

# MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

9:00 a.m. Thursday, April 20, 2023

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 approximately 9:00 am

II. **ROLL CALL**

**Staff:** Ethan, Chance, Malissa

**Board Members:** Richard, Rocky, Aaron, Thomas, George

**Others:** Landon, Renae

**Absent:** Steve

III. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Richard motioned to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as submitted by the District Clerk. Rocky seconded.

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

IV. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Richard motioned to accept the financials with a request to send out ahead of the meeting for board review. Rocky seconded.

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

V. **REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES**

- a. Landon shared an update for NRCS. EQIP and Meadowlark contracts are still being reviewed by the state office. Planning list for field season currently has 20 producers with most interested in water developments, cross fencing, and grass seedings. Active contracts were reviewed to make sure engineering designs and producer copies are prepared.  
Winter setting in early and staying late, many projects were not completed as planned last fall and will be delayed this spring. Have been working on getting contracts to get updated and modified to allow more time if needed. Cultural resource walks that need to be done and will pick that up starting next week with field conditions allowing.  
Update on personnel: Kate Motzko is acting CDU Supervisor.  
Went through Civil rights responsibilities for partners checklist and plan to go through the Local Work Group (LWG) process. This LWG is made up of representatives with expertise in natural resources who advise NRCS on decisions related to implementation of USDA conservation programs. Typically made up of local FSA, SCD, Tribal Government, and County Extension. Resource concerns looked at and objectives are identified and then incorporated into NRCS conservation efforts.  
Regarding Civil rights responsibilities – any posters must have the non-discrimination statement. The cooperative agreement is updated every 10 years.
- b. Renae shared an updated for Morton County extension. Winter assessment was submitted on Tuesday, 4/18. Cody, the emergency manager, is working with the county for flood preparedness. Sump pump review advise was published on the extension site. 4H achievement winners will be presented on 8/2 at 6 pm. Farm safety camps have full registration with 16 attending. The camp includes ATV certification, tractor safety, ag youth laws amongst other items. Sponsorship brackets are available – Richard recommended that we put this in the budget for next year. Renae is sending Malissa information after the meeting via email. Renae is currently helping with the kids composting class which is being held at Ft Lincoln.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### a. Audit quotes for 2022

Malissa shared the results of her research for price quotes for an audit of 2022 due to change in staff in the secretary/clerk position

-Richard went through the previous 2017/2018 agreed upon procedures (AUP) audit outline scope

-Rocky motioned to do an AUP audit with the same firm previously used (Haga Kommer). Richard seconded.

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

### b. Women's Ag Night – rescheduled to May 8

-Malissa shared that she called the RSVPs received in the mail and emailed the RSVPs received via email.

Updates on the date were also sent to Morton County, KFJR radio and tv for their calendar of events.

The Morton County SCD website and facebook were also updated with the new date of May 8. All speakers are able to adjust to the new date

-no cost impact on the venue due to rescheduling and not canceling the event by 4/3 prior to 4 pm

-Richard asked what our previous FFA sponsorship was, asked that Malissa research and bring to next meeting

### c. Funds received from NRCS TA agreement & DART clarified

-NRCS TA agreement funds are received from NDCDEA

-DART funds are received from NDSU and labeled 'District Assistance funds'

### d. Photo contest winners – 4 categories, \$50 gift card each

-Malissa stated she wanted to get a motion from the board prior to obtaining gift cards for the winners

-George motioned to approve gift cards being purchased for photo contest winners, Richard seconded.

\*Thomas suggested on next years' contest to amend the flyer to indicate a maximum of 3 photos per person per category

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

## VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR

a. 4/18 – Tree workshop in Minot (Ethan attending)

b. 4/21 – Rock 101 AM show MCSCD interview for Earth Day (Ethan and Malissa)

c. 4/24 – Chance off \*no longer needed as of meeting date

d. 4/27 – Brave the Shave

e. 4/28 – Malissa off

f. 5/2 – Soil Health to Human Health, BSC Career Academy

g. 5/3 – Morton Co Ag Day, Dacotah Centennial Park

h. 5/8 – Women's Ag Night, Baymont Inn

i. 5/14 – Mother's Day

j. 5/29 – Memorial Day, offices closed

k. 6/10-11 – 40<sup>th</sup> Buggies & Blues

l. 6/18 – Father's Day

m. 6/26-28 – Farm Safety Camp, BSC

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Tree crew staff

-Ethan shared that a few applicants have been removed from possibility list, as no response to multiple attempts of reaching out to confirm continued interest; several are still in contact and interested, one lives in Minot. Tractor driver role is taken care of, is a retired farmer. Hopeful for 2 planters, reaching out to friends and family. Flyers that were sent out and post on Bismarck indicates \$16-\$18/hr with overtime available.

