to obtain some specific plans and timelines to bring those parcels into compliance. Stated the number of Administrative Penalty Orders will be going down to three.

Grants Program & Policy Committee – Todd Holman reported they have not met. There is an action item on the agenda. Next meeting is scheduled for July 25.

RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee reported the committee has not met.

Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins reported the committee has not met.

Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton reported the committee has not met.

Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – Mark Zabel reported the committee has not met.

Drainage Work Group (DWG) – Tom Gile reported they met and had preliminary discussions on the ranking and prioritization of topics they expect to talk about this season. They discussed the outlet adequacy definition to have a better comprehensive understanding of that term. They also discussed their preliminary overview of the Drainage Registry Bill that was introduced last session.

AGENCY REPORTS

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen reported the 2021 Agricultural Drought Relief Program opened June 21 and had 144 applicants the first day. They are accepting applications until July 6. Stated they have a pilot program for soil health grants that they'll be working on this fall. There is also a grant from the McKnight Foundation to help farmers develop climate smart farming practices.

Jill Crafton asked what cattle do when the temperatures are so high. Commissioner Petersen stated cattle can adapt to the heat, water and shade is always helpful.

Chair Van Amburg asked if there would be a greater demand than resources available for the soil health grants. Commissioner Petersen stated they were only able to do a pilot project from the funds they received. Stated the interest is there and they hope to expand it.

Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson reported they launched a PFAS dashboard to view the statewide testing in public water systems.

Stated some of their bills did not pass during the Legislative session. They were seeking funds for a grant program to help communities with lead service line inventories. This would be used to help comply with the new lead and copper rules in October of 2024.

Chair Van Amburg asked how they treat for PFAS. Steve stated there are specialized technologies that can remove it.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Jess Richards reported Commissioner Strommen went to the Minnesota River Congress with Executive Director Jaschke and stated they are look forward to working together on water storage projects and issues. The DNR Round Table was held in person on June 9. Jess gave an update on DEI.

Jill Crafton stated she met Bradly Harrington, their Tribal Liaison and asked what his role is. Jess stated as their Tribal Liaison he helps with cultural differences and how we communicate with each other. He is also working on their policies and procedure development.

Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson reported the Northern Central Region Water Network is hosting the Climate Intersections Conference July 12-14 in Duluth. It will focus on how water and natural resource professionals can work with local communities to respond and adapt to a changing climate. Joel stated they are also collaborating with the Network on a Field School for Soil Health Educators event August 9-10 in Waseca. It will focus on soil health and people who are providing education related to soil health.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Melissa Lewis gave an update on DEI.

ADVISORY COMMENTS

Association of Minnesota Counties – John Jaschke reported for Brian Martinson that the Clean Water Council will be considering budget recommendations for next year in the coming months. They are encouraging BWSR Board members to reach out to their colleagues on the Council about what the priorities should be.

Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – No report was provided.

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – No report was provided.

Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel reported they had a primary election on May 24 and will have a special election on August 9. Stated the Legislature ended without a deal on transportation funding for townships. There will be a second round of ARPA training in June.

Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts –Emily Javens reported the Stormwater Summit is next week and she will be doing a presentation with Mark Doneux, Capital Regional Watershed District; Paul Gardner, Clean Water Council; and Andy Erickson, University of Minnesota. It will showcase how we govern, fund, and operate for clean water in Minnesota.

Emily stated the recommendations are in line on the 1W1P Evaluation Summary.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – No report was provided.

Chair Van Amburg recessed the meeting at 10:20 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

FY2023 CWF Competitive Grants Policy and RFP Criteria – Annie Felix-Gerth presented FY2023 CWF Competitive Grants Policy and RFP Criteria.

The Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Policy is reviewed and approved annually. For FY2023, the policy will apply to Projects and Practices, Projects and Practices Drinking Water, Multi-purpose Drainage Management, and Soil Health funding.

The changes in this policy from the previous year include:

- Change in terminology: “Livestock Waste Management Practice” is now “Feedlots” in the Eligible Activities section. The term change and associated information has been changed to be consistent with the FY22-23 Watershed Based Implementation policy.
- Addition of the Soil Health grant.

