



112 5th Street, PO Box 161
Gaylord, MN 55334
(507) 702-7077

MINNESOTA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Minutes of the Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District, 112 5th Street, Gaylord, MN on December 20th, 2023.

The meeting was called to order by Chair – Grams at 4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chair, Wayne Grams
Vice Chair, Kathleen Thies
Secretary, Loren Evenson
Treasurer, Paul Wiemann
Member, Robert Nielsen

Others Present: District Manager, Joel Wurscher
District Technician, Jeremy Buckentin
Water Resources Coordinator, Jack Bushman
NRCS-District Conservationist, Reyna Chavez
FSA-County Executive Director, Jennifer King

Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the December 2023 agenda as presented. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the minutes of the November 2023 meeting. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve twenty-nine paid bills for the month of November totaling \$54,228.57. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve the December 2023 Treasurer's report subjected to audit. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Old Business: Wurscher brought up the topic discussed at the previous Board meeting regarding the request for additional WBIF funding. Since that discussion, a new opportunity had arisen towards a water storage project located within Sportsman's Park at the outlet of Project 7 near Arlington. With the potential to contract and construct prior to the arrival of WBIF FY24/25 funding, Wurscher had presented to the Board that it may make sense to add another \$75,000 to the original \$150,000 request. Upon a motion by Nielsen, and seconded by Wiemann, the District (acting as fiscal agent) will now request \$225,000 in additional WBIF supplemental funds.

Wurscher then gave a brief update towards the non-compliance issues with RIM easements #72-32-86-01 and #72-04-93-02.

FSA Report: See attached.

NRCS Report: See attached.

New Business:

Cost Share:

Peter Hahn's well had been sealed and he requested final payment in the amount of \$500.00. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the final payment for his state cost share contract (FY23-2) towards a well sealing at the rate of \$500.00.

Paul Platz requested his second and third year payments for 68.7 acres of cover crop each year, using a single species for the amount of \$4,795.26. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve Paul's payment request from his state cost share contract (FY22-2). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Peter Kramer requested his second and third year payments for 50 acres of cover crop each year, using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$4,267.00. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve Peter's payment request from his cover crop contract (CAP22-1). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Karl Schauer requested his first year's payment for 79 acres of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$3,246.90. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen it was moved to approve Karl's payment request from his cover crop contract (SH FY23-1) in the amount of \$3,246.90. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Travis Dahlke requested his payment for 154.18 acres of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$6,938.10. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve the payment request for the one-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-1). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Chris Beranek requested his payment for 32 acres of cover crop using a single species in the amount of \$1,120.00. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve the payment request for the one-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-2). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Dann Forsberg requested his payment for 77 acres of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$3,465.00. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the payment request for the one-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-3). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Gerald Lorentz requested his payment for 91.71 acres of cover crop using a single species in the amount of \$4,126.95. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve the payment request for the one-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-4). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Richard Kramer requested his payment for 160 acres of cover crop using a single species in the amount of \$5,600.00. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the payment request for the one-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-5). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Tom Henke requested his final payment for 160 acres (80 acres per year) of cover crop using a single species in the amount of \$6,400.00. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the payment request for the two-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-6). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Eric Annexstad requested his final payment for 210 acres (70 acres per year) of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$9,450.00. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Evenson, it was moved

to approve the payment request for the three-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-9). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Troy Grosam requested his final payment for 232.47 acres (77.49 acres per year) of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$12,785.85. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the payment request for the three-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-11). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Kieth Hartmann requested his final payment for 1,489.2 acres (496.4 acres per year) of cover crop using a multi-species mix in the amount of \$81,906.00. Upon a motion by Wiemann and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the payment request for the three-year cover crop contract (FY23 WBIF-12). Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Dave Evans's (FY23 WBIF-7) two water and sediment control basins were completed. The total cost of the projects came in at \$16,500.00. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the final payment in the amount of \$14,850.00. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve amendment #1 to contract FY23 WBIF-8 increasing the cost share amount by \$2,891.50. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Darwin Gieseke's (FY23 WBIF-8) two water and sediment control basins were completed. The total cost of the projects came in at \$37,611.00. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve the final payment including amendment #1 for the amount of \$20,834.00. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Jim Carlson's (FY23 WBIF-15) terrace was constructed this past fall. The total cost of the project came in at \$15,537.40. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the final payment in the amount of \$13,983.30. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Resolution #2023-4: Wurscher had sent out a copy of the resolution with the Board packet prior to the meeting. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve Resolution #2023-4. This resolution states the District is in support of submission of the plan and that the District intends to adopt the plan for that part of the County that it covers. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

2023 Performance Evaluations: A personnel committee meeting took place on November 27th to discuss several items. The first topic was annual employee reviews. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve the personnel committee's recommendation of all staff increasing wages by one step on the County's performance matrix starting the first pay period in January. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

The second item discussed was the new law in Minnesota regarding the earned sick and safety time (ESST). A handout was included in the Board packet detailing the suggested changes to the Sibley SWCD personnel handbook. Wiemann asked if all employees had reviewed the language prior to the meeting. Bushman had not yet seen the changes and Wurscher was instructed to provide a copy to him after the meeting. Upon a motion by Nielsen, seconded by Thies, it was moved to adopt the proposed changes to the personnel handbook effective starting January 1st, 2024. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Lastly, it was discussed adding additional office space. Currently, the District is running out of storage space and has limited room to add any additional staff. The District's current 10 year lease started January 1st, 2018 and the district pays \$1.14 per square foot. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Wiemann, it was moved to approve exploring additional office space within the building. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Banking: With O'Brien's probation period ending on December 5th, a motion was made by Wiemann and seconded by Thies, approving to move forward with acquiring her a debit card and FillMeUp gas card. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

ProGrowth Bank in Gaylord was the official depository in 2023 for the SWCD. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to leave all banking matters as they were in 2023. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Supervisor Committees/Assignments: A motion was made by Wiemann and seconded by Nielsen, moving to approve the board positions as follows: Chair –Thies, Vice Chair – Evenson, Secretary – Wiemann, Treasurer – Nielsen, Member – Grams. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Then a motion was made by Thies and seconded by Nielsen, leaving all committee assignments as they were in 2023. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Supervisor & Staff Reports: See attached staff reports.

Other Business: Wurscher brought up that the Districts annual membership was up with the Soil Health Coalition. A motion made by Nielsen, seconded by Thies, moved to pay the \$25 towards the annual membership renewal to the Soil Health Coalition.

Next Meeting: January 9th, 2024, starting at 4 p.m., located at 112 5th Street, Gaylord, MN.

Adjourn: Upon a motion by Wiemann seconded by Thies, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m. Ayes Grams, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann, Nielsen. Carried.

Approved: January 9, 2024

Secretary