

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

8:30 a.m. Thursday, August 3, 2023

8:30 a.m. CDT – USDA Service Center, 2540 Overlook Lane, Mandan, ND 58554

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Aaron called the meeting to order at 8:30 am

II. **ROLL CALL**

Staff: Ethan Gress, Malissa McKee

Board Members: Aaron Steckler, Richard Tokach, Rocky Bateman, Thomas Osterbauer, Steve Tomac, Kent Belland, George Ferderer

Others: Landon Weiser NRCS

Absent: Chance Porsborg

III. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Richard made a motion to accept the minutes of previous meeting, George seconded the motion.

Aye – 4 No - 0

IV. **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Malissa presented the June and July reports.

Richard made a motion to file the June financial statements. Rocky seconded the motion.

Aye – 4 No - 0

Richard asked the board to review aging summaries.

Richard made a motion to have the district clerk send out an invoice on 90 day open invoices, apply interest if not paid after.

Rocky asked if Richard could work with Malissa on QB to see why there are credits and how to fix the A/R aging report.

Steve seconded the motion to have the district clerk mail out open invoices at 90 days and over.

Aye – 4 No – 0

George asked if made a motion on July – Aaron stated that can table it for next month or make a motion on it at this time. No motion made.

V. **REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES**

a. District Conservationist

Landon stated this month has been busy conservation planning with and checking out projects going in. 33 producers on planning list, visited 23 thus far. EQIP batching deadline September 22, Meadowlark deadline around the same time. Last few weeks a lot of phone calls regarding projects being completed – wells, pipelines, tanks, and fences have been getting checked. Grass waterway just finished staking for this project. CRP grassland 9 in Morton and between Sioux and Grant, 50.

Bryce Andersen, Jacob Dummer, and Landon will be attending a week long range training towards end of August.

Kent asked about total of CRP grasslands – total 4000 to 5000 acres in Morton county.

Richard asked why the increased interest – Landon believes not many people knew about it last year, still getting questions about it. Need to follow grazing plan for 15 years. Good conservation planning.

b. County Extension Agent – Renae Gress

No report received prior to meeting – Morton County Fair this week

VI. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. Mill Levy

Malissa presented last year’s Mill Levy schedule A and B for reference, along with a worksheet including the Profit and Loss previous year comparison report for calculating FY2024.

Revenues:

Custom work –

\$2000 determined for category.

Grants –

Minimum of \$30,000 in the grant section.

Interest income–

Misc Income –

Items included in this category: Reimbursement from Area 4 for clerk hours, sales of hats.

Reimbursement Expenses –

none for several years, Richard stated theoretically money from Area IV for District Clerk hours should fall under here.

Rent/Lease –

Sale of Assets –

After discussion - \$150,000.

Special Projects –

Drill and Manure spreader rental. Richard and George suggested \$10,000

Sponsors -

Richard suggested \$3000

Expenses:

Advertising and Promotion –

After discussion, \$15,000 and if necessary can come back and change if necessary.

Bank charges –

\$500

Cost of Goods Sold –

Steve indicated guideline for cost of goods, 45-50% of sales. \$70,000

Conservation Education –

Richard recommended \$12,000

Contributions –

\$0

Depreciation Expense –

Richard stated should have something in there for a replacement cost. \$5000

Dues and Subscriptions – Richard recommended \$2000

Fuel/Oil –

Rocky suggested \$7500, Steve suggested \$8000 as budgeted for \$8000 this year and fuel prices are going up. Agreed upon \$7500 noting that can always go back and adjust.

