Minutes of the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting held at the Buffalo Ag Service Center in Buffalo, Minnesota on December 14, 2009.

Chairman Uecker called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:        Chairman, Christopher Uecker
                        Vice-Chairman, Mark McNamara
                        Secretary-Treasurer, Duane Dahlman
                        Member, Mary Wetter
                        Member, Michael Zieska (Left at 5:57 p.m.)

Members Absent:  None.

Others Present:        District Secretary, Sandra Hessedal
                        Office Manager, Kerry Saxton
                        Wright County Commissioner Liaison, Jack Russek
                        Rain Garden Program Cokato Nursery, Michael Berg, Owner

In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the December 14, 2009 Wright SWCD Board agenda was accepted as printed with the:

Addition Of:  
Projects:  Rain Garden Installation - Cokato Camp Ground
Interagency:  Rent Agreement and Possible Negotiation

Deletion Of:  
Senator Amy Koch was unable to attend this meeting as scheduled – will be rescheduled to either the January regular Board or Planning meeting

Affirmative:  Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed:   None.

Motion carried.

A motion by McNamara, seconded by Wetter, approved the minutes from the November 09, 2009 regular District Board meeting.

Affirmative:  Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed:   None.

Motion carried.

In a motion by Wetter, seconded by McNamara, the Board reviewed the Financial Statement dated December 14, 2009 and, subject to audit, authorized the payment of twenty-three (23) invoices for $90,368.73. Working Lands Initiative payments were noted.

Affirmative:  Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed:   None.

Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR ZIESKA ATTENDED THIS MEETING AND HEARD THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE MOVED UP ON THE AGENDA FOR HIS PARTICIPATION:
AGENDA ACCEPTANCE
COOPERATING AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS – NRCS report
EQUIPMENT – 1992 Chevrolet
PERSONNEL – Personnel Committee Report/Salary Reviewal
PROJECTS – Rain Garden Installation Program
PART I – DECISION/POLICY MAKING

ADMINISTRATION: After discussion, the Wright District will schedule its Annual Planning Meeting for Monday, January 25, 2009 beginning at 9:00 a.m. Alternative sites suggested to the previously used Klein Bank Community Room were Bison Creek Restaurant/Huikko’s Bowling Center, Historical Society or the new Wright County Jail which also has a Community Room. A discussion regarding the agenda was tabled until the January, 2010 District Board meeting.

COOPERATING AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS:

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – District Conservationist Onstad’s report included the following items:

Interagency – In an effort to further establish and define areas of cooperation between NRCS and the District, this Memorandum of Understanding regarded the use and maintenance of the Sharp color copy machine. This copy machine is owned by the District and maintained by a District paid service contract. In accordance with the MOU, NRCS will supply all sizes of the needed paper. Supervisor Uecker signed this MOU and Supervisors McNamara and Wetter attested his signature.

Meetings, Upcoming –

2010 EQIP Local Work Group Meeting – This meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2010, 10:00 a.m. in the USDA Service Center, Buffalo, Minnesota.

Personnel –

District Conservationist Onstad – This was the last District Board meeting District Conservationist Onstad will attend as he retires December 31, 2009 after thirty-three (33) years with NRCS. DC Onstad stated he started as a NRCS Technician, and then became a Soil Conservationist for approximately three (3) years of training in the Buffalo Field Office before he served as the District Conservationist of Carver County (Waconia). He returned to Buffalo and assumed the District Conservationist position in November, 2004. DC Onstad stated the past five (5) years have passed quickly and he has very much enjoyed working with the Wright SWCD staff and Supervisors. Onstad said the good cooperation between the Buffalo Conservation Offices has resulted in many Wright County conservation projects. He thanked the Board for their support and they in turn thanked him for his cooperation with the Wright SWCD. Commissioner Russek thanked DC Onstad for his leadership of the Mid-Minnesota Mississippi RC&D.

Programs –

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) –

Four (4) applicants signed up for this program. These applications are being reviewed and assigned dollar values in Washington, D.C.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) –

• One of the compost barns has been completed; the other barn will be completed in 2010
• The ag waste management facility correction has been completed and is awaiting payment
• One (1) water and sediment basin and two (2) grade stabilization projects were completed in 2009
• Four (4) basins and one (1) grassed waterway will be carried into 2010

EQUIPMENT:

1992 Chevrolet – After discussion, the District Board did not wish to establish a minimum bid before the two (2) bids were opened. Bid opening revealed a high bid of $800.00 and a low bid of $455.00. In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the $800.00 bid was accepted and the owner will be contacted and the vehicle transfer made before year end.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.
EQUIPMENT:

2009 Deletion Authorization – In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, equipment that staff notes as unused, broken or antiquated was given authorization to dispose of by the best means available and/or profitable to the District (general advertisement, County Auction, e-Bay or recycling are options). At this point, the only piece of equipment noted for disposal is the Lietz Theodolite purchased in April, 1981.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL:

Audit and Close-Out Of 2009 Financial Records – In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the District authorized contracting with James Maiser, Certified Public Accountant to conduct the 2009 closeout and audit.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

