



Who we are as an organization – Mille Lacs SWCD is applying a civic governance approach to SWCD actions and activities. The work of the SWCD and the outcomes of its activities will produce a base of active citizens with common interest in sustainable soil & water conservation. All stakeholders are committed to organize, educate, and apply policy according to principles and standards instituted in democracy.

Frequently Used Acronyms:

(AgBMP) Agricultural BMP Loan Programs

(SCS) State Cost Share

(BWSR) Board of Water & Soil Resources

(CLWMP) County Local Water Mgmt Plan

(SWCD) Soil & Water Conservation District

(MASWCD) MN Assn. of Soil & Water Cons. Districts

(MLLWMG) Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Mgmt Group

(NRBG) Natural Resources Block Grant

(PFM) Private Forest Management

(CAI) County Agricultural Inspector

(NRCS) Natural Resources Conservation Service

(WCA) Wetland Conservation Act

(SRWMB) Snake River Watershed Mgmt Board

(CWF) Clean Water Fund

(TSA 3) Technical Service Area 3

(MAWQCP) MN Ag. Water Quality Certification Program

(WPLMN) Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network

(1W1P) One Watershed, One Plan

(PTM) Priority Target Measure

(JAA) Job Approval Authority

Mille Lacs SWCD Board Meeting – MINUTES
Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse, Conference Room D with remote option for the public.

Members Present:

Chair, Jake Janski, District 3 – (remote non-voting)

Vice Chair, Kurt Beckstrom, District 2

Treasurer, Andre LaSalle, District 4

Secretary, Dan Campbell, District 1

Member, Robert Hoefert, District 5

Staff Present:

District Administrator, Susan Shaw

Watershed Coordinator, Harmony Maslowski

Participating Guests:

Commissioner Liaison, Genny Reynolds

Members Absent: none

Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance – Vice Chair Beckstrom called the meeting to order at 6: 02 PM

1. Conflict of Interest Declaration – Supervisors were requested to identify any real or perceived conflicts of interest they may have regarding meeting business. The conflict-of-interest declaration form was provided to each for signature.

2. Approval of Agenda – (additions and deletions of new business or committee reports)

• additions - 4.c NRCS report; 6.f Personnel Cmte Rpt

• deletions - _____

Motion by Hoefert to approve the agenda as amended. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. **The motion carried.**

3. Open Public Forum - Board policy limits public forum time for board meeting topics not scheduled within the agenda to 10 minutes, but allows time extension by vote. - **No public comment.**

4. Consent Agenda

a. Approve April 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

b. Approve Monthly Disbursements - Electronic transfer's #E22-061- E22-077 and checks written #7838-7848, totaling \$162,030.01.

c. Information Only: Partner Reports, Project Summaries, News Releases

Motion by LaSalle to approve the consent agenda as presented. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

5. Staff Reports/Presentations

- a. Administrators Report - Shaw reported that the County Commissioners briefly visited the SWCD office April 26 for county government appreciation day. Topics discussed included comprehensive watershed planning and staff capacity to meet financial management, as well as ag and forestry assistance in the community.

The Mille Lacs county USDA Local Work Group public input meeting is tentatively set for June 14 and is being coordinated by Ms. Maslowski and Ms. Zeroth of NRCS in coordination with the Kanabec SWCD & NRCS offices.

6. District Policy, Planning, Activities, Projects, Grants

- a. Comprehensive Watershed Planning (1W1P) updates

- i. Rum River – 1W1P Policy Cmte (Janski/Maslowski/Shaw)

Plan Approval Updates:

- o The plan is set to be approved by BWSR on May 25th
- o A draft resolution and final Joint Powers Entity agreement (JPE) with instructions will be sent out at that time. Each LGU will have 60 days to adopt the plan and sign onto the JPE in order to be an initial partner.
- o Entering into the JPE and the plan adoption can/should happen at the same meeting - but NOT until after the plan is approved. Anticipate this action to be requested at the June or July meeting
- o There is a process described in the JPE agreement for those who plan to sign on after the 60 days.

JPE Updates:

- o We need an attorney to represent the JPE. The attorney group plans to meet to discuss who, if any, would be the best fit.
- o Policy Members have been asked to bring this up with their county attorney.
- o The tasks are pretty minimal:
 - Short Term needs (pro-bono): bylaws, BWSR grant agreement review, JPE authority questions.
 - Long-term needs (grant reimbursable): partner subcontracts, various entity related questions as they arise.

- 1. Consider request for ML SWCD attorney role in next steps - Consensus of the board that we should offer the opportunity to act as the Rum Watershed Partnership attorney to the ML county attorney’s office, but agreement it is unlikely they have the capacity to fill the role at this time.

- ii. Snake River – Management Board/CAC & 1W1P Policy Cmte (Beckstrom/Hoefert)

Beckstrom attended the Pine county public input meeting. A joint powers agreement will be discussed at the May 23rd policy committee meeting. The technical advisory committee will review the draft plan early June in prep for the policy committee to review next.

