

Red River Valley Conservation Service Area – TSA 1  
Regular Board Meeting  
June 24, 2014

The regular meeting of the RRVCSA-TSA 1 was held on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at the Red Apple Café in Mahanomen, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Lyle Dittmann-EOT, David Rinke-Traverse, Jerome Flottesmesch-Becker, Carol Schoff-Clay, Pete Revier-Mahanomen, Ron Thorsrud-Norman, Julian Sjostrom-WOT, and Scott Balstad-East Polk. Others present include Jeff Haverland-Engineering Technician, Jim Hest-Engineer, Darren Newville-EOT Manager, Tanya Billberg-Red Lake Manager, Brett Arne-Board Conservationist, Duane Steinbrink-West Polk Technician, Peter Mead-Becker Manager, Kevin Kassenborg-Clay Manager, Brad Mergens-WOT Manager, Gary Lee-East Polk Manager, Bryan Malone-Pennington Manager, and Jen Wentz-Becker Admin Assistant.

**Call to Order** – Chairman Flottesmesch called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**Approval of January and March Minutes** – minutes from both of these meetings were distributed at an earlier time in emails to Board members and District staff.

Motion (Schoff, Dittman) to approve the January and March minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Financial Reports and FY15 Budget** – Peter reviewed the May financial reports with the Board.

Motion (Dittmann, Rinke) to approve the financial statements. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Peter reviewed the FY15 Budget with the Board, noting salary increases and additional breakdowns shown. Shared Services staff and additional expenses have increased budget totals.

Motion (Balstad, Thorsrud) to approve the FY15 Budget as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda** – Jerome explained the items listed which have been previously reviewed by the Board members.

- Fee Schedule
- Shared Services grant agreement
- TSA 1 and TSA 8 Joint Powers collaborative agreement
- Position descriptions

Motion (Schoff, Dittmann) to approve the items listed on the consent agenda. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **Reports –**

*Brett Arne, BWSR Board Conservationist reported on the following:*

The BWSR board will meet this week. They will review the following items:

- Targeted Watershed Approach allocating another \$5,250,000 this year.
- RFI will be out mid-July.
- Competitive CWF grant projects and practices will be out mid-August. There are increased dollar amounts from last year with a total of \$10 million to be distributed.
- Non-point funding plan (NPPF) – The legislature has tasked BWSR to establish a plan to fund what is necessary with clean water dollars. The plan will eventually impact the types of projects and practices funded through a more rigid PTM process.
- Scoring rubrics may change based on the new policy. BWSR board will approve this draft after tomorrow's meeting.

*Jim Hest, TSA 1 Engineer reported on the following:*

- Field work has been slow recently
- Several work orders will come in July
- Latest project—Burnham Creek—will be expanded for fish passage. This project has been ongoing over four separate phases.
- Red Lake SWCD, rain garden
- Red Lake Watershed and SWCD, side water inlet
- Additional stream bank projects have been reviewed last week. River levels need to decrease in order to make a good assessment.

*Jeff Haverland, TSA 1 Engineering Technician reported on the following:*

- Installed five basins so far this spring
- District requests have decreased quite a bit. This may have something to do with Clean Water funded jobs.
- EQIP activity could be part of the problem with the application period on hold for much of early to late spring.
- Concerned with the lack of Clean Water funded jobs
- Still recovering physically but moving well

Discussion continued. Farm Bill uncertainties and EQIP application process delays could be part of the slower than normal Clean Water projects. NRCS programs could be another hindrance on project counts.

Billable work is another concern. We need to work quality jobs and not just quantity. We should be able to complete both in balance. Maximum amounts have been set on the fee

schedule for this reason. Districts and engineering staff need to be held accountable. Quality project and design needs to coexist with quantity in order to keep our revenue flowing.

*Peter Mead, Becker SWCD Administrator reported on the following:*

- Recapped funding sources that were received in April for both the TSA 1 and TSA 8.
- Chuck Fritz, Henry Van Offlen, BWSR folks, and others met for a water quality decision support system built to work in cooperation with the Clean Water fund initiatives.
- Attended meeting with Bois de Sioux Watershed District and area SWCDs to showcase the Water Quality Decision Support System. Districts can meet with new staff to prioritize and target projects for CWF applications.
- Lake/Stormwater Assessment and Prioritization of Preservation efforts in TSA 8
- New employees will meet with District staff through workshops held by Chuck Fritz, Director - International Water Institute, with a more personal approach to each District and their needs. At this point, requests should be sent to Peter.
- New staff will be driving many miles and working through the initial orientation process

**Renewal of Lease Agreements** – Peter noted that the current lease agreements for both Jeff and Jim will expire as of the end of this fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>. New agreements have been written.

Motion (Balstad, Rinke) to approve the lease agreements for FY15. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Shared Services Joint Oversight Committee** – Peter noted that we need to assemble a committee to oversee the Shared Services collaborative agreement. The committee will be comprised of one Supervisor and two District Managers per TSA. Lyle Dittmann would be willing to attend the meetings and work in correlation with Jerome Flottesmesch. Peter has declined his position in this capacity. Darren Newville and Bryan Malone have accepted as managers.

Jerome has appointed Lyle Dittmann and himself as Supervisor's for the committee. Darren Newville and Bryan Malone will accept as committee Manager's.

**Technical Capacity Summit Recap** – Brett, Darren, Peter, and Jerome gave a recap on the summit.

- Education is a huge factor. With new GIS staff on board, we will need an educational forum in the future.
- We need to assess current problems with the JPB process and its impediments. Training has declined from the past. Technical approval authority needs are high.
- There is no oversight at the state level to provide approval authority for TSAs. NRCS has needed to maintain their TAA for needs of the Districts.
- The need for base funding is a priority.
- Engineering personnel employment options—state, regional, other

Overall, there should be more input for the future of the TSA. John Jaschke will be conducting a survey of the Districts to find the best approach to this question.

Currently, there are more funds available for Districts. MPCA, DNR, Department of Ag, and other agencies will be looking at Districts to become leaders for installing Clean Water projects on the ground. Because we're not part of the state, there seems to be much more scrutiny regarding the use of these funds.

**2015 Competitive Fund Applications** – Peter has asked the Board to think about our needs for the upcoming year. He reviewed AIG grants for additional income and new equipment needs.

Matt has offered his assistance to provide an ArcGIS subscription to all users. Sharing licenses with a non-profit is no longer an option. Matt would like to provide iPads and data plans to everyone in the field. Becker is using an iPad in their office which reviews all cost-share applications while using images with data on inspection to keep records up to date. This works well for WCA too. GPS systems will allow tying into NRCS equipment. There are many options out there. DNR has begun using the iPad with their field work projects too.

Most seemed agreeable as long as there is a training component attached. Equipment values are minimal compared to the software needed to initiate the project. However, this option will not replace survey equipment. The application needs to be completed by mid-August.

Motion (Balstad, Schoff) to authorize TSA 1 administration to proceed with an AIG grant application. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Other –**

Streamlining operations for the TSA 1 has been a significant change for everyone on board. Communication can sometimes be a hurdle. Geography can be an issue as well. This organization must have a political body to allow for operations to run smoothly. Our Executive Committee seems to have a good focus on the needs for the future. We don't want to feel as though any Districts are being left out of the loop.

Future needs of the Clean Water grants may facilitate a need for more change.

Distance between Districts does tend to be an obstacle. All Districts are invited to attend every regular meeting when many do not participate.

Being no further business, motion (Schoff, Thorsrud) to adjourn meeting at 10:23 a.m.