

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Supervisors Voigt, Lewis, Aitchison, Dreher, Reller.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Pam Tomevi, Jolen Simon, James Aasen, Sam Soderman, Marcie Peeters

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Jody Peek (NRCS)

Chair Aitchison called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m.

- 2024/2-1 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller to approve the agenda as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**
- 2024/2-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded Reller to approve the minutes dated January 8, 2024 with
one correction.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**
- 2024/2-3 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Dreher to ratify paid bills, check numbers 11480 to
11493 including electronic transfers, in the total amount of \$277,664.86 for December
2023 (details on file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**
- 2024/2-4 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Dreher to approve the Treasurer's reports ending
December 31, 2023 as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**
- 2024/2-5 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Dreher to approve accounts payable in the amount of
\$4,225; authorize the District Administrator to upgrade the accounting system from
QuickBooks Desktop Pro 2021 to QuickBooks Online; allow payment of ordinary and
necessary bills between February 6, 2024 and March 4, 2024, not to exceed budget.
Details on file.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**

Supervisor Reports

Supervisor Voigt reported on attending the SWCD Forestry Association including forest stewardship plan writing consultant fees. Voigt also reported that he is currently serving as Acting Director of Area VIII until the elected Director returns from a leave of absence. He also attended a planning meeting for the 2024 MASWCD State Convention. The Area VIII spring meeting will be held on March 15th in Bemidji. Voigt requested authorization to attend a virtual meeting regarding load allocation reductions in Rainy River.

- 2024/2-6 Motion by Lewis, seconded Reller authorizing Supervisor Voigt to attend Phase II O
& A Discussion on Load Allocations and Objectives on February 8 at 2 p.m. online.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.**

Committee Reports

None.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

See attached.

2024/2-7 **Motion by Lewis, seconded Voigt authorizing all Supervisors to attend the Grazing Workshop in Baudette on February 15th.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.

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:

Resolution to establish 2024 SWCD Aid Guidelines (effective 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2024)

2024/2-8 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to establish 2024 SWCD Aid Guidelines as presented.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.

2023 Audit Engagement Letter

2024/2-9 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller to accept the bid from Peterson Company, LTD for the 2023 financial audit in the amount of \$4,500 and authorize the signatures of the Chair and District Administrator on the bid engagement letter.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.

2023 PERA Exclusion Report

2024/2-10 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis approving the 2023 PERA Exclusion Report as presented (details on file).**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

BWSR Master Joint Powers Agreement

2024/2-11 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis retroactively authorizing the District Administrator's signature on the BWSR Master Joint Powers Agreement effective February 1st.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:**MASWCD Legislative Days at the Capitol March 12-13 in St Paul**

2024/2-12 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing the District Administrator to attend the MASWCD Legislative Days at the Capitol March 12-13 in St. Paul; authorizing all staff and supervisors to attend the Area VIII meeting on March 15th in Bemidji; and authorizing the District Administrator to attend the IJC Semi Annual Meeting April 9-11 in Washington DC.**

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

Permits:

1. 2023-2658 Boathouse Rebuild
2. 2023-3168 Culvert Construction/Modification/Replacement

No objections and no additional comments offered on either permit.

General Business:

Discussion included:

- Lake of the Woods SWCD invited the Koochiching SWCD to provide a staff member to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Rainy-Rapid 1W1P which will meet one time per year to review accomplishments towards the plan goals; the District Administrator will work with staff to determine who will serve on the committee.
- International Falls School donation request for Post Prom;
- MCIT Certificate of Excellence presented to the District in recognition of outstanding loss ratio for coverage years 2018-2022.

2024/2-13 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing the District Administrator to put a business card sized ad in the Littlefork/Big Falls School yearbook ad; and to authorize a Plat book request from the Environmental Services Department including books for each member of the Koochiching County Board of Adjustments and the Koochiching County Board of Planning and Zoning as needed.**

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

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on Monday, March 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the courthouse board meeting room.

Adjourn Meeting:

2024/2-14 **Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.**

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

Approved:

Chair, George Aitchison

Date

Koochiching SWCD District Administrator Report

January 2024

- **AIS**
 - Expense tracking/invoicing
- **BWSR Conservation Delivery**
 - JAA meeting with BWSR/Staff; eLINK updates;
- **BWSR Cost-Share**
 - Soil health cost share contract template review/discuss with staff; program guidelines/work plan review
- **BWSR Local Capacity**
 - Staff oversight/assistance; IJC/IRLWWB/WLC meetings; IWI proposal review; and prep for pre-spring engagement and upcoming public meeting
- **County/District**
 - Computer security training; Legislative updates; staff meetings/workload updates; Board Meeting; Budget and Personnel Committee reports; Operational and Personnel Handbook review meeting with board members; year-end financial reports; W-2/1099 filings/distributions; 2023 Sales & Use Tax filing and payment; Tree and Native Plant program document review; 2024 operating budget review/projected updates; Asset inventory update; 2023 Special District report; newsletter article on 1W1P process; TSA 8 funding update with Crow Wing SWCD;
- **DNR/CPL**
 - Contractor/partner communications re: Hybrid Cattail Removal and Water Flow Enhancement
- **MPCA/Other Contracts (MFRC, WPLMN, LF WRAPS, BF WRAPS, USGS)**
 - Expense tracking/invoicing; partner communications; staff updates
- **Natural Resource Block Grant**
 - eLINK updates; 319 NKE discussions with MPCA; draft 2024-2025 service agreement with ESD; landowner visit and print RR-RL WRAPS/1W1P info;
- **Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P**
 - Communications with consultant; Advisory Committee meeting organization and follow-up; Policy Committee meeting preparation; quarterly financial report
- **Wood Ash**
 - Expense tracking/invoicing; partner updates/program review with staff

General Administration

- Board meeting prep/follow-up items; Board minutes/agenda; 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; file/record maintenance; general phone/mail/email

Submitted by:

Pam Tomevi, District Administrator

Koochiching SWCD Resource Conservationist Report

January 2024

WCA

- Joint Application reviews and TEP communications,
- Prepared and reviewed NOA and NODs,
- Attended TEP meetings,
- Prepared and delivered TEP recommendations for applicant.