Invoice Processing – In a motion by McNamara, seconded by Dahlman, District staff was authorized to process all invoices received by December 31, 2009.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

INTERAGENCY:

Rental Agreement and Possible Negotiation – Because of recent audit results imposed on NRCS, the ability of the District to sublet rental space from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is no longer an option. As a result, the Wright District has had to contact Ronald Carlsen, Buffalo Service Center building owner, to resolve this issue and formulate a contract which is mutually agreeable. Due to the economic downturn and the many available rental properties, Office Manager Saxton was able to negotiate a 25 percent reduction in the cost of the yearly rent ($28,393.00 to $23,183.00 or $18.00 per square foot). The rent will be payable in the first month on a quarterly basis. After a short discussion, the Board stated that it would pay the square footage allocated to the C.R.O.W. project in turn will reimbursement the District this cost. In a motion by Zieska, seconded by McNamara, Office Manager was authorized to further develop the lease agreement with the above information and when completed Chairman Uecker was authorized to immediately sign it.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

PERSONNEL: This meeting was closed at 5:16 p.m. to hear the District Personnel Committee report regarding the recent employee evaluations and interviews and their consideration and recommendations for yearly salary adjustments. The meeting reopened at 5:57 p.m. with the following motion regarding the presented information. A motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, formalized and adopted the following District Personnel Committee recommendations: District employees that warrant a scheduled step increase will receive it and all employees will be given a 2½ percent cost of living increase (same as County staff). In addition, Office Manager Saxton (2010 will be his 31st year with the District) and District Secretary (2010 will be her 40th year with the District) will be given a 3 percent longevity increase as they have exceeded the District schedule for step increases having both passed the twenty (20) year longevity limit of the schedule. Pay increases will be effective with the first full pay period in 2010 – 1-10-2 (01-09-2010 through 01-22-2010).

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.
PROJECTS:

Rain Garden Installation Program – Office Manager introduced the situation which has led to a much higher than anticipated bill being received by the District. Discussion follows -

The two (2) rainwater gardens in question are the City of Cokato Veterans’ Park and the Cokato Lake Campground. Both projects were viewed as “demonstration” projects by the District and authorized for 100 percent cost-share. Office Manager Saxton felt that when these projects were authorized for 100 percent cost-share, the owners became totally unconcerned with the costs.

Mike Berg, owner of Cokato Nursery, was charged with getting both projects completed and contacted Prairie Restorations for the required plants. As the season was late, many trays were unavailable in the smaller plant sizes but were available in the larger 4 inch size which dramatically increased the costs. The odd thing that happened was that while Berg only ordered enough plants for one of the rainwater garden he received enough for both gardens.

Office Manager Saxton adjusted the bills to reflect the cost of each plant for each project and refigured each of the project bills. He felt that the labor estimate was figured extremely low but when estimated it was anticipated that the landowners/volunteers would perform the labor and not that it would be contracted to a vendor. The Cokato Park final bill was actually three (3) times the District’s project estimate ($3,572.00 cost to $1,187.00 estimate).

Mike Berg, Nursery owner, stated he questioned Prairie Restorations regarding the number of plants both before and when he picked them up and both times they stated there was 630 plants (50 flats) when in actuality there was 1,249 plants. He was unconcerned about the over shipment because he had another project needing the same plants starting in another week (Cokato Campground). When questioned, Berg stated in his adjusted bill he added a 20 percent charge (profit) on the cost of the plants which is lower than his usual service charge. Office Manager Saxton stated that the District has never before seen profit being charged on supplies and thought most District vendors only made their profit on labor. Berg stated that this is a common practice which was substantiated by some of the Board Supervisors.

In a motion by Wetter, seconded by Dahlman, the District will pay fully the bills for both the Cokato Veterans’ Park and the Cokato Lake Campground ($6,367.65) and will use this discussion as a learning experience. In the future, for those projects covered to 100 percent cost-share the District will provide a maximum expenditure and give the landowner a “not to exceed” budget amount.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker, Wetter and Zieska.
Opposed: None.
Motion carried.

Wetland Restoration Program

Bosacker, Travis – Silver Creek Township, Section 24. Total costs were approximately $21,000.00 for two pools - .7 acres and 1.08 in size. In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the District will release $1,000.00 of Restoration Program funds toward the cost of this project.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.
Motion carried.

Moores, James – Monticello Township, Section 30 (practice also covered under the Working Lands Initiative (WLI) program). This project focused on an old ditch in an unused pasture that drained to Pelican Lake. The project costs were increased because:
• a 10 inch tile had to be laid on a flat grade to provide on outlet for an existing 8 inch tile that was too low to daylight into the wetland restoration
• clay for a dike had to be hauled further than anticipated to ensure good construction material
The total project cost was $9,034.85 - $5,820.00 will be paid by WLI, the landowner will pay $500.00 and in a motion by McNamara, seconded by Dahlman the District will pay $2,714.85 out of Wetland Restoration Program funds. This project is covered by a ten-year agreement.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.
Motion carried.
PROJECTS:

Working Land Initiative (WLI) – These payments will be reimbursed to the District by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under the Workings Lands Initiative program established for the area around Pelican Lake.

