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## MINNESOTA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Minutes of the Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District, Conference Call on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

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

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

Others Present: District Manager, Joel Wurscher  
District Technician, Jeremy Buckentin  
Conservation Technician, Jack Bushman  
District Conservationist-NRCS, April Sullivan  
District Conservationist-Team Lead- NRCS, Jacob Stich  
Board Conservationist–BWSR, Jenny Mocol-Johnson  
Sibley County Commissioner, Joy Cohrs  
Area Fisheries Supervisor–MN DNR, Scott Mackenthun

Before the pledge of allegiance and introductions, Wurscher stated that the board meeting would be held in accordance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021. Wurscher followed that by announcing the meeting would be conducted by telephone due to the health pandemic and declared emergency.

Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the May agenda. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the minutes of the April 2021 meeting. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve 33 paid bills for the month of April totaling \$30,962.04. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Thies, it was moved to approve the May 2021 Treasurer's report subjected to audit. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

**Old Business:** Wurscher recapped the discussion from the last month's meeting about the CPL grant working towards replacing the dam at the outlet of High Island Lake. Scott Mackenthun gave some background of the situation, described how Covid-19 has impacted the process, and provided more background of how the CPL grant was developed. Mackenthun described how the dam would still be state owned and all liability/maintenance would also fall upon the DNR. Mackenthun then gave an update on the engineering and that latest estimated project cost (\$675,554.00). With the latest information

provided by Mackenthun, a motion was made by Nielsen and seconded by Evenson, to continue ahead on partnering with the project. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

**Tree Program Update:** Wurscher gave a short report recapping the 2021 tree program sales. Buckentin added that two customers had used the tree planter with success. He then stated that emails will not be used next year to notify customers of their pick-up date and that the district will send postcards instead. Lastly, Buckentin noted that the SWCD may need to order earlier for next year's program. For 2021, the District had placed their nursery orders in September of 2020.

**CTS – Server and Firewall:** Wurscher described an issue with the server being short on memory. He contacted CTS for a solution and described to the board a quote he had received. Upon a motion by Thies and seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to approve the memory/storage upgrade as Wurscher had described in the amount of \$1,590.08. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried. Wurscher then told the board that the Firewall subscription was going to run out on June 14<sup>th</sup>. There were two options, upgrade the Firebox since the old one will no longer be formatted next year or renew the subscription and upgrade next year. A motion was made by Nielsen and seconded by Thies, to renew the firewall subscription for one more year at a rate of \$260 and proceed with the necessary upgrade next year. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

**MASWCD 2021 Call for Resolutions:** Wurscher briefly gave an overview of this year's process for submitting resolutions. After some discussion, it was decided that no resolutions will be submitted from Sibley SWCD this year.

**Covid-19:** Sullivan and Stich gave a summary of the current USDA office policies regarding Covid-19. Wiemann had some concern about spaces of the office in which employees co-mingle. Sullivan responded that breakrooms are supposed to be off limits and that the conference room is supposed to be limited use. Stich added that currently he is leaving it up to each office to determine their mask usage based upon their comfortability. Cohrs informed the board that County employees entering the Courthouse must wear masks, however a lot of them take them off at their workstations. Upon a motion by Nielsen and seconded by Evenson, it was moved to approve that all staff return to the office starting in June. Staff are to come to a consensus whether or not to wear masks within the SWCD space but must wear masks when in the common areas co-located with USDA. In addition, staff need to meet with producers onsite or outside of the office. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

**LWG Meeting:** It was decided that the SWCD host the local work group (LWG) meeting on Monday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, starting at 10am located at the Fireman's Shelter in Gaylord.

**NRCS Report:** See attached monthly report.

**Supervisor & Staff Report:** See attached monthly staff reports. Cohrs thanked the board for agreeing to help out the Friends of High Island and the DNR with their CPL grant.

**Other Business:** Wurscher asked the board if any member would like to join the staff in this year's Evolution Shirts order of SWCD logo apparel. None of the members were interested in participating and Wurscher stated that he would follow up with Grams.

**Next Meeting:** June 8, 2021, starting at 4 p.m., via conference call.

**Adjourn:** Upon a motion by Thies seconded by Nielsen, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 p.m. Ayes Nielsen, Thies, Evenson, Wiemann. Carried.

Approved: June 8, 2021

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Secretary