Insurance –

\$12000

Interest Expense –

Miscellaneous Expense –

Richard suggested doing \$3500 and can adjust later if necessary

Office Supplies –

Richard suggested \$2000

Payroll –

\$205,000

Postage –

\$650, that could be upgraded if we have another event

Professional Fees –

After discussion, \$5000

Purchase of Assets –

\$0

Rent Expense –

\$0

Repairs/Maintenance –

After discussion of anticipated repairs, \$12000

Shop Supplies –

\$500

Supervisor Expense –

Discussion regarding the new century code and updated mileage reimbursement rate; \$6000

Taxes –

\$0

Telephone –

\$2500

Utilities –

\$4000

Workshops/Training –

\$2500

Discussion regarding Mill Levy schedule A form, cash reserve and money set aside for building fund. Richard suggested put \$40,000 for dedicated cash reserve and adjust expenses for \$230,000 Mill Levy Steve – Mr. Chairman based on Richard’s suggestion maybe we would reduce the 319 estimate Aaron – went through numbers, change suggested on grants revenue to \$20,0000

Revenues – Custom work \$2000

Grants	\$20,000
Interest Income	\$5000
Misc Income	\$2000
Reimb expense	\$0
Rent/Lease	\$0
Sale of Assets	\$0
Sales	\$150,000
Special Project	\$10,000
Total	\$192,000

Expenses – Advertising and Promotion	\$15,000
Charges	\$500
Cost of Goods Sold	\$70,000
Conservation Education	\$15,0000
Contributions	\$0
Depreciation	\$5000
Dues & Subscriptions	\$2000
Fuel/Oil	\$7500
Insurance	\$12,000
Interest	\$0
Misc Expense	\$3500
Office Supplies	\$2000
Payroll	\$205,000
Postage	\$650
Professional Fees	\$5000
Purchase of Assets	\$0
Rent Expenses	\$0
Repairs/Maintenance	\$12,000
Shop Supplies	\$500
Supervisor Expenses	\$6000

Taxes	\$0
Telephone	\$2500
Utilities	\$4000
Workshop/Training	\$2500
Total	\$367,650

Steve motioned to levy \$230,000, Rocky seconded the motion.

Aye – 4 No – 0

b. CD rates for building fund moneys

Richard stated thought he had made a motion at a previous meeting. Discussion/motion to shop around regarding \$40,000 sitting in cash reserves

Richard – motion to shop around in month of August for CD and get it invested

Aye – 4 No – 0

VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR

- a. August 10 – Crops, Covers, and Cows
- b. August 10 – Mill Levy request due to County Auditor
- c. August 18 – 2nd round OHF deadline
- d. Planning for Eco Ed (sponsorship partner with Oliver Co SCD) – September, tentative wk of 18th per JD
- e. Schedule TREES program in schools in September – December
- f. Place initial tree orders in October
- g. Begin planning ‘Men’s Ag Night’ in September – winter?
- h. 3rd quarter DART and NRCS TA agreement due by October 15th
- i. October newsletter submitted to Image Printing by October 15th
- j. Register for convention in October – November
- k. Post tree order form on website and insert in newsletter – October
- l. Sponsor letters sent for Men’s Ag Night’ in December – winter?
- m. I3 CD maturity date – 6/27/24
- n. I14 CD maturity date – 11/18/24

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Administrative Leave – Federal Policy, NDASCD policy
 Malissa noted that handouts included an example email of additional administrative leave from Secretary Vilsack, also the administrative leave policy through NDASCD.
 Discussion regarding creation of the Morton County Employee handbook, that the county HR representative is to be accessible and should be delivering any updates on policies. Malissa noted that she has been in contact with this representative, however, has not had much success in replies from them.
 Rocky noted that somewhere in the Morton County policy handbook, need to reference to the state and federal policies as these supersedes our [Morton County SCD] policy. Have to honor these and the reason why these have to be updated to our handbook is that our employees know what they are entitled to or not entitled to
 Malissa confirmed going forward for any new employees, and current staff, to receive a copy of the NDASCD handbook to read and sign just as is done with the Morton County handbook.
- b. SCD mileage reimbursement – NDASCD policy
 An item that has come up due to having two [SCD] vehicles at the office and one in New Salem. Malissa noted that she has driven to events with her personal vehicle during tree season with water sampling, as no vehicles were available and not able to drive NRCS vehicles.
 Discussion that this is available, at the state rate. Also noting when available, to car pool.

c. Lincoln Oaks Nursery Report - Rocky

Rocky indicated that met with all the districts, promised going to fix some things. Tree quality this year was an issue, thought on track to fixing it, but still have some employee issues. In process of reorganizing some of the duties, hiring someone to oversee in management capacity. Not sure when all items will be fixed, part of the process and part of the duties for new hire is to assess the cost of raising each variety of trees, and if should be raising as many as currently; 70-80 tree varieties. Some are currently losing money and some trees are more expensive than other trees. A lot of issues to work through.

