

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REORGANIZATIONAL BOARD MEETING
COURTHOUSE COUNTY BOARD ROOM
715 4TH STREET * INTERNATIONAL FALLS * MN * 56649
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020**

Members Present:	Ralph Lewis	District I
	George Aitchison	District II
	Eldon Voigt	District III
	Richard Dreher	District IV
	Al Linder	District V

Others Present:	Pam Tomevi	District Administrator
	Jolen Simon	Program Coordinator
	Eric Olson	Resource Conservationist
	Sam Soderman	Water Resource Specialist
	James Aasen	Forest Resource Specialist
	Kevin Adee	Koochiching County Commissioner

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**2020/1-1 Motion by Linder, seconded by Aitchison to approve the agenda with corrections
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

**2020/1-2 Motion by Dreher, seconded by Linder to approve the minutes dated December 3,
2018 with corrections.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

As per District policy to elect the chairman and vice chairman on a rotational basis, Supervisor George Aitchison was elected Chair and Supervisor Eldon Voigt was elected Vice Chair for calendar year 2020.

Chair Lewis turned the meeting over to the new Chair, Supervisor Aitchison.

Supervisor Ralph Lewis accepted the office of Board Treasurer and Supervisor Richard Dreher accepted the office of Board Secretary for calendar year 2020.

2020/1-3 Motion by Linder, seconded by Dreher authorizing committee member(s) and/or alternate(s) to attend scheduled committee meetings up to a maximum of 2 board members per meeting and approve committee assignments as follows:

- Budget Committee: Ralph Lewis/Eldon Voigt/Administrator
- Personnel Committee: Ralph Lewis/George Aitchison/Administrator
- Education/Public Relations Committee: Al Linder/Richard Dreher/Administrator
- North Central MN JPB: Al Linder (Eldon Voigt – Alternate)
- Laurentian RC&D: Al Linder (Eldon Voigt – Alternate)
- MN SWCD Forestry Association: Eldon Voigt (Ralph Lewis – Alternate)
- Big Fork River Board: Richard Dreher/ George Aitchison
- Little Fork/Rat Root River Board: Al Linder/George Aitchison

- Int'l Watershed Advisory Committee: Eldon Voigt/Ralph Lewis
- Wood Ash Committee: Richard Dreher/Al Linder
- Others (As deemed necessary and approved by the Board)

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-4 Motion by Linder, seconded by Voigt to approve the following reorganizational meeting business:

- keep monthly meeting date and time as the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. for November-April meetings and 7:00 p.m. for May-October meetings;
- keep supervisor compensation rates at \$75 for all meetings;
- adopt the 2020 mileage reimbursement rate set by the IRS;
- designate Bremer Bank and Border State Bank as official depositories of the Koochiching SWCD (see MN Statute 118A.002);
- keep The Journal as the official newspaper;
- grant district check signing authority to Pam Tomevi, Jolén Simon, Ralph Lewis, and Eldon Voigt.
- define ordinary and necessary bills to mean all bills, not to exceed approved operating budget, with the following exceptions (requiring prior Board approval): Dues, publication subscriptions, employee expense reports, and special projects/expenses not included in the approved operating budget.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis approving updated asset inventory list as of 12/31/2019 as presented (details on file).

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-6 Motion by Lewis seconded by Linder to ratify paid bills, check numbers 10955 to 10975 including electronic transfers, in the total amount of \$49,312.12 (details on file).

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-7 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Linder to approve the Treasurer's report ending December 31, 2019 as presented.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-8 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to approve accounts payable in the amount of \$3,442.75 and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills between January 7, 2020 and February 3, 2020, not to exceed budget.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Supervisor Reports

Dreher reported on his attendance at the Bartlett Lake meeting in Northome on December 5 where suggestions were taken from the public on what could be done for the lake and his attendance at the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed meeting in Kelliher on December 12.

Voigt reported on his attendance at the MASWCD Annual Convention. Discussion included potential changes in wetland permit management between the state of Minnesota and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Lewis reported on a letter from the MN Health Coalition asking for membership. SWCD staff will look into it and bring back to the February meeting for discussion.

