

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

9:00 a.m. Thursday, February 9, 2023

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

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Aaron called the meeting to order at 9:03 am
- II. **ROLL CALL**
Staff: Malissa McKee, Ethan Gress, Chance Porsborg
Board Members: Aaron Steckler, Thomas Osterbauer, Steve Tomac, George Ferderer, Richard Tokach, Rocky Bateman
Others: Landon Weiser NRCS, Renae Gress Morton Co Extension
- III. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
Richard motioned to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as submitted by the district secretary. Steve seconded.

Aye – (4) No – (0)
- IV. **TREASURER’S REPORT**
George motioned to table as not emailed out to the board for review prior to the meeting. Richard seconded.

Aye – (4) No – (0)
- V. **REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES**
 - a. District Conservationist – Landon Weiser
 - paperwork and documentation getting finalized for 2023 EQIP applications, ranking deadline was 2/3/23; currently being reviewed by NRCS supervisors; pre approvals come out 2/17/23
 - Meadowlark preapprovals came out, both in Morton selected for funding, letters went out to producers scheduled to follow grazing plan to develop plan for this year
 - Jon, Chance, Landon went to marketing club meeting in Glen Ullin at Dakota Community Bank, update on current programs; Chance shared about watershed, Jon and Landon shared about programs and planning process
 - Bryce Andersen Soil Conservationist in Mandan starting as Cannonball CDU Agronomist
 - b. County Extension Agent – Renae Gress
 - wrapped up Annie’s project with 11 women attending, 6 from Morton county
 - Morton Co producers day was held on 1/11 and had 6 attendees
 - took 4H group out to Denver at beginning of January for a competition, took 4th place
 - Morton Co Extension 4H position is open, closes end of February; salary DOE
 - Farm Bill sign up deadline is 3/15
- VI. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Internet Provider
 - Malissa provided update on different options on a printout showing price point difference for doing a hot spot device purchase with Verizon, comparing with a modem for office and one for New Salem shop.
 - Thomas indicated can generate hotspot with district cell phone, was done last year for tree sale.
 - Richard moves to change internet service to Midco 100G and drop Verizon internet service. Steve seconded.

Aye – (4) No – (0)
 - b. Record retention policy
 - Malissa presented policy from ND Conservation District Employees Association website (ndcdea.com)
 - Rocky indicated is state policy that we are to incorporate

-discussion that staff will be implementing and more than likely shredding a lot of aged documents

c. Annual Work Plan

-Staff learned at leadership conference that Burleigh SCD visits their annual work plan at each board meeting, update on progress; also learned need to assign tasks to staff or board member and indicate on work plan

-Discussion on how to develop, if just project out 5 years or annual; was discussed need to be doing both

-Prior to covid disruption, had a meeting at Comfort Inn to develop with aid of Andrea Bowman

-Rocky motioned to have a designated meeting to develop annual and long term work plan, George seconded; scheduled for 2/23/23 @ 1 pm

Aye – (4) No – (0)

d. Mandan Community Garden

-Chance stated he has been in discussion with Kelsey Deckert regarding Morton SCD sponsorship of the community garden, asked for her recommendations for sponsorship amount and no value yet; more details expected at upcoming meeting

-possible signage for shed and/or pollinators to assist

-garden is going to have a future no-till section

-possibility discussed with Kelsey of Morton SCD sponsoring by donating shed for supplies and community tools

-meeting 2/22 at Mandan Courthouse to discuss further, SCD staff is attending

-discuss planting trees as a windbreak along perimeter, Ethan will be attending 2/22 meeting

-Rocky suggested we do anything to get SCD on for sponsor to show urban support

-Steve indicated completely on board to support, such as \$1000 for shed

-Richard motioned to have Chance pursue signage cost, Rocky seconded

Aye – (4) No – (0)

e. Women's Ag Night

-Malissa provided an update regarding the event scheduled for 4/6/23

-Kelsey Deckert, NDSU Extension, confirmed to speak regarding raised garden beds and local perennials

-Haley Robison, NDFB, confirmed to speak regarding farm/ranch safety

-contacted Linda Black Elk at UTTC to speak regarding plants used for food, medicine, and materials

-need to send back signed contract to Chelsey at Baymont

-looking at menu, trying to keep on lower rate items and looked back on previous year's feedback ladies are 'tired of roast beef' so will be avoiding that option; possibly stuffed pork loin

