

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 8, 2022

9:00 a.m. CDT – USDA Service Center, 2540 Overlook Lane, Mandan, ND 58554

I. CALL TO ORDER – Aaron called the meeting to order at 9:00

II. ROLL CALL

Staff: Chance Porsborg, Malissa McKee, Ethan Gress, Landon Weiser

Board Members: Aaron Steckler, Steve Tomac, George Ferderer, Richard Tokach,

Others: Renae Gress, Thomas Osterbauer

III. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Review of minutes, as submitted by district secretary

Richard moved to accept the minutes as submitted. George seconded

Aye – (3)

No – (0)

IV. REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES

a. County Extension Agent – Renae Gress

- Renae gave an update of upcoming events

*Annie’s Project – January 8, 15, 22, 29 in Flasher

*Pesticide trainings – 1/24 and 2/7

*Farm Management Education, BSC via zoom with Kyle Olson – 1/17, 1/31, 2/21

*Farm resident tax exempt forms due 2/1

*Morton Co Producer Day – 1/24

- Steve indicated that he will coordinate with Renae regarding meeting with SW Water Authority

b. District Conservationist – Landon Weiser

- Landon gave an update regarding NRCS office.

*14 EQIP applications in planning, 2 processing through Meadowlark Initiative.

*Several fencing and water system projects have been able to be certified and paid this year.

Working with Sharon to clean up contracts that need modifications. EQIP CIC timeline has been announced with deadline of 3/3/23. Paula, Chance, and Landon attended recent water board meeting to introduce themselves and sit in on meeting. Malissa has made great progress on NWQI narrative proposal and working on getting SAMS number active. Prioritizing work off instructions coming down from the state office.

V. TREASURER’S REPORT

a. Review of financials, as submitted by district secretary

- bank statements not received prior to meeting; nothing to report

VI. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion of info meeting in Western Morton, Southwest Water Authority and Upper Missouri Water
-Steve will share info with Renae, planning to be in contact next week

b. Wildlife escape ramps

- Malissa shared that she researched for stainless steel options and found one that met NRCS specs, \$85/each, however, have to buy in multiples

-Steve indicated that he has a few that he bought in Union Center, SD for approximately \$35/each roughly 5 years ago and they are doing well, now starting to rust a bit were received painted

- discussion of having an example on hand vs being a retailer for producers
- tank availability issues of tanks with built in escape ramps
- Richard motioned to purchase 3 from Cammack Ranch Supply, Steve seconded

Aye – (3) No – (0)

- c. Malissa shared research regarding internet plan offerings from Verizon and Midco
- current plan with Verizon is 10 Mbps at \$79/mo + \$8.33/mo modem rental
 - Verizon offers 25 Mbps at \$109/mo and \$50 Mbps at \$209/mo
 - Midco offers one to three year contracts, at end of contract if not renewed is one year contract rate
 - *100 Mbps - \$105/mo for one year contract, \$95/mo for two year, \$85/mo for three year
 - *200 Mbps - \$135/mo for one year contract, \$125/mo for two year, \$115/mo for three year
 - Modem rental – standard \$8/mo, wireless \$12/mo
 - *will need two – Mandan office, New Salem shop
 - Thomas recommended checking to see if Midco can input service in Mandan office without conflicting with Federal internet service
 - George motioned authorizing staff to get Midco into SCD for 3 year contract with two wireless routers as rental units. Steve seconded.

Aye – (3) No – (0)

- d. Richard motioned to add Thomas to the board as an advisory member. George seconded.

Aye – (3) No – (0)

VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR

- 12/7 Soil & Watershed Leadership Academy, Carrington (Chance)
- 12/7 Burleigh SCD Grazing planning meeting (Malissa)
- 12/12-16 Chance off
- 12/13 319 Watershed project presentation to task force, 4201 Normandy, Bismarck
- 12/14 Private Pesticide Training, FCS 1600 Old Red Trail, Mandan
- 12/15 SCD website training (Malissa)
- 12/16 Ethan off
- 12/23 Malissa off
- 12/26 Christmas Day observed, office closed
- 1/2/23 New Years Day observed, office closed
- 1/8, 15, 22, 29 Annie’s Project, Morton/Grant Counties, 120 S Main Street, Flasher

