



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:

(1W1P) One Watershed, One Plan (BWSR program)
 (AgBMP) Agricultural BMP Loan Programs
 (BMP) Best Management Practice
 (BWSR) Board of Water & Soil Resources
 (CAI) County Agricultural Inspector
 (CWF) Clean Water Fund
 (JAA) Job Approval Authority
 (JPA, E or C) Joint Powers Agreement, Entity or Collaborative)
 (RRWP) Rum River Watershed Partnership (JPE board)
 (MRSC) Mississippi River St. Cloud
 (SWCD) Soil & Water Conservation District
 (LGU) Local Government Unit
 (MASWCD) MN Assn. of Soil & Water Cons. Districts

(MLBO) Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
 (MLLWMG) Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Mgmt Group
 (MLSWCD) Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District
 (NACD) National Association of Conservation Districts
 (NRCS) Natural Resources Conservation Service
 (PFM) Private Forest Management
 (SCS) State Cost Share
 (SRWMB) Snake River Watershed Mgmt Board (JPE board)
 (SRW PC) Snake River Watershed Policy Cmte (MOU board)
 (TSA 3) Technical Service Area 3 – SWCD Engineering
 (MAWQCP) MN Ag. Water Quality Certification Program
 (WPLMN) Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network
 (WCA) Wetland Conservation Act

Mille Lacs SWCD Board Meeting – MINUTES
Thursday, November 8, 2023

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

Members Present:

Chair, Jake Janski, District 3
 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
 Financial Specialist, Pam Kuhn

Participating Guests:

Commissioner Liaison, Genny Reynolds
 NRCS, Barb Zeroth

Members Absent: none

Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance– Chair Janski called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 – 5.f cost share rate discussion
- deletions - _____

Motion by Beckstrom to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Hoefert. Affirmative: Beckstrom, 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. – Ms. Zeroth provided an NRCS report and highlights.

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 11, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. Account Quick Report - Approve Monthly Disbursements - Electronic transfer's #E23-188 - E23-214 and checks written #7999-8007, totaling \$35,790.73.
- c. Budget versus Actual comparison
- d. Information Only: Partner Reports, Project Summaries, News Releases

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

5. District Policy, Finance, Planning, Activities, Projects, Grants

- a. Financial Update (Treasurer/Financial Specialist)
 - i. Treasurer’s Report – Ms. Kuhn reviewed the October report. The report will need to be updated to reflect staff time for grant program work which is currently being tracked out of District funds.
 - ii. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Finance Committee Member) - Shaw reconciled the bank statement with the QuickBooks accounting system.

- b. Personnel & District Capacity
 - i. Personnel probationary reviews..... (Administrator/Personnel Committee)
Probationary period will end in December for Ms. Kuhn and January for Ms. Dean.
 - ii. Hiring process updates (Administrator/Personnel Committee)
Candidates for the Watershed Organizer/Coordinator position were interviewed some were invited for a second-round interview Nov 13th.

Motion by Beckstrom to authorize the personnel committee and administrator to make a conditional offer of employment to a qualified candidate for the Watershed Coordinator position. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Beckstrom, Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. **The motion carried.**

- iii. Employee and supervisor handbook policy changes..... (discussion)
Shaw reported there are numerous changes to state law that will affect personnel policies and leave provisions. Shaw will plan to provide a draft of needed updates for review or action in December.

- c. Civic Governance policy – consider continuation of pilot (discussion/action)

Janski reported that the personnel committee and Administrator have met to discuss the continuation of the civic governance pilot. A year ago, Ms. Shaw had asked about reconfirming the policy but it was kicked down the road. After careful consideration, the personnel committee is behind the concept that it is good for implementing but there has been a struggle with learning. The committee is under the impression that we are learning from our mistakes, which is what happens in a pilot. Over 2023 Shaw has demonstrated she is able to make course corrections at a higher speed. The committee wants to give this the time it needs to intuitively advance vs force it with deadlines that are too short. Therefore the personnel committee would like to re-up the policy for 24 months and plans to develop new metrics that get at staff buy in around the policy.

WHEREAS The MLSWCD is aware that mistrust may exist between government entities and the community. Government often sees its role as ‘expert’ and pushes agendas in the community; while individuals in the community often look to the government to ‘fix’ water quality problems, seeing their role fulfilled by voting or paying taxes etc. This presents a barrier to achieving sustainable conservation actions at the scale needed to solve complex water resource challenges. A new approach to managing soil & water resources should be tested to ensure soil and water resources can meet the needs and the common good of all citizens for generations.

WHEREAS The MLSWCD has been testing the Civic Organizing Inc civic governance framework for several years. The Personnel Committee of the board adopted the civic governance framework as policy for how staff accomplish the work of the District on June 12, 2019 and a pilot was initially approved by the board on 12/09/2020.

WHEREAS The District Administrator is providing civic leadership development to apply the civic governance framework to staff roles and the work of the district, and

WHEREAS By applying a civic governance approach to SWCD actions and activities, we propose 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, and

WHEREAS The Personnel Committee and staff are willing to explore a pilot to determine if the framework is beneficial to achieve the goals of the organization.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board adopt the Civic Governance Framework Document as the practice and policy for the way that the Staff and Board of the Mille Lacs SWCD do the work of the District and extend the pilot demonstration an additional two years to sunset December 31, 2025, unless further action is taken.