- Richard asked Ethan and Thomas if the pay rate were raised if they felt more applicants would be received
  - \*board discussion regarding this as well as other ideas – possible incentives?
  - \*Malissa suggested end of season bonus
  - \*Thomas suggested following year return bonus
  - \*Rocky stated that he liked the idea of a bonus
- Renaë offered to share job listing with older 4Hers
- Ethan stated that Betty B from Divide Co SCD offers \$1/yr wage increase for each year tree crew returns
- Richard motioned to increase tree crew to \$18/hr and tractor driver to \$22/hr, George seconded

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

b. Building fund on mill levy request; CDs and money set aside for building fund

- Malissa asked the board if the \$20,000 set aside for building fund on the mill levy budget should be put into savings to show designated as such
  - \*discussion in regards to clarifying funds for audit purposes
  - \*Richard suggested putting into CD along with the \$11,000+ certified check from the Dakota Community closed CD
- Richard motioned to put \$20,000 into a CD, George seconded
  - \*discussion regarding current CD rates at Capital Credit Union from research previously done
- Richard motioned to put the certified check and \$20,000 into a CD at 18 months at 4%, Rocky seconded
  - \*George stated that his personal financial planner indicated that federal meeting was going to be occurring and rates were going to be changing, suggested perhaps we wait for the new rates
- Richard updated the motion – take \$11,000+ certified check to Capital Credit Union and start an 18 month CD, Rocky seconded

**Aye – (3)      No – (0)**

c. Waterfest

- Malissa updated the board that she had a team’s video conference meeting with Tina Harding on 3/17. Tina is the Water Resource Education Program Manager at ND State Water Commission and leads the coordination of Waterfest events. Got a good synopsis of the planning process and division of responsibilities – Tina supplies majority of the speakers and events, as well as \$750 prior to event and \$750 post event, with a one page right up of the event submitted for the post event funds. MCSCD is responsible for obtaining the venue, usually Engage Church, contacting schools, obtaining materials, lunch, and t-shirts. Lunch and t-shirts are for facilitators and staff.
  - \*Malissa indicated did not proceed with this year per conversation with Aaron via email 3/17 due to staffing changes
  - \*Richard & Aaron commented that this event is a 319 responsibility and would fall under Chance

d. Morton County Ag Day

- Morton Co SCD will have a booth at Morton County Ag Day, 5/3
- plan to show kids the source of their food by having samples of food from store as well as crop samples of the source
  - \*target age is daycare – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
  - \*expecting up to 3000 attendees
- discussion of ordering MCSCD stickers to hand out

e. Scholarship

- Scholarship program and application are on MCSCD website, due date for submission is 5/31
- Richard suggested to email to the local schools

f. Audit requirements of SCD

- Malissa shared ND Century code 54-10-14 regarding the requirements for political subdivisions regarding audits and annual reporting

\*clarification that annual financial reports are required REGARDLESS of total annual receipts requirement for every two year audits

\*\*as of 6/30/23 total annual receipts changed to \$2,000,000

g. Updating names on credit card account

-Ryan is still on credit card, need to add Ethan and Chance

George motioned to remove Ryan, Rocky seconded

**Aye – (3) No – (0)**

George motioned to add Ethan and Chance, Rocky seconded

**Aye – (3) No – (0)**

h. Annual/Long term work plan

-Separate meeting, afternoon

**IX. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES**

a. District Clerk

-Malissa shared a comprehensive printout of month completed tasks

\*discussion regarding compliance in other areas besides HR files and updating drivers with insurance

\*\*Rocky recommended reviewing safety handbook for any necessary updates

\*\*reconnect with Wendy Bent re Employee Handbook for any necessary updates – previously contacted amidst controversy in their office of County Attorney departure

b. District Technician

-Ethan stated purchased burlap for the 2023 planting season, Thomas assisted in order to purchase the same product

-one site visit last week for 2024 – primarily technical assistance

-tentative dates to pick up trees at the nurseries

\*approximately 6-8” of snow at Towner, so still waiting to schedule with them

-Travis Wolf called, follow up, plan to till site in next couple weeks

-2 submissions for OHF, appear will be approved

-contacted same volunteer who waters trees on weekend, very willing

-Richard noted that we cannot conduct official board business over email, it has to take place in a public setting with full board available to participate

\*George indicated there are committees when needed – subject based

\*board clarified that any item needed for ‘regular day to day business,’ no need for board approval for purchase

\*\*Thomas stated he never asked for approval on purchase of burlap or similar, just ordered

c. 319 Watershed Coordinator

-Chance provided a March vs April updates of completed tasks

-working with Jim of the Grazing Lands Coalition for shop talk regarding topics and location

-4/21 at 7:00 am going out with DEQ staff for water sample training

\*rescheduled post meeting due to weather

-2 practice reimbursements being finalized

-Mandan Community Garden sponsorship

\*5 or 6 hose holders or shed with MCSCD logo

\*\*shed would be locked with keys stored at Morton Co Extension office

\*Rocky stated would lean towards a shed, suggesting a good structure, Thomas agreed, George recommended to look into wood

\*Thomas suggested to check to see if can be used under 319 funds

- X. **CORRESPONDENCE** – none to report
- XI. **APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS** – none at this time
- XII. **PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING** – 5/11 at 8:00
- XIII. **SIGN EXPENSE VOUCHERS, PAYROLL, AND CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS**
- XIV. **ADJOURN** – Aaron adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee  
Recording Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Aaron Steckler - Chairman