Committee Reports

2020/1-9 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis approving Personnel Committee recommendation “PC 2020-1 Staff Wages and Benefits” as presented (details on file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2020/1-10 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis approving Budget Committee recommendation “BC 2020-1 Operating Budget” as presented (details on file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

See attached.

District Administrator Report

See attached.

Resource Conservationist Report

See attached.

Water Resources Specialist Report

See attached.

Forest Resource Specialist Report

See attached.

Program Coordinator

See attached.

NEW BUSINESS

Quote for 2019 Financial Audit (Review/Approve)

2020/1-11 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to accept the bid from Peterson Company, LTD for the 2019 financial audit in the amount of \$2,725 and authorize the signatures of the Chair and District Administrator on the bid engagement letter.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2019 PERA Exclusion Report

2020/1-12 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison approving the 2019 PERA Exclusion Report as presented (details on file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

Verbal authorization was given for the Vice-Chair and the District Administrator to attend the 2020 Area VIII Manager/Chair Meeting in Bemidji on January 7 (Chair unable to attend).

2020/1-13 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Linder authorizing all board members and staff to attend the 2020 Lake of the Woods Watershed Forum March 11-12 in International Falls.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

General Business:

Discussion included the MAWQCP program and direct deposit for supervisors.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the courthouse board meeting room.

Adjourn Meeting:

2020/1-14 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Submitted by:

Board Secretary, Richard Dreher

Date

Approved:

Chair, George Aitchison

Date



December 2019 NRCS Report
By: Jody Peek CST-DC

01/06/2020

- CSP:
 - Funding from OMB (Office of Budget & Management) came to MN very late in year. Field offices were able to begin making payment on 12/13/19. Field staff were able to make 98 payments of 103 that wanted paid in 2019 in the Baudette field office. Cari Reopke, DC in Bagley and Dan Pazdernik, DC in Park Rapids assisted the field office to ensure that all payments were certified and approved.
 - Contracts that have been in for 10 years expire Dec 31st 2019. They will have a 2 year cooling off period before they will be eligible to sign back up again.
 - Contracts that have been in for 5 years that were set to expire in December have been modified to extend their expiration date. These contract holders may have the option to renew their contracts for another 5 years.
- EQIP
 - No information on FY2020 signup
 - Taking applications in preparation for the next signup
- CRP
 - General Conservation Reserve Program Signup: December 9, 2019 – February 28th, 2020)
- Bemidji CST Staffing Update:
 - Wade Jackson started his duties as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Bagley Office on November 25th.
 - Two vacancies have been advertised. One was to hire a Soil Conservationist (GS-5-9) in the Bemidji Field Office this vacancy closed on 01/03/20. The 2nd vacancy is open right now and is for a Resource Conservationist to be housed in the Baudette Field Office (GS-11). This vacancy closes on 01/13/20.
- Other Items
 - Attended the MASWCD convention on December 8th-10th.
 - Assisted Zach Gutknecht in manning a booth at the Upper/Lower Red Lake WRAPS Public Meeting.

Koochiching SWCD District Administrator Report

December 2019

- **Buffer**
 - X
- **BWSR Conservation Delivery**
 - Area 8 meeting assistance; MASWCD State Convention; BWSR interview; Website updates; time tracking coding; budget updates for 2020
- **BWSR Local Capacity**
 - Staff updates; work plan review; time tracker template updates
- **Cost Share**
 - X
- **County/District**
 - Plat Book sales; financial software updates; 2020 draft billing rates
- **MPCA Contracts**
 - Expense/time tracking; new contract development;
- **Natural Resource Block Grant**
 - Review of potential funding for projects re: Bartlett Lake Management/1W1P; Website updates; GIS web mapping; eLink reporting; news article re: Rat Root River project; Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club meeting and review of upcoming projects/conversations with former Senator Bob Lessard
- **Wood Ash**
 - X