Beckstrom noted that when the issue of inviting eligible entities such as Chisago and Isanti SWCDs and counties, and Tribal entities into the implementation organizational partnership, it generated discussion. Cmsr Smith of Kanabec county said he wanted the discussion to be tabled until the Mille Lacs Cmsr was present for the discussion.

- iii. Mississippi St. Cloud / Sartell – 1W1P Policy Cmte (Campbell/Hoefert)

The process has stalled. More discussion is needed to determine who will be the fiscal agent as well as whether to move forward with a JPE or MOU format agreement. A hybrid document was drafted and BWSR provided comment. There will be a May 26th attorney meeting to review this. These discussions will necessitate extending the timeline and have resulted in delaying the consultant interviews.

b. Area3/MASWCD Business

i. MASWCD Call for Resolutions – info provided

- ii. Proposed resolution to exempt SWCDs from MDA Nursery Dealer Certification – Janski introduce the resolution and noted he had discussed it with MASWCD who was surprised SWCDs were not already exempt. Janski and Beckstrom had shared the resolution with reps from SWCD Areas 2, 4 and 8 and a few SWCD in Area 3. Many were supportive of the resolution and plan to bring to their Area meetings.

Beckstrom read feedback in opposition to the resolution from Mark Schnobrich of Area 8.

Janski noted that MLSWCD staff had suggested we reach out to MDA as well get their input which would reflect our civic process of including stakeholders impacted by decision in the decision-making process.

Motion by LaSalle to approve the resolution to exempt SWCDs from MDA nursery dealer certification. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

Resolutions meeting will be June 10th: Beckstrom and Janski plan to attend, Hoefert hopes to attend.

Motion by Hoefert to approve attendance at the June 10th Area 3 Resolutions meeting by any staff or board member who can attend. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

c. 2017 Strategic Plan Review - renew it as it, update it or sunset it?

Comments by Janski that goals 1,2,3 &5 remain relevant but goal 4 needs consideration in light of recent Rum Comprehensive Watershed plan goals. Beckstrom thinks the plan is still relevant but would like to review together. Decision by Vice Chair Beckstrom to table discussion until the June meeting when all could hopefully be in person.

- d. Anoka SWCD request for letter of support for a Rum River Stabilization grant – Anoka conservation district is applying for Lessard Sam’s Outdoor Heritage Funds (LSOHF) to implement river stabilization projects that will enhance the Rum River corridor as a wildlife habitat network. Since we have limited staff capacity at this time MLSWCD staff will not take an active role in this grant but will refer possible projects to Anoka.

Motion by Hoefert to send a letter of support for the LSOHF application. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

e. Interseeder maintenance

Motion by LaSalle to approve compensation to Kurt Beckstrom at the \$60 per diem rate for each rental he assists with. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

Kurt Beckstrom reported that he and Chris Carlson worked on the no-till drills three times for a couple hours each time this spring to do maintenance and repairs. Beckstrom feels it would be appropriate to compensate Mr. Carlson for his work.

Motion by LaSalle to approve payment to Chris Carlson in the amount of \$180 for six hours work. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

f. Personnel Committee report – Civic governance pilot exploration

LaSalle reported that the personnel committee had met with staff to discuss how the civic governance pilot was proceeding. The effort hints at meeting the 2017 strategic plan goals but staff reported it felt like a heavy work load. The committee asked staff to list pros and cons that all three staff agreed on.

(pro) The use of Civic Governance standards and principles to do the work of the district has engaged landowners and community in decision making processes leading to more sustainable conservation practices.

(pro) Landowners are more committed to problem solving because they have had input in defining the problems and solutions.

(pro) We like the flexibility to make adjustments as needed toward goals considering the real state of things.

(pro) We like the feedback loop of keeping people informed with 1:1s.

(pro) And it seems to fit with what BWSR is asking for, that we 'use different engagement approaches' *(BWSR uses different language for this)*

What we do is overwhelming and that is something we knew to be true before we began testing CG.

(con) However, learning advanced Civic Governance skills has proven to be time consuming, repetitive, complicated and confusing.

(con) There is a time-consuming learning curve,

(con) and there are times we get stuck "rehashing" where it feels like we aren't getting anywhere

(con) Long term goals and standards of success are unclear at this time.

Solutions to get unstuck: Slow down, get good at current skill level before moving on to advanced skills. Acknowledge there is a lengthy learning curve, but at the same time we can move on with our work using the skills we understand. We can "put a pin in it for now," say "good enough" and then move forward.

Next steps are to figure out the measurables at the June mid-point evaluation in order to have clear metrics for the December end-point evaluation where the district would decide whether or not to continue the pilot exploration into a third year.