In addition to approving the policy, the board order also authorizes the fiscal year 2023 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants Program and authorizes staff to finalize and issue a Request for Proposals. The Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed these recommendations on May 23, 2022 and recommends the attached policy and order to the board.

Jill Crafton asked in section 3.8 if the first sentence was defined anywhere. Annie stated the practices are consistent with the Natural Resource’s Conservations Service Field Technical Guide, the Minnesota Stormwater Manual, or a professionally accepted engineering or ecological practice. John Jaschke stated the majority will be in one of those.

Joe Collins referred to section 3.5 Project Support where it says eligible activities. Joe asked if that meant it would be funded locally with the match. Annie stated those are activities that can be funded through this grant.

Chair Van Amburg asked if they could explain the new adoptions in the Soil Health Ranking Criteria. Tom Gile stated by new adoption we can assume that it’s trying to encourage something that hasn’t been done before by that producer. Tom stated they are asking the applicant to tell what specifically they were targeting in terms of new adopters.

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22-31 Moved by Todd Holman, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the FY2023 CWF Competitive Grants Policy and RFP Criteria. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

NEW BUSINESS

One Watershed, One Plan Program Evaluation Report – Lizzie McNamara presented One Watershed, One Plan Program Evaluation Report.

BWSR is nearly halfway to achieving the goal of statewide coverage with approved comprehensive watershed management plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program. BWSR conducted an evaluation to determine if the program is meeting the original vision and whether any mid-course corrections were needed for this major shift in Minnesota’s local water planning. BWSR entered a contract with Management Analysis and Development (internal consultants for the state of Minnesota) to conduct a formal evaluation of the One Watershed, One Plan program in Spring 2021. In fall 2021, MAD conducted a survey, interviews, and focus groups involving over 350 One Watershed, One Plan participants and stakeholders. MAD completed a final report in May 2022. A summary of findings and recommendations is in the executive summary. BWSR is working with the Local Government Water Roundtable and staff from partner associations to strategically disseminate the report to 1W1P participants and stakeholders. Staff anticipate a detailed discussion about next steps to act on the report’s recommendations with BWSR’s Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee over the summer of 2022.

Chair Van Amburg asked if the full report will be available. Julie Westerlund stated she will send the full report to Rachel, and it will be available on our website.

Jayne Hager Dee stated we need to look at the people skills and outreach skills to get more public participation.

Joe Collins stated we also need political awareness with the people skills during implementation.

LeRoy Ose stated that staff learn people skills by doing it.

Jill Crafton stated they did a good job of capturing and analyzing feedback. Stated it is hard to go from planning to implementation.

Melissa Lewis stated its exciting to see this evaluation and didn't see any surprises.

Ron Staples asked who is the Local Government Roundtable that started this. John Jaschke stated the participants are AMC, the Association of Watershed Districts, and the Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. It started with the encouragement of the Legislature to come up with a plan that all would support opposed to a plan for each organization. They continue to meet, there is staff level work and board member appointees.

Joe Collins stated the report was good and highlights issues coming up.

Steve Robertson stated he thought it was a good report and is looking forward to seeing how everything works out.

Update on the FY22 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program– Rita Weaver presented the Update on the FY22 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program.

The Board passed the first Water Quality and Storage Program policy in January 2022. Since then, BWSR staff have put out the RFP, received applications, and ranked and scored the projects. The intent of this presentation is to discuss the FY22 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program evolution and give an overview of how water storage is considered in our watershed planning and projects.

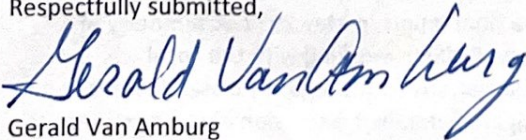
Jill Crafton asked about the time frame. Rita stated the initial grant will be set up for three years but can be extended two more years.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Grants Program and Policy Committee is scheduled for Monday, July 25, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., location TBD.
- Joint summer tour and meeting, August 23-25, 2022.

Chair VanAmburg adjourned the meeting at 12:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerald Van Amburg
Chair