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- Nelson land proposal for area IV research farm – Rocky (absent)
 - based on presentation at annual convention by assistant AG Allyson Hicks, can request exceeding 2.5 mills but has to go to electors
 - Rocky wanted to bring this to Morton Co SCD board as proposal
 - Steve indicated the research farm is a state wide interest, not just Morton County so do not see this being something that Morton should shoulder solely
 - *think all counties in area IV should follow suit if to pursue
 - *concerned on price of land in question as per acre price is very high
 - Richard indicated his response would be no, would be needing to show benefits to the tax payers of Morton county in order to encourage a vote on a larger mill

- b. District Secretary job role/title discussion
 - Malissa brought forward discussion of the role of Morton Co SCD district secretary being broader than a traditional secretary role and that it may worth conversation to update the title
 - *aid in future of SCD for interviews, avoid mis understanding of the role
 - *match other SCDs in state, noted at annual convention range in titles from clerk, district manager, office manager, etc
 - *aid in market comparison for wage for the role
 - Steve agreed that role should be labeled in a different manner based on duties, asked for Malissa's suggestions
 - *Malissa suggested office manager or administrative assistant
 - Richard suggested should be put to personnel committee to discuss further
 - c. Record retention policy
 - Malissa researched following the annual convention and did not find in writing a formal policy for Morton County SCD
 - *Thomas indicated that when he was working for SCD he was told policy was 7 years but had no idea where it was documented
 - *federal computer backs up files on the shared drives, anything prior to 7 years ago is unable to be accessed
 - discussion on what would be helpful to keep
 - *Thomas recommended machine tree plantings as a reference for any follow up questions in the future by staff or producers
 - Steve agreed need to develop policy, suggested to match state of ND and/or NRCS with exceptions
 - *suggested SCD staff develop and board review
 - Steve motioned to have employees along with Landon develop a records retention policy, including categories and timeframes, for next board meeting. Richard seconded
- Aye – (3) No – (0)**

IX. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

- a. District Secretary
 - Malissa shared list of updates for the month
 - weekly planning meetings for Farming and Ranching for the bottom line on Fridays
 - received nursery license renewal, due end of year
 - communicating with Andrea regarding ND Envirothon
 - TREES program with Tom Gibson
 - *12/6 Sweet Briar
 - *12/7 Custer (am and pm sessions)
 - *12/9 Flasher and St Anthony
 - *Hebron and Lewis & Clark tbd
 - renewing SAMs # for SCD
 - coordinating with Sandy, Burleigh SCD administrative assistant, quickbooks class at BSC, \$115 total
 - *Steve motioned to authorize Malissa to attend the Quickbooks class at BSC, George seconded

Aye – (3) No – (0)

 - attending planning meetings with Burleigh SCD for Grazing Lands Summit, Crops/Covers/Cows. And Garden Tours

b. District Technician

-Ethan shared that the manure spreader is back from Center Machine and is being stored at George's for the winter

*welds and rotor look good

-receiving hand plant orders daily, deadline is the end of the month

*will accept through few weeks after

-all second round OHF forms have been received signed and sent on to Rhonda

*only 2 are following through, other 4 have backed out due to inability to prep sites or change of plans otherwise at this time

-metal signage for plantings

*"Trees provided by Morton Co SCD" benchmark of ft, OHF, or \$

*Thomas indicated was previously approved in minutes – Jan – March minutes for 3000+ ft

-Ft Sauerkraut out of Hebron contacted us regarding possible donation of trees

*60 trees requested

*35 donated to DAR for Veterans Cemetery

*inquiry on what our donation cutoff is per year – monetary amount for staff

*per Steve, 50/60 trees per organization a year definitely within the realm

*Richard suggested exploring possibilities of educational opportunities and cost match with 319

i. species signs on each tree donated

b. 319 Watershed Coordinator

- Attended Carrington Soil and Watershed Leadership on 12/7

- Dependant on weather, will be assisting on 319 presentation Tuesday, 12/13

- Computer access being set up today

- Went with Ethan out to see the Watershed area and water sampling sites, cleared snow at New Salem shop while out in the area

*noted some gutter damage on shop

X. CORRESPONDENCE – none to review at this time

XI. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS – none to review at this time

XII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING – January 5, 2023 at 9:00

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

XIV. ADJOURN – meeting was adjourned at 10:50

Personnel Committee met from 10:50-11:45 for three month review of district technician. Wage was increased to \$20/hr per his review.

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee

Recording Secretary

Approved: _____

Aaron Steckler - Chairman