Motion by Hoefert to adopt the civic governance policy resolution. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Beckstrom, Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. **The motion carried.**

- d. BWSR CWF Grant – Central Mille Lacs Co Targeted Well Sealing (C23-6045)
 - i. Contract C23-6045-3:
Motion by Beckstrom to authorize payment to Kelly Applegate for well sealing in the amount of \$292.50, based on 50% of the estimated eligible cost of \$585.00, not to exceed @292.50. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Beckstrom, Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. **The motion carried.**
 - e. BWSR 2023 Resource Conservation Partnership Grant (P23-1461)
 - i. Irrigation Water Management - Contract P23-1461-MLSWCD-1..... **(action)**
Motion by Beckstrom to approve Contract P23-1461-MLSWCD-1, to install a conservation irrigation system for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, pending technical signoff, and in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 for expenses deemed eligible under the grant. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Beckstrom, Hoefert, LaSalle, Campbell. Opposed: none. **The motion carried.**
 - f. Cost share rate discussion:
Mr. Hoefert indicated it has come to his attention that the Snake River watershed will have cost share for projects under a policy that requires 25% match by cooperators. He is concerned that not all cooperators will be able to cover a 25% match for some practices and wanted to know what flexibility exists for adjusting match requirements and cost share rates. Shaw described the types of flexibility the MLSWCD and watershed partnerships have to adjust cost share policies under various grants.

6. Informational Updates

- a. Comprehensive Watershed Planning (1W1P) updates
 - i. Rum River Watershed Partnership JPE BoardJanski (Beckstrom)
 - ii. Snake River Watershed 1W1P Policy Cmte Beckstrom (Hoefert)
Draft administrative service contracts have been provided for review.

Snake River Watershed Management Board Beckstrom
A public hearing was held but then tabled because there was a split opinion on dissolution of the Snake River Watershed Management Board.
 - iii. Miss/St. Cloud 1W1P Policy Cmte Campbell (Hoefert)
- b. Area3/MASWCD Business..... (Beckstrom-A3 Director/Janski-A3 Exec Cmte)
- c. Water Management/Workgroups
 - i. Technical Service Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert)
 - ii. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group (Janski/LaSalle)
Good strategic planning session.
 - iii. Forestry Association(LaSalle/Campbell)
- d. General Project Updates
 - i. Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts (info)

- ii. Groundwater/drinking water safety (info)
- iii. Agriculture (info)
- iv. Forestry..... (info)
- v. Information/outreach..... (info)

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

- a. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) JPE Board (Janski/Beckstrom)..... Jan 25 @ 4:30
 - i. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) liaison (Janski) Nov 20 @ 9:00
- b. Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) JPE Board (Beckstrom/Hoefert)..... Nov 20 @ 10:30
- c. Snake River Watershed CAC & Board Meeting (Beckstrom/Hoefert) TBD Nov 20 @ 9:00
- d. Mississippi-St. Cloud Watershed Policy Committee (Campbell/Hoefert) TBD
- e. TSA Area 3 (LaSalle/Hoefert) Dec 27 @ 10:00
- f. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Mgmt. Group (Janski/LaSalle) Nov 20 @ 10:00
- g. SWCD Forestry Association (LaSalle/Campbell) Nov 16 @ 10:00
- h. Area 3/MASWCD meetings
 - i. MASWCD Annual Convention (all Board members encouraged to attend).....Dec 11-13
- i. Internal Operational Committee Meetings
 - i. Finance (Hoefert/LaSalle)
 - 1. Statement reconciliation w/Quickbooks (LaSalle) monthly
 - 2. Finance Committee (Hoefert/LaSalle)..... TBD
 - ii. Personnel (Janski/LaSalle)
 - 1. Hiring (1st round interviews) Janski/LaSalle Nov 2 @ 1:30
 - 2. Hiring (2nd round interviews) Janski Nov 13
 - 3. Civic Governance review Nov 7
 - 4. Personnel Reviews (Janski/LaSalle)..... early Dec
 - iii. Conservation (Beckstrom/Campbell) Feb to prepare for cropping season
 - 1. Rental Equipment management (Beckstrom/LaSalle)..... as needed
 - iv. Public Outreach (Beckstrom/Campbell)
 - 1. Employee/Citizen recognition plan..... TBD
 - v. One on One Meetings with Administrator please schedule monthly as needed

8. Supervisor Updates

LaSalle saw a report that 71% of shallow wells in Wisconsin have PFAs in them.

Beckstrom reported that BWSR approved a grant to provide funding for soil health.

9. Evaluate the Meeting – good meeting

10. Next Regular Meeting – THURSDAY, Dec 14, 6:00 PM, Historic Courthouse, conference room D. A remote option will continue to be offered for presenters and the public. Board members will meet in person.

11. Adjourn – Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 7:37PM



 Dan Campbell, Mille Lacs SWCD Secretary

12/14/2023

 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.