Rocky noted that his term is up in November at convention.

IX. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

a. District Secretary

Busy month, a lot with Friends and Neighbors day. Interacted with ARS a lot. Helped set up, helped delegate and move things around and made sure that everything was paid for and used up all of the sponsor dollars. Small deficit afterwards, but not much. The rest of the month was keeping up with all of the activities around SCD office. Still working on the Area IV SCD Research Farm SAMs number renewal.

Rocky indicated that Area IV received good exposure in the month of July with National Soils annual meeting, the National Association of Conservation Districts tour, and then Friends and Neighbors Day. All within a two week period. Area 4 and the Research Farm got a lot of national coverage and it was all positive.

Malissa indicated that she did educational binders for the booth, as far as what 319 and Morton county does, and a history of both. The binders are working binders that we can keep and continue to use for future booths.

Discussion in regards to time that Malissa dedicated to planning of Friends & Neighbors day. Planning was for several months, planning meetings every Monday, however, she was unable to attend every meeting due to delegating time between Morton County SCD as well as Area IV. There was also discussion in regards to the new individual at Agricultural Research Services (ARS) in the technical delivery position; Seth Archer. Richard indicated that he has been at a couple of the other meetings that he has attended and he [Seth Archer] does a good job and is looking for partnerships and cooperations.

b. District Technician

Ethan indicated that tree season is finished. The tractor needs to be repaired; Northern Plains. Equipment board concurred, no vote needed.

Ethan noted with the tree season completed, the same individual that has done it for several years watered the trees on weekends. Discussion regarding a gift card for her.

Rocky motioned to get her a gift card with a value of \$400; George seconded.

Aye – 4 No – 0

Discussion regarding mowing around the tree shed and cost. A New Salem resident takes care of this and sends a billing of \$55/each occurrence, trimming is also done.

Ethan indicated that the second round of OHF is just about 2 weeks from now. Will be getting everyone that didn't sign up for the first round taken care of and submitted. Plan on doing many site visits in the next month and a half planning for next year. Due to the deadline, will have to push survival counts off a little bit.

c. 319 Watershed Coordinator

Chance is absent from meeting, attending DEQ Watershed Coordinator meetings; report submitted. One item on the report regarding the community gardens shed Morton County SCD is sponsoring.

Richard noted that he and Kathy [spouse] were in town on a Sunday evening, drove by the Community Gardens site. Noted the site is very nice. Parks monitor regarding weeding. Encouraged everyone to drive by and take a look. Faucets everywhere, \$40/lot and can have two lots. City roto tilled lot if wanted.

X. CORRESPONDENCE –

a. email re SSCC (State Soil Conservation Committee) requesting needs form for SBARE (State Board of Agriculture Research and Education)

Malissa indicated that the State Soil Committee is wanting input from every SCD on needs.

No motion was made in regards to a response on this correspondence.

b. email re NWQI assessment documentation for reimbursement – f/u with Mark Hayek 8/2/23 re 7/16/23 email

to see if completed, not correct

Malissa noted a couple of emails to bring to the board’s attention that were of concern. In regards to relationships and follow up re NWQI grant.

XI. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS –

a. NRCS – Landon indicated that he had a few CRPs for signature

b. 319 – none at this time

XII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING – 9/14/23 @ 8:30

Public hearing for the Mill Levy will be held at the beginning of this meeting

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

XIV. ADJOURN – George motioned to adjourn at 11:50

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee

Recording Secretary

Approved:

Aaron Steckler - Chairman