

**POPE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MEETING MINUTES  
Supervisory Board Meeting 7:00 am January 15, 2012  
Meeting site: USDA Service Center,  
1680 N. Franklin Avenue  
Glenwood, MN 56334**

**Supervisors:** Mike Billehus, Keith Nygaard, Gary Reents, Randy Pederson, Tom Talle,  
**SWCD Staff:** Kelly Erickson, Matt Fischer, Luan Johnsrud, Justin Stangler  
**Guests:** Paul Gerde, Commissioner; Mark Kulig, NRCS Area Conservationist, Dave Jungst, DU  
Wetland Restoration Specialist, Melissa Behrens, NRCS Technician, Justin Lindner,  
Acting NRCS District Conservationist

**Meeting Agenda:**

1. Reents called the meeting to order at 7:02 a.m...
2. Motion by Talle, second by Billehus to approved the revised agenda. Carried.
3. Supervisors D. Gary Reents, District 5 and Mike Billehus, District 4, were sworn in by District Manager Johnsrud.
4. Motion by Nygaard, second by Talle to accept the December 19, 2012 meeting minutes
5. Motion by Talle, second by Billehus to accept the Financial Report-Current Bills December 2012-January 2013, as presented. Carried.
6. Old Business
  - o West Central Technical Service Area Agreement update-Area 2 meeting will be held in Litchfield, hosted by Meeker SWCD March 21<sup>st</sup>. A revised Agreement is expected to be presented then.
  - o BWSR PRAP Work plan and Grant Agreement was reviewed. Motion by Nygaard, second by Talle to sign the BWSR PRAP agreement. Carried. The project is to be completed by June 30, 2013.
7. Reports-
  - o Paul Gerde, County Commissioner  
DNR is in the process of purchasing an easement in Lake Johanna Township. Paul asked about the process to purchase the easement and suggested that they meet with Township officials to explain the process and build a working relationship.  
Dist review is in process. Levies will be placed on ditches that have had work done on them in the past.  
A five year road and bridge plan has been presented to the Commissioners. Some roads will return to gravel to cut maintenance costs.  
Rainbow Rider demand for service remains stable. They receive operating and capital funds from MNDOT.  
Paul attended the BWSR Water Plan review in Wadena. Also in attendance were Pete Waller and Ron Shelleto, BWSR, Dave Rush, Interim Land & Resource Director, Michael Johnson, Water Plan consultant, and Luan Johnsrud. The BWSR committee approved the preliminary scoping document as presented.  
MRCC (Minnesota Rural County Caucus) met in Grant Rapids. Their priority concerns are vulnerable children & adults funding formula, Land and shoreline issues, transportation & bridge funding and park & trails.  
Chippewa River Watershed Project is waiting for MCIT insurance to take over their policy by the end of January 2013 so that transition is completed.  
The Pope County Interim Assessor will be attending the Commissioners' meeting today. Also on the agenda are the parking lot across from Glenwood Lutheran Church and the main street Glenwood project.
  - o Kelly Erickson, Technician  
WCA TEP met on January 14, 2013. Motion by Nygaard, second by Pederson to approve David Thompson's .2 acres wetland mitigation request. Carried.

Provided information on the Ag Bank application for wetland credits. The application has been shortened to 2 pages for Ag land instead of the existing 8 pages. Also, the county can move credits to the Ag Bank to sell to local landowners. Must make sure that the credits are from restored, not created wetlands. Commissioner Gerde requested that we keep him in the loop on the program change. Erickson and Fischer met with Dave Orlovski, Pope County Ditch Inspector, to discuss WCA issues as they pertain to the county ditch system.

A hearing has been scheduled for Gary Modlin's writ of Mandamus for February 5, 2013. Erickson has sent a letter to the Judge hearing the case, county attorney, and Mr. Modlin has been served a copy of the letter.

Discussed pending mitigation proposals. Motion by Billehus, second by Nygaard to approve request based on completed and signed application for Gerald Maus. Carried.

Seven grass plans have been accepted by landowners for 2013; 11 potential tree plans for spring 2013 so far.

Viewed storage sheds displayed by Alexandria with supervisor Nygaard. They are reasonably priced and well built. Erickson will contact landlord for approval and final cost for the shed.

Continuing to search for drill repair parts. Plans to have complete list of parts and prices for the February meeting and will begin working on them in March.

- Matt Fischer, District Technician

Participated in the Clean Water Fund Webinar, Chippewa River Watershed Civic Engagement workshop and WCA TEP.

Still no CRP sign-up, however putting together information for 2013 expiring contracts. Working on mid-contract activities for existing CRP contracts.

RIM buffer sign-up is open; have talked to 2 landowners to explain the program.

Work Plan for the 2013 Accelerated Implementation Grant is due for BWSR review. Working on eLink to submit to BWSR for review.

Presented draft grant agreement for Walk-In Access (WIA) program. WIA is moving from a Federal program to DNR administration. Draft agreement indicates Pope SWCD will be reimbursed \$250.00 per contract not to exceed \$5,000.00. Motion by Pederson, Second by Billehus to authorize Johnsrud and Fischer to sign the final contract. Carried.

Completed a Highly Erodible Conservation Plan for an MDA application for Ferguson 3, LLC. The Department of Ag requires the Plan for corporate farms. Fischer discussed this with the attorney requesting the information. This is a new MDA requirement for corporate farms; we can expect to receive more of them. If we so choose, we can charge for this service.

