

# MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

8:00 a.m. Thursday, October 13, 2022

USDA Service Center, 2540 Overlook Lane, Mandan, ND 58554

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – George called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05

II. **ROLL CALL**

**Staff:** Ethan Gress, Malissa McKee, Landon Weiser

**Board Members:** George Ferderer, Steve Tomac, Richard Tokach, Rocky Bateman (8:15)

**Others:** Greg Sandness, Emilee Lachenmeier, Jen Murray

III. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Richard motioned to add a motion to accept the budget as proposed in minutes of September meeting.

Richard motioned to accept minutes with amendment, Steve seconded.

**Aye – (2)**

**No – (0)**

IV. **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Richard motioned to accept – Steve seconded

**Aye – (2)**

**No – (0)**

V. **REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES**

- a. Landon presented his report. 13 applications received for EQIP in Morton County and have been planning with them, will wrap up field work within next week. Applications will be ranked in February. September had a lot of construction occurring for planned practices. Staff was out flagging routes and checking so that we can certify and pay as they come in. CSP documentation was collected and certified for end of FY22. A few cover crops went in and a few producers held off due to lack of moisture. Summary report of the effect of drought on forage production potential for the county received (included in minutes) and at the time it was done, Morton was at 94% of average precipitation. All NRCS staff employee meeting for three days in late September in Bismarck. Tim & Landon attended weeklong training on planning in September as well. October will be getting CSP renewals ready for ranking and planning EQIP applications in Morton, Grant, and Sioux Counties.
- b. County Extension Agent, Renae Gress – absent
- c. Farm Bill Specialist, Blake Sogge – absent

VI. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. 319 Watershed Project updates – Greg Sandness and Emilee Lachenmeier, ND Dept of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
  - Greg presented and answered any questions of the board regarding the watershed project.
  - current proposal goes through end of 2023. New proposal has been submitted and will present 12/13/22 to the task force, making sure funding levels are in the budget.
  - April to June, funds are available, and allocate accordingly to projects. Currently 3 million with 8 projects, the max is determined by the budget and the number of projects.
  - Can apply for additional funding each year, if have additional practices (BMPs) above what was set forth in proposal.
  - Rocky discussed suggestion of upstream sample sites in Big Muddy Watershed, near lagoons of New Salem, to determine source of contamination if related to lagoons. Greg indicated do have a couple statewide ag waste testing sites, could implement this

- Determining if contamination is animal, human, or bird – would just need to train new coordinator as different type of sample to be gathered. Full season, every 2 weeks, May to September. Testing is expensive to determine source, could be included in the project.
- District role is targeting where cost share money be implemented, as producers in region are known by SCD staff as well as region.
- Big muddy watershed is a large watershed, Greg indicated that this is definitely going to be a long term project, not just a 5 year scenario.
- The watershed coordinator is a field position, not an office position.
  - \*Training for new Watershed coordinator – shadow other coordinators, NRCS
  - \*Recommended background – ag degree, understanding from growing up on a farm of the ag industry, outgoing personality
  - \*Recommended pay rate - \$22-\$27/hr with benefits
- Cost shares have a cap based on historical information, evaluated annually by DEQ. \$200K cap currently
  - \*discussed with rising costs of materials should be re evaluated
- 319 funds can be applied to:
  - \*resource management
  - \*water resources
  - \*café/shop talks with speakers
  - \*equipment – cost share lease
  - \*hook up to rural water line
- 319 funds can NOT be applied to:
  - \*food
  - \*building costs
- engineer is on retainer and available through DEQ at no cost to producers for 319 Watershed project planning
- Scott Ressler (ND Stockmen’s Association) and Jason Wirtz (ND Dept of Agriculture) are also available as resources to 319 Watershed producers

b. Tree pricing for upcoming season – Ethan

- Towner nursery increase was minimal
- Big Sioux nursery increase was \$1.05-\$1.35/tree
  - \*prioritizing South Dakota SCDs first on orders
- suggestion of moving from \$2 to \$2.50 rate increase on hand plant trees
  - \*Rocky feels prices are going to continue to go up
  - \*Richard stated important that SCD makes some money so that not all of the budget comes back on the tax payers
- Steve motioned to move to \$3/tree for hand plant, Rocky seconded

