



Benton Soil & Water Conservation District

www.soilandwater.org

It is the mission of the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District to protect and enhance Benton County's soil, water, and other natural resources; to nurture a conservation ethic by educating county residents on conservation and environmental issues.

Benton SWCD
Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday
February 28, 2024
8:00 A.M.

Chair, Chuck Rau
Vice Chair, Mike Winkelman
Secretary, Bernie Thole
Treasurer, Wade Bastian
Member, Joe Jordan

Attendance: Supervisors—Wade Bastian, Mike Winkelman, Joe Jordan, Chuck Rau, Bernie Thole

Other: Gerry Maciej (District Manager) Josh Bork (NRCS District Conservationist), and Renee Thell (Administrative Assistant) In for part of the meeting: Scott Johnson (Benton County Commissioner), Emily Forbord (Watershed & Outreach Specialist), Mike McMillin (District Technician), and Nathan Sanoski (Farm Bill/District Technician)

- I. **Call meeting to order** – The meeting was called to order by Rau at 8:00 a.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**- recited.
- III. **Approve Agenda**- Motion by Jordan, second by Winkelman to approve February agenda with suggested changes. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.
- IV. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**- Motion by Jordan, second by Thole to approve January minutes. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.
McMillin came into the meeting at this time and left after Other Item B.
- V. **Other Items**
 - A. Discuss a diversity, equity and inclusion plan framework - Motion by Bastian, second by Winkelman to approve the diversity, equity and inclusion plan. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.
 - B. Authorize the Chairperson to sign the Memorandum Of Agreement Between the NACD and Benton SWCD - Motion by Bastian, second by Thole to approve the Chairperson to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the NACD and Benton SWCD. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.
 - C. County Ditch repair discussion – Commissioner Johnson looking for some suggestions on a maintenance program for county ditches from the SWCD.
 - D. Vulnerable Drinking Water Protection Grant Program Changes – Maciej updated the board on this meeting with Morrison SWCD on this grant.
- VI. **One Watershed One Plan** – Forbord and Maciej updated the board.
 - A. **Rum River Watershed Partnership**
 - 1) January 25, Rum River Watershed board meeting
 - 2) February 13, outreach office hour
 - 3) March 11 (scheduled), implementation planning committee meeting
 - 4) March 12 (scheduled), outreach office hour
 - 5) March 21 (scheduled), Rum River Watershed board meeting
 - B. **Mississippi River St. Cloud 1W1P**
 - 1) January 29, citizen advisory committee meeting
 - 2) February 5, landscape stewardship plan final meeting
 - 3) February 7, steering committee meeting

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- 4) February 14, education and outreach subcommittee meeting
- 5) February 20, steering committee meeting
- 6) March 6 (scheduled), steering committee meeting
- 7) March 19 (scheduled) technical advisory committee meeting

C. Mississippi River Sartell 1W1P

Maciej informed the board that the meeting was not going to happen just yet.

Johnson left the meeting at this time.

VIII. Other Items

A. Education and outreach update – Forbord updated the board.

B. Select a date and time for an education committee meeting – after the board meeting today Jordan, Winkelman and Forbord discussed after the next board meeting the Education Committee will meet.

Forbord left the meeting at this time. Sanoski came into the meeting and left after loan program discussion.

C. Clarify the low interest loan program scoring process – Sanoski discussed with board how they would like to proceed with the low interest loan program.

D. Select an auditor to perform the 2023 financial audit and authorize the chairperson to sign the audit engagement letter - Motion by Jordan, second by Thole to approve Peterson Company as the Auditor for the 2023 financial audit and to have the chair sign the audit engagement letter. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.

E. Decide attendance at the MASWCD legislative briefing & networking reception and SWCD day at the capitol. – Rau will be signed up with the MASWCD and Winkelman will get back to Thell if he can make it.

F. Approve a new position description and authorize the hiring process - Motion by Jordan, second by Thole to approve the Sustainable Farming Technician job description, authorize the hiring process and to increase job advertisement to Certified Crop Advisor website. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed. Motion by Winkelman, second by Jordan to approve hiring of Mike Kraemer to complete an assessment of the Benton SWCD office not to exceed \$5,000.00. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor.

G. Irrigation RCPP proposed grant application letter of commitment – Maciej informed the board.

VII. Treasurers' Monthly Report- Maciej presented January Program Summary Report. Motion by Jordan, second by Bastian to approve reports. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.

IX. Payment of Bills

A. Benton SWCD Bills - Motion by Thole, second by Winkelman to approve the accounts payable report, pay bills. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.

B. WCTSA Bills - Motion by Jordan, second by Winkelman to approve the WCTSA accounts payable report, pay bills. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.

X. Progress Reports

A. BWSR report - none

B. District Manager report – Maciej informed the board.

C. Staff reports – in packets.

D. NRCS report – Bork updated the board.

XI. Information Items

A. Supervisor / Manager Reports

1) January 25, Rum River Watershed board meeting

2) January 29, Minnesota Association of SWCDs board meeting

3) February 13, SWCD Supervisor Orientation/Refresher training

B. Calendar of Future Events:

1) March 4, MASWCD legislative priorities webinar

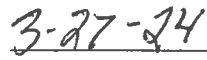
2) March 5, Winter conservation day 2024

- 3) March 6, MASWCD area 2 meeting
- 4) March 12, MASWCD legislative briefing & networking reception
- 5) March 13, SWCD Day at the capitol
- 6) March 18, Benton County soil health team meeting
- 7) March 27, Benton SWCD board meeting
- 8) April 25, Mississippi River Sartell watershed "We Are Water" exhibit opening ceremony
- 9) May 21 – June 4, Candidate filing period, SWCD areas 1,4 and 5

XII. **Supervisor Open Forum**

XIII. **Adjourn**– Motion by Jordan, second by Thole to adjourn the board meeting at 11:50 am. A moment was taken to ask if there were any objections, all were in favor. The motion passed.


Secretary, Board of Supervisors


Date