-Mandan HS Ag class is going to be making door prizes once more, 25 total; MCSCD covering costs for supplies

-Richard asked how plan to get the word out on the event

*Rocky suggested in county newspapers and extension website

*Rena suggested to send flyer to speakers to send out also to their contacts and sites

-discussed opportunity to push programs – 319, trees, and NRCS programs

*schedule time during program to have SCD staff and DC/CDU supervisor share

VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR

a. 2/7 – Northern Great Plains Research Lab Focus Group Meeting, 10-2

b. 2/7-8 – Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop, Holiday Inn – Fargo

c. 2/9 – Morton Co SCD board meeting

d. 2/9 – Morton Co Lower Heart River Water Resource District Meeting,
Veterans Conference Room – City Hall (2-3)

e. 2/14-15 – Living Ag Classroom, Civic Center

- f. 2/20 – Presidents Day, offices closed
- g. 2/22 – Morton Co Water Resource District Board Meeting,
Missouri West Water Office (10-11)
- h. 2/22 – Community Gardens meeting, Mandan Courthouse (12:30)
- i. 3/1 – Grazing Summit, BSC Bavendick
- j. 3/2 – Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line, BSC Bavendick
- k. 3/9 – Morton Co Lower Heart River Water Resource District Meeting,
Veterans Conference Room – City Hall (2-3)
- l. 3/12 – Daylight Savings Time
- m. 3/15-17 – Perennial Cool Invasive Grasses Workshop, NDSU Fargo
- n. 3/29 – Morton Co Water Resource District Board Meeting,
Missouri West Water Office (10-11)

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. NWQI assessment update
 - SAMs number has been updated and are now able to receive federal grants
 - paperwork has been completed for grant, Chance and Malissa worked with Mark Hayek, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist
 - Chance spoke with Jim Collins with Grazing Lands for potential assist for assessment
- b. 2023 Burleigh SCD sponsorship
 - Rocky stated Burleigh SCD helpful for urban conservation outreach
 - Chance noted electronic billboards in use for garden series – includes BCSCD and MCSCD logos
 - 2022 sponsorship \$6000
 - Richard motioned to increase sponsorship to \$7000 and have staff continue to assist with BCSCD events, Rocky seconded

Aye – (4) No – (0)
- c. Area IV billing for Secretary hours
 - Malissa indicated that she had brought this to Dave Archer, ARS and he had indicated that we can certainly bill for hours dedicated for area IV work and he believes there is an agreement in place
 - Addition of focus group account under area IV responsibilities, minimal account balance yet another account to keep records pertaining to; no records found yet and still struggling to gain access to password protected flash drive
 - Richard motioned to bill area IV for hourly wage and portion of benefits for secretary/clerk, Rocky seconded.

Aye – (4) No – (0)
- d. Conservation Achievement winner nominees
 - Rocky brought Oliver Co nominee form from their newsletter, suggested that we implement to get county input on nominees, expand list and possibly include some producers implementing practices we are not aware of
 - discussed adjusting form slightly for Morton Co and adding to April newsletter
 - discussed implementing awards banquet
- e. MCSCD items for speakers; Grazing Summit and Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line
 - Burleigh SCD is making sweatshirts for speaker gifts, asked that MCSCD consider doing something similar
 - notepads, pens, etc from backroom supplies already planned to include
 - BCSCD is creating padfolios also, with 5 soil health principles as well as BCSCD and MCSCD logos
 - *discussed did not want to do additional sponsorship on this, can be taken out of the \$7000/yr sponsorship for support
 - unanimous decision, feel that speakers would not do anything with a MCSCD shirt other than for chores or rag and did not feel would be a beneficial expense of tax payer dollars