**Aye – (3)**

**No – (0)**

**VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR**

- a. 10/20 – Grant writing workshop, Malissa attending (day 2 of workshop)
  - Malissa shared that she is doing a ‘mock’ grant for a new building with tree cooler, meeting space, office, bathroom, and separate machine shed for equipment storage
  - idea of building in the middle of Morton County to better service producers, rent out meeting space to community for education, hire staff for building to rent out equipment from site directly as well as

manage rental space. Better site for hand plant sales in meeting space, one tree cooler with drip line and test plot outside for educational purposes as well

- b. 10/26-31 – Ethan off
- c. 11/20-22 – annual convention
- d. 11/20 at 6:00 pm – area IV board meeting at annual convention
- e. 2/22-23 International Crop Expo, Alerus Center

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Southwest Water Authority manager/CEO, Jen Murray
  - drought livestock program ended at the end of August
  - department is state run and department of water resources oversees
  - 1986 construction ongoing, 2017 finished laying pipeline
  - 700 people currently on the waiting list
  - 7500 rural water customers
    - \*2500 signed up after construction
  - main water treatment center is located in Dickinson
  - do not allow hook ups if it lowers pressure down the line
    - \*pump stations through out the region are being looked at
  - most underserved area is surrounding Hebron
  - Steve suggested putting contact info in our newsletter as it is located in the Big Muddy Watershed area
  - \$1500 to sign up – if no construction is done, will refund 50%
    - \*in comparison, \$400/yr for pasture tap
  - Rocky indicated that in his area, high pH well water
    - \*Missouri West Water covers this area, near New Salem
  - Missouri West requested an additional 50 gallons/minute in Flasher area, would need to get details from Karin Garvie with Missouri West regarding details for extra flow
  - Steve suggested holding an informational meeting with Watershed coordinator, SW Water Authority, Missouri West Water, NRCS representative(s) (EQIP), and reach out to Grant County SCD to join
  - Steve inquired on how many gallons can be pumped before becoming commercial:
    - \*pasture tap
    - \*residential tap
  - Southwest Water Authority will fill tanks for fire usage, only in off peak, 5 gallons/minute flow
  - Steve suggested that establishing depots in cities in Morton would be very beneficial for producers
  - Steve motioned to have informational meeting in western Morton, Richard seconded

### **Aye – (3)**

### **No – (0)**

-Richard mentioned had previously had conversation of men's ag day in February, could maybe in conjunction with informational meeting

- b. Missouri West Water manager – Karin Garvie, unable to attend/previous engagement

- c. Manure spreader – repairs, ongoing usage

- Ethan indicated that the manure spreader has been busy in consistent usage
- wheel bearing went out, Jim H repaired and SCD employees brought parts that were purchased from Duppong's
  - \*two sets of bearings purchased, board recommended to keep the remaining one due to need and prices continuing to rise on parts
- weld for axle underneath are broken
- flat tire occurred when Dan S. was using, repaired and price was taken off of his bill



**X. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

- a. Currently SCD has received 16 applications for the 319 Watershed Coordinator position, with one candidate withdrawing
  - vast majority of applicants have no agriculture experience, knowledge base, or education
- b. Richard motioned to move initial offer on job listing for Watershed coordinator to \$20-22/hr+ DOE
- c. Steve recommended an executive session regarding all SCD employees' salaries
- d. Discussed possibility of contacting BSC/NDSU for internship that would result in full time position, for Watershed coordinator or other position(s).

**XI. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS –**

- a. Two AFPs for 319 in kind fencing for signature

**XII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- a. The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17 at 8:30 at the USDA service center.

**XIII. SIGN EXPENSE VOUCHERS, PAYROLL, AND CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS**

**XIV. ADJOURN –** Richard motioned to adjourn at 11:30, Steve seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee  
Recording Secretary

Approved:

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Aaron Steckler - Chairman