Gindele, Albert – City of Monticello, Section 32 and City of St. Michael, Section 5. This $27,060.00, payment is a signing bonus for 135.3 acres ($200.00 per acre) put into the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Moores, James – Monticello Township, Section 30. This $5,820.00 payment is for the installation of a wetland restoration practice.

Schultz, Jim – Buffalo Township, Section 14. This $180.00 payment is for the repair of a wetland restoration after muskrats damaged the dike.

In a motion by McNamara, seconded by Wetter, the above three (3) projects were noted and the pass through payments authorized. DNR, Section of Wildlife, has been invoiced for District reimbursement.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAMS:

Regular Cost-Share Program

Granite Lake (FY08-03) – Albion Township, Section 20, Sediment Basin. The project has been completed; however, the Lake Association will be adding a riser extension in the near future so that the front slope will be more farmable. The project’s final cost is $19,761.32. In a motion by Wetter, seconded by McNamara, the District authorized the release of $7,653.75 (38.7 percent of total cost) of State Cost-Share funds for this project.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

Weed Program – The final “Wild Parsnip” spraying bill has been received for the 2009 spraying season bringing the expenditures for that program in 2009 to $21,336.23 (staff time is excluded).

Cokato Township (09-CWMA-11) – The total cost submitted was $803.26; of which $293.26 was herbicide cost and $510.00 was labor for 17 hours at $30.00 per hour. In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the total herbicide cost will be paid.

Affirmative: Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN:

MLCCS – The final results for this study have been received from the consultant. If after closer scrutiny, staff approves the depth of the study and findings, this $10,000.00 invoice will probably be added to the payments being made on December 31, 2009. Office Manager Saxton stated that the basic conclusion of this study was that there was very little of ecological value noted in the study’s area of concern as most of the land has either been drained or otherwise altered. Water Management Specialist Jacobs will be presenting the study results in an upcoming Board meeting.
SUPERVISOR’S FORUM: Discussion concerned

- Supervisor Wetter is concerned about the wind turbine proposed ordinance and the 750 foot set back from adjacent buildings. There is more information coming.

PART II – MEETING REPORTS:

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| November 12, 2009 | Metropolitan Conservation Districts (MCD) Fall Meeting Rogers, Minnesota Wetter reported and highlighted:  
  - Dues will remain the same as 2009  
  - The By-Laws are being rewritten to reflect the recent name change  
  - 501c3 status may be obtained under the MASWCD umbrella  
  - NRCS - Tim Wilson, Area Conservationist, discussed the various federal programs and how these programs and their funding relate to the MCD. Additionally, Wilson discussed the quandary of charging Districts for the use of the federal computer network and the result of a recent audit not allowing charges to Districts.  
  - BWSR - Jim Haertel, Metro Region Supervisor, discussed a 20 percent decrease of budget and the success of the BWSR Academy. |
| November 18, 2009 | Metropolitan Conservation Districts (MCD) Brooklyn Center, Minnesota Office Manager Saxton reported and highlighted:  
  - NRCS will not be funding the Landscape Restoration Program in 2010  
  - Some of the Minnesota legislative grant for $1,000,000.00 will be used to cover the anticipated but not received NRCS grant  
  - Of the $1,000,000.00, $800,000.00 of projects must be generated; however, a portion of this amount could be locally generated money which could free additional funds for staff use. It is currently anticipated that each member District will be allocated $50,000.00; however, it will have to be spent within 18 months. The problem for Wright County will be that it is targeted for specific watersheds and urban programs. |
| November 19, 2009 | Mid-Minnesota Mississippi RC&D Meeting Foley, Minnesota  
  - Without funding, the group is winding down but will remain intact by meeting once a year so that the formulation process will not have to be redone if funds do become available. |
| December 06 – 08, 2009 | Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts’ Annual Meeting Duluth, Minnesota  
  - All supervisors and staff attended along with a representative (Ray Rau) of the District’s Outstanding Conservationist (Granite Lake Association). |
**PART IV – MEETINGS, UPCOMING**

| January | 20, 2009 | Overcoming Technical and Policy Challenges of LID
|         |          | Minneapolis, Minnesota
|         |          | Registration Fee: $195.00 |
| January | 20, 2009 | Minnesota Wetlands Conference
|         |          | St. Paul, Minnesota
|         |          | Registration Fee: $125.00 (WPA Members) Up To $175.00 |

In a motion by Dahlman, seconded by McNamara, the Board approved attendance for Supervisors and staff at all of the above meetings. Meeting attendance for staff is also at the discretion of and authorization by Office Manager Saxton.

- **Affirmative:** Dahlman, McNamara, Uecker and Wetter.
- **Opposed:** None.

Motion carried.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next scheduled meeting of the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District will be held on Monday, January 11, 2010 beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the Ag Service Center, 311 Brighton Avenue, Buffalo, Minnesota.

**ADJOURNEMENT:** This meeting was adjourned by Chairman Uecker at 6:50 p.m.

Minutes Approved: January 11, 2010

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Secretary-Treasurer