Wood Ash

- Assisted landowners with wood ash permitting process,
- Prepared landowner materials and mailing,
- Completed GIS data and wood ash permits,
- Attended partner meetings,
- Filed all recent landowner documents (hard copies and created digitals),
- Updated permit document attachments,
- Working on updating program brochures.

CPL Grants

- Wrote project update for annual newsletter.

Other Business

- Attended staff meetings,
- Joined NLC Climate Change meetings,
- Virtual training on Critical Area Planting,
- Finalized native plant sale order forms.

Upcoming Work/Training

- Online study and training on Critical Area Planting,
- Virtual refresher training on WCA.

Submitted by
Marcie Peeters
Resource Conservationist

Water Resource Specialist Report

Jan 2024

AIS

- Inspection program management
- NSL and VNP collaboration
- End of year reporting for DNR and next year
- 2024 program planning
- Delegation agreement documents
- Small communities plan with ESD
- Always There Staffing 2024 meeting

LCCMR

- Sample collection
- Sample prep with USGS, LOTW SWCD
- Planning for 2024, budget review, monitoring plan
- Data review for equis
- Meeting with USGS MPCA LOTW SWCD to coordinate spring sampling
- Budget review and outlook

LF WRAPS/BF WRAPS

- Geomorph data review
- Sediment fingerprinting proceedings paper review
- Watershed document review
- Sediment fingerprinting results meeting

LWM/Local Capacity

- Grant budgets
- DNR assistance for Rat Root
- Mapping, Arc Pro utilize

WPLMN

- Sampling
- WPLMN call-in
- Hydrograph analysis
- End of year document compile

Miscellaneous

- Emails
- Staff meeting
- landowner talks, project review, watershed planning
- 1W1P meeting

Submitted by: Sam Soderman

Koochiching SWCD Forest Resource Specialist's Report

January 2024

Local Capacity-Forestry

- Researched general forestry and forest health topics.
- Many landowner discussions involving native plant programs, FSP's, CAP's, SFIA, 2C tax designation, tree planting etc...
- Conducted fieldwork and developed two FSPs.
- Began working with several other landowners on forest planning.
- Began MN Tree Inspector Certification Online
- Attended the SWCD Forestry Association Meeting Online
- Worked on creating contracts for the soil health cost-share
- Wrote an article for the 2024 newsletter
- Continued assisting several landowners with spring tree planting plans.
- Assisted with WPLMN Water Sampling.
- Assisted staff with CCMI Apprenticeship application.
- Worked with NRCS to help coordinate invasive species projects for a local landowner.

MFRC Northern Landscape Committee

- Helped facilitate and lead two climate change meetings for the Northern Landscape Planning update.
- Continue to create support documents and gather input from the committee to include in the plan update.

Cooperative Weed Management Area

- Wrote and submitted a buckthorn removal project proposal to CCMI for potential crew placement.
- Conducted conversations about wild parsnip spraying cost-share and coordination.

SWCD Tree and Native Plant Sale

- Conducted annual landowner special tree order coordination and processed regular tree orders for 2023 spring sale.

Submitted by: James Aasen

Forest Resource Specialist

Koochiching SWCD Program Coordinator Report

January 2024

Local Capacity:

- RSDP Natural Resources meeting
- eLINK data entry – year-end reporting

MPCA Big Fork WRAPS

- Review hours remaining in contract and discuss potential additional hours for contract
- Complete and submit semi-annual report
- 4th Quarter Invoice

MPCA Little Fork WRAPS

- Complete and submit semi-annual report, coordination with N. St. Louis and Itasca SWCDs
- 4th Quarter Invoice

MPCA WPLMN

- 4th Quarter Invoice

BWSR 1W1P

- Attend Policy Committee Meeting and process minutes

MFRC-Northern Landscape

- Attend Climate Change Meeting and take minutes

PCA Wood Ash

- Customer assistance
- Invoice

Conservation Delivery

- Complete Conservation Corps application
- eLINK data entry – year-end reporting

NRBG Grants

- Customer service for walk-ins
- Climatology data entry
- Begin newsletter planning
- Prep 1W1P minutes
- eLINK data entry, year-end reporting
- Coordination of Northern Landscape Committee Meeting – Climate Change
- Envirothon planning call: Event date: May 1st
 - Sent out donation requests- will be requesting to send funds to Area VIII Envirothon in March

General Administration

Board meeting prep; minutes; website maintenance; credit card tracking; eLINK reporting; bank deposit; board meeting follow up; bereavement; holiday; computer updates; update tree page on website; staff meetings

Submitted by:

Jolén Simon

Program Coordinator