General Administration

- Board meeting prep/follow-up items; Board minutes/agenda; staff meetings/training; calendar update/time tracking; Payroll; PERA; FWT/SWT; bank statement reconciliation; QB transactions/updates; Treasurer Report; Accounts Receivable; Accounts Payable, budget updates; bank deposits/online banking; staff meetings; file/record maintenance; general phone/mail/email

Submitted by:

Pam Tomevi, District Administrator

Resource Conservationist Report

December 2019

WCA

- Talking to ESD on notices for upcoming projects and decisions with other agencies.
- Assisting landowners with permit process and identifying areas of wetlands on possible wetland properties in the area.
- Working with DNR, BWSR, and ACOE on getting information for permits and actual project implementation.
- Continued work on WCA tasks and updating Koochiching ESD on in-progress projects.
- Work with various landowners and conservation officers on violations, potential violations, restoration orders, and regulations.

Wood Ash

- Assisting landowners with process/working with DH contracting.
- Ash production is picking up again and should remain stable (~3 loads/day)
- Working with DH contracting on permits and areas to dump/spread with current conditions.

Cost Share

- Meeting with TSA 8 project facilitator for new process on requesting assistance and visiting sites for potential/ongoing projects.

Water Quality

- Checking river conditions daily and communicating with DNR and other areas districts.
- Calls to project manager and other agencies to check status on other river conditions and entering data.
- Hydrograph analysis on sites.

Miscellaneous

- Attended Bartlett Lake meeting in Northome.
- County hazard mitigation plan and riverbank/hospital plans.
- Vacation/holiday

Submitted by: Eric Olson

Koochiching SWCD Forest Resource Specialist's Report

December 2019

Local Capacity-Forestry-Conservation Delivery

- Researched general forestry and forest health topics.
- Processed contracts for several upcoming Forest Stewardship Plans.
- Completed a forest stewardship plan and began another.
- Helped many landowners with new SFIA, FSP, and CAP requirements.
- Finished an FSP and worked on writing a CAP plan.
- Held discussions with several landowners about forest stewardship planning.
- Drafted conservation awards news release.

Kooch CWMA

- Researched grant opportunities with US Fish and Wildlife and USDA.

Northern Landscape Committee

- Brainstorming projects with NLC members.
- Continued with MFRC staff contact and coordination of on-going committee issues.
- Organized and led the December NLC meeting.

MN Buffer Initiative

- Reviewed BWSR and MN DNR Buffer Law updates and guidance as they became available.
- Reviewed and updated buffer affected parcels via web map.

2020 Tree and Native Plant Sale

- Continued researching prices, availability, and ordering trees for 2020 sale.
- Began updated inventory and order forms for 2020 sale.
- Advised neighboring SWCD on starting a native plant sale.
- Worked with native seed supply company on a new seed mix for 2020 sale.

Submitted by: James Aasen

Forest Resource Specialist

Koochiching SWCD Program Coordinator Report

December 2019

Local Capacity:

- eLINK data entry
- Website updates
- eLINK workplans
- Northern Landscape Committee prep and meeting, minutes
- Attend Upper/Lower Red Lake public meeting (booth)
- Survey webinar

MPCA Rainy Basin Watershed Grant

- Contract writing for upcoming EOR work
- Prepare for and schedule 3 interviews
- Public Participation plan for Lower Rainy and Rapid River Watersheds
- Prep for and attend impaired waters meeting
- Upcoming Environmental Ed workshop in Bemidji on 1/7/20 hosted by MPCA

PCA Wood Ash

- End User Forms sent, and up to date
- Updated permits, and spreading
- Updated summary, hauling reports and spreading reports, permit coversheets

NRBG Grants

- eLINK data entry
- climatology data entry and send winterizing letters

General Administration

Customer walk-in general assistance; board meeting prep; minutes; minutes book updating; reporting; website maintenance; credit card tracking; bank deposits; plat book sales; vacation time; holiday

Submitted by:

Jolén Simon

Program Coordinator