7. Financials

- a. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Finance Committee Member) - LaSalle reconciled the accounts last week and everything looked good.
- b. Financial Updates
 - i. Hiring updates – Shaw reported that the Financial Specialist position has been posted for two weeks with an initial deadline of May 11th. It is posted as a ½ time position with possibility of full time in the future, but no applications have been received. The position will now be posted continuously and an additional note that it is eligible for PERA retirement and prorated vacation/sick leave. As a ½ time position (avg 30 hrs over 12 months) it is not eligible for PEIP health insurance if the SWCD follows MLC policy guidelines.
 1. **Motion by Campbell to approve the Financial Specialist position description.** Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.
- c. SRW 1W1P Planning Grant P20-9953 fiscal expenditures to be reimbursed:
 - i. Stantec Invoice #1915206 March 19-April 15, 2022 - \$5,687.50 consultant plan writing
 - ii. Kanabec SWCD Qtr 1 2022 - \$2,432.65 program coordination & outreach
 - iii. Caleb Anderson (Pine County) - \$105.58 for outreach/input meeting refreshments

Motion by Hoefert to approve payment to Stantec in the amount of \$5,687.50, Kanabec SWCD in the amount of \$2,432.65 and Caleb Anderson (Pine County) in the amount of \$105.58 for eligible expenses under the SRW 1w1p grant P20-9953. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.
- d. Tree Sale – The primary purpose of the program has been agreed to be multipurpose: Increase native trees being planted in the region, introduce people to the SWCD, and have the revenue generated pay for the cost to operate the program.

Shaw reported 9,700 trees were purchased or donated and we can assume planted in the area as a result of the effort. Approximately 100 customers purchased trees. The tree distribution event went smoothly. Customers surveyed responded that the wait in line to pick up trees as a drive through was less than expected and they were happy. 22 bundles (550 trees) were unsold and donated to a local boy scout troupe as a project and to the City of Princeton. Because some trees were unsold the overall program revenue was approximately \$500 short of breaking even.

8. Informational Updates

- a. Water Management/Workgroups
 - i. Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert)
 - ii. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group (Janski/LaSalle)
 Planning for the July 9 Community Stewards meeting at Father Hennepin State Park. MLBO will host a lakeshore cleanup event May 20. Healthy Land Healthy Lake event planning started.
 - iii. Forestry Association(LaSalle/Campbell)
 - iv. Local Water Management Plan Advisory Committee(LaSalle/Beckstrom)

9. Approved SWCD Meetings & Events - Motion by Hoefert to approve supervisor attendance/reimbursement for the following meetings. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. The motion carried.

- a. 1W1P Rum River Policy Committee (Janski/Beckstrom) TBD possible no May meeting
- a. Snake River Watershed CAC & Board Meeting (Beckstrom/Hoefert) TBD Tentative May 23rd @ 9:00
- b. 1W1P Snake River Policy Committee May 23rd @ 10:30
- 1W1P Snake River TAC (Beckstrom as PC liaison) ~~May 12th~~ 1st week June @ 1:30, remote option
- c. Mississippi-St. Cloud Watershed Policy Committee (Campbell/Hoefert) TBD @ 1-3:00, Location TBD
- d. TSA Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) June 23 @ 10:00
- e. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Mgmt. Group (Janski/LaSalle) June 20 @ 10:00, remote
- f. SWCD Forestry Association (LaSalle/Campbell) May 19 @ 10:00
- g. Local Water Management Plan Advisory Committee (LaSalle/Beckstrom) TBD
- h. Internal Operational Committee Meetings
 - i. Finance (Hoefert/LaSalle) TBD – set at the June Bd mtg
 - 1. Statement reconciliation w/Quickbooks (LaSalle) monthly
 - ii. Personnel (Janski/LaSalle)
 - 1. Civic Governance review TBD June
 - iii. Conservation (Beckstrom/Campbell) TBD – need to plan the 2023 tree sale before Sept.
 - iv. Public Outreach (Beckstrom/Campbell) TBD – Beckstrom plans to photo document a no-till planting
 - v. One on One Meetings with Administrator please schedule monthly as needed
- i. Area 3 Resolutions meeting June 10 @ 9AM-2PM, Carlton Transportation Bldg
- j. Area 3 Fall Meeting – SAVE THE DATE Sept. 8-9, Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade MN

10. Supervisor Updates

11. Evaluate the Meeting –

12. Next Regular Meeting – June 8, 2022 - 6PM, Historic Courthouse, conference room D. A remote option will continue to be offered for presenters and the public. Board members will meet in person.

13. Adjourn – Vice Chair Beckstrom adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM



Dan Campbell, Mille Lacs SWCD Secretary

6-8-2022

Date

Our specific purpose or vision is to organize more sustainable partnership between government and community, by developing and supporting an active role for all citizens in managing soil & water resources, that will ensure soil and water resources can meet the needs and the common good of all citizens.