- f. Educational article for county papers
 - Malissa shared possibility learned from leadership conference in regards to educate public of what soil conservation district is and does
 - discussed legislation 1020 and 2253
 - Rocky shared that SCDs went from being under extension to committee then back to extension
 - *some confusion currently within extension that SCDs are under their budgeting, not correct as SCDs are their own entities and just housed under extension
 - *individual within extension to which SCDs do their reporting, i.e. DART
 - all current Morton Co legislatures, representatives, and commissioners are now on MCSCD mailing list, Steve feels is enough at this time
- g. SCD signage for building
 - Leadership conference, suggested sign out front of SCD buildings for community visibility
 - Richard asked on building committee
 - NRCS has the contract, building owner
 - Richard suggested that Landon follow up with the building owner for authorizations
- h. Follow up from Leadership Academy – Watford City
 - discussed other possible social media platforms to reach younger generations
 - *possibly tiktok and twitter
 - Ethan will be taking on twitter
 - Chance may possibly be doing tiktok, decided to table for now and will discuss further at annual/long term goal meeting
 - suggested to add tentative board meeting dates to newsletter for public knowledge
 - *contact extension to provide meeting dates for their calendar

IX. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

- a. District Secretary/Clerk
 - Malissa shared a printout of monthly updates
 - W2s, W3, 1099s sent out and efiled
 - *had to purchase a separate program for \$59 to print 1099s
 - 2023 Nursery license received
 - \$1020 sponsorship(s) received for Women’s Ag Night
 - \$700 sponsorship(s) received for annual/newsletter support, still incoming checks
 - Jaden Deckert recommended Master Gardener program
 - received updated sales tax exempt certificate
 - DART submitted for 4th quarter
 - finalizing food and attendance numbers for Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line
 - *numbers to BSC on 2/15
 - received letter from ND auditors office regarding annual reports not being filed, need to file 5 total years including last year
 - *Rocky reached out to Rhonda Kelsch, provided me her number and we had a call regarding necessary paperwork to submit with the annual report(s)
 - *discussed possibility of needing overtime to complete – Richard and Steve indicated this is what comp time is for on policy

Aye – (2) No – (3)

Motion fails

- b. District Technician
 - followed up on signs for tree plantings
 - vinyl quoted at \$8.25/each for single sided, \$9.50/each for double sided
 - aluminum quoted at \$82.50/each and \$100.75/each for high performance vinyl lettering, never Fades

- per Thomas, last year believe the thought was any planting over 3000 ft for aluminum signage, add the year of the planting on the signs ourselves
- 25 plantings last year total, estimated 10 over 3000 feet
- Steve felt this is important, and would like to see samples
- c. 319 Watershed Coordinator
 - discussed if SCD staff should attend Grazing Summit and Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line
 - *per Thomas, partnering expectation all attend and assist as needed, such as registration
 - *Rocky agreed, help with any set up and registration
 - have been attending Gardening planning meetings with Burleigh SCD
 - *electronic billboards across Bismarck and one in Mandan advertise for the series, include BCSCD and MCSCD logos as sponsors
 - trainings are going slowly but surely, assigned by Landon
 - went to Glen Ullin on 2/7 for marketing meeting
 - *shared cost share program information
 - *a dozen individuals in attendance, Dakota Community indicated about average
 - working with National Wild Turkey Foundation for grant to offset producer costs, due 2/10
 - *3 to 1 match, max of \$25,000
 - *targeting grass seeding
 - intend on working with Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever as well in the future for more grants to bring into the Watershed
 - talked with Emilee Lachenmeier at DEQ inquiring on if there is a procedure in place for training 319 Watershed Coordinators, she indicated no but something she would like to implement in the Future
 - *received some additional resources
 - *3 Watershed Coordinators are resources
 - Rocky inquired on large projects in 319 Watershed history – none yet
 - *discussion of containment systems state funded through other departments, not 319 Watershed in the Watershed region
 - *Steve suggested Chance inquire on state permitted feed lots, contact being Jason Wirtz

X. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- a. Follow up on annual staff reviews
 - meeting broke for an executive session at 11:45
 - meeting reconvened at 11:55
- Rocky motioned to accept the motion from personnel committee regarding SCD staff updates.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Nationwide – update to investment options on policy
- b. State Farm – schedule Rod for board visit
- c. House Bill 1020 and HB 1129 – email from Jodi Delozier
- d. ND State Tax Commissioner – additional income withholding tax \$25
- e. NDIRF follow up – auto policy criteria for political subdivisions
- f. New Salem Lead Service Line Inventory

XII. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS – none at this time

XIII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING –

- 2/23/23 @ 1 pm, annual and long term planning meeting
- 3/9/23 @ 9 am, monthly board meeting

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

XV. ADJOURN – meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee
Recording Secretary

Approved: _____
Aaron Steckler - Chairman