Motion by Nygaard, second by Pederson to purchase a new set of tires from Brownies Tire (\$750.00 +/-) for the 2003 Chevy pickup. Carried. The old tires will be kept for the trailers.

- Justin Stangler, Land & Lake Specialist

Participated in the Clean Water Fund Webinar and Chippewa River Watershed Civic Engagement workshop.

Setting up a timeline with Janell Miersch, DNR, for the Lake Malmedahl drawdown project. 75% of the landowners around the Lake are required to approve the project before it can go forward.

The RFP for the Clean Water Partnership grant (MPCA) is posted. The program provides 50% cost share for project.

- Luan Johnsrud, District Manager

Prepared and participated in the Pope County Water Plan presentation to the BWSR committee; participated in the TMDL Implementation Planning Committee January meeting.

Completed eLink work plan for the 2013 NRGB program. The grant agreement has been signed and executed so we will receive funding for the WCA and Local Water Plan projects.

Prepared and submitted W-2's, PERA report, Federal 7 State 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter withholding reports.

Reviewed revised 2013 budget with staff; the proposed 2013 budget is as realistic as we can get.

Completed 4<sup>th</sup> quarter Rosholt Farm Report for Mn Dept. of Ag.

Michael Peterson, CPA will be in the office January 29<sup>th</sup> to begin yearend financial preparation and 2012 audit.

Motion by Talle, second by Pederson to approve the 2013 Goals and Objectives as presented. Carried.

Motion by Nygaard, second by Pederson to advertise in the 2013 Minnewaska Visitor Guide. Carried. Advertising in the Visitor Guide will expand our outreach efforts and make more people aware of Pope SWCD and the programs/projects that we offer.

- Justin Lindner, Acting NRCS DC  
Lindner is the NRCS DC in Todd County and started Monday assisting Pope County. Processing CSP payment, requests to review highly erodible lands and wetland determinations. Melissa Behrens has been sending out letters for EQIP.

Gerde left at 8:45 a.m.

Guest: Mark Kulig, NRCS Area Conservationist

An Area 2 SWAT team has been formed to assist counties with the large workload for wetland compliance issues. The team will rotate throughout the area on an 'as needed' to assist with processing applications. Controversial applications will be elevated to the Area office.

Farm Bill Programs have been extended for 1 year; we can expect similar funding as in the past. As of today, details for 2013 CRP signup is not available. The focus is expected to move to smaller parcels in sensitive area(s).

CSP and EQIP programs are authorized through 2014. There are 3 EQIP signup periods; Special Projects ends 1-18-13, General program applications ends February 15<sup>th</sup>. Pope County appears to have several applications in the pipeline.

Kulig received information yesterday afternoon that there is a hiring freeze effective through 6-1-2013. However, he had processed the paperwork for a Pope County District Conservationist before the hiring freeze announcement. He will notify us of the human resource office determination.

FSA and NRCS are in the process of negotiation their building lease for the next 10 years. FSA will be the lead agency for the advertising process. Pope SWCD will set up their own agreement with the Landlord.

NRCS is offering to partner with SWCDs to assist with paying for their newsletters that include information on NRCS programs. Pope SWCD sent their newsletter to the publisher last week. Kulig requested that an estimated bill be sent to him to see how much and how to process payment.

Dave Jungst, WRP update

Jungst presented a power point presentation to Meeting participants highlighting 2012 RIM/WRP activities in Pope County. Pope County has 40-50 projects in various stages of restoration. RIM/WRP activities are second in the state to NW Minnesota. At this time, 113.9 acres of wetland are being restored, 428.8 wetland seeding is underway. Landowners receive 125% of the township land value, 100% of the restoration costs are paid through RIM/WRP funds. At this time, there are not as many applications for 2013 as in previous years.

## 8. New Business

- Chair Reents called for a motion to elect Pope SWCD Board of Supervisors 2013 officers. Motion by Billehus, second by Pederson to accept slate of officers as listed: Chair-Nygaard, Vice-Chair-Billehus, Secretary-Pederson, Treasurer-Talle, Public Relations-Reents. Carried.
- Motion by Talle, second by Billehus to authorize, Erickson, Johnsrud and Pederson to be listed on the Pope SWCD Resolution and Authorization for bank deposits and signature cards for depositories. Carried.
- Motion by Talle, second by Pederson to approve final 2013 budget and submit to BWSR. Carried.
- Discussed Day at the Capitol, February 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>; Johnsrud requested Supervisors notify her by Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup> if they plan to attend. At this time, Johnsrud and Fischer plan to attend.
- Motion by Pederson, second by Nygaard to host a booth at the Pope County Expo April 6 at MAHS. Carried. Pope SWCD received Local Water Plan funds for public education. We will host 2 water quality education sessions in the morning of the event.
- Discussed procedure for direct deposit for payroll and Supervisor Per Diem checks. QuickBooks offers this service at a fee of \$1.40 per transaction. Erickson and Johnsrud will verify payroll and

per diem before the direct deposit is authorized monthly. Motion by Billehus, second by Talle to proceed with direct deposit for those that want this service. Carried.

- Motion by Nygaard, second by Pederson to add Matthew Fischer on the Pope SWCD credit card account. Carried.
- 2013 BWSR Clean Water Fund RFP grant agreements were not available for review.

Motion by Nygaard, second by Talle to move into closed Executive Session at 10:45 a.m. Carried.

Motion by Pederson, second by Talle to pay staff as noted in closed meeting minute notes and pay yard rental in 2013. Pederson, Talle, Billehus, Nygaard in favor.

Meeting re-opened at 11:20 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.