

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

8:30 a.m. Thursday, September 14, 2023

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

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Aaron called the budget hearing meeting to order at 8:35 am. George motioned to approve the Mill Levy budget as submitted to the County Auditor for a Mill of \$230,000. Richard seconded as a final budget.

Aye – 2 No – 0

Richard motioned to close the budget hearing. Meeting adjourned.
Aaron called the regular monthly board meeting at 8:40 am.

II. ROLL CALL

Staff: Ethan Gress, Malissa McKee

Board Members: Aaron Steckler, Richard Tokach, Thomas Osterbauer, Kent Belland, George Ferderer

Others: Landon Weiser NRCS, Danelle Dahlke NRCS, Renae Gress Extension

Absent: Chance Porsborg, Rocky Bateman, Steve Tomac

III. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Richard asked to have the minutes of previous meeting be redone with only the high points (motions made and actions taken).

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Malissa presented the July and August financial reports.

Richard made a motion to file the July financial statements, asked to wait on the August statements until reviewing the CD reports. George seconded the motion.

Aye – 2 No - 0

V. REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES

- a. District Conservationist – Landon Weiser

Completed all CRP Grasslands paperwork, signed and were passed along to FSA. Approximately 4291 acres were enrolled to start 10-15 year contracts beginning in October. All CSP and CSP-GCI contracts were certified in the county for FY23. Will follow up with grazing plans once those are completed this fall. EQIP batching is September 22. Have a few signed applications, contacting those that need to come in for signatures. Field work is completed for most of interested individuals, following up with others to completed as soon as possible.

Two from CDU attended Crops, Covers, and Cows and for attended the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health training in Burleigh County. Discussion regarding lack of Morton County producers at Crops, Covers, and Cows and other a

- b. County Extension Agent – Renae Gress

4H Achievement Days in conjunction with Morton County Fair - 615 static projects; 95 livestock, horse, and small animal projects

Update on anthrax in Grant County, sounds to be in control. If any unexplained deaths in herd, recommend talk to your vet. Discussion regarding any formal training regarding anthrax, extension staff received talking points from the state vet.

Starting week of September 18, will be on maternity leave. Please call Extension for any needs, will be directed to whom can assist.

- c. Conservation Delivery Unit Supervisor – Danelle Dahlke

Danelle introduced herself as the new CDU supervisor for Morton, Grant, and Sioux Counties.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. New CD for building fund – Dakota Community Bank
Malissa noted that the CD was opened with building funds set aside, as discussed at the previous meeting. Both financial board members do need to sign documents at the branch in Mandan.
- b. Mill Levy Submission follow up
Malissa noted the documentation submitted for Mill Levy requests on form A and math calculations there did not add up appropriately when initially submitted. County Auditor asked that this be fixed, leading to the error on the Mill Levy request initially submitted (210,000). Calculations were adjusted on form B to adjust accordingly for the board approved Mill Levy of

VII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR

- a. Eco Ed (sponsorship/partner with Oliver Co SCD) – September 20th
- b. TREES program in schools planning in September – December 5-8 reserved for Morton Co
- c. Prepare handplant order form for October newsletter - September
- d. Begin planning 'Men's Ag Night' in September – winter?
- e. Place initial tree orders in October
- f. October 11th – ND Envirothon, Malissa volunteering
- g. 3rd Quarter DART and NRCS TA agreement due by October 15th
- h. October newsletter submitted to Image Printing 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 – October
- l. Northern Plains Region, National Conservation District Employees Assoc Regional Meeting 11/1-3, Deadwood SD - *Registration by October 18th
- m. December 5-8th TREES program, Morton County schools
- n. CD maturity dates: 2/24/24 (Dakota Community Bank)
6/27/24 (Capital CU – I3)
11/18/24 (Capital CU – I14)

Richard motioned to allow all 3 employees attend the Northern Plains Region NCDEA Regional Meeting in Deadwood, if the state association scholarship comes through for them. George seconded the motion.

Aye – 2 No - 0

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) Audit of 2022, Haga Kommer
**associated topic – correction to CDs I8.1, I8.2 and CCU savings balances
Malissa presented the contract from Haga Kommer for the AUP audit of 2022, noting the items that will be checked during the process. Months being checked in the process will touch when bookkeeping was being done by both prior employees and the current. Malissa noted that the audit will also do spot checks on 2023 noting the reconciliation of errors have been made in Quick Books.

George motioned to accept the Haga Kommer, CPA 2022 audit, Richard seconded.

Aye – 2 No - 0

- b. Government Shut Down Protocol
Discussion regarding the event of a government shut down. Federal building and federal laptops can not be utilized. Pack up resources: district laptop(s), district cell phone, tree paperwork, clean up at the New Salem shop, and telework. Discussion regarding board communicating if the shut down is extending up to a month or longer for a plan of action. Danelle recommended updating the voicemail to include the district cell phone for contacting the SCD.

IX. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

a. District Clerk

Malissa presented a report of monthly activities. A lot of items sent out to area educators, free curriculum as well as coordinating for TREES program in December. Supply order for CDU has been coming in at state office, sorting and distributing. A lot of work in Quick Books with bookkeeping updates, as well as doing inventory. Shared of NRCS Technical Agreement (TA) training and reporting differences learned compared to Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and NRCS TA.

b. District Technician

Ethan shared that second round of OHF deadline last month, 9 submitted. New requirements on application process. First round, 2 submitted. Applications are on to State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) at this time.

Have been doing survival counts on plantings within the last month. Majority are doing well, 98%, other than a few select spots and species. A few plantings did not do well, isolated, feel due to post planting care. Feel not a stock issue. Will be assisting NRCS on CRP renewals status reviews with survival counts. Have had several site visits for plantings for upcoming year. Calling old contact sheets and cleaning out. If still interested, will be placed on planting list. If not, filing.

Northern Plains – tractor was taken for service. Sensor in seat out, replacing entire seat. \$273 and will be approximately week to receive part.

Inventory at New Salem shop.

Have just received Big Sioux hand plant order form, waiting on Lincoln Oaks and Towner. Will be cross referencing in creating order form.

Will be off for week in late October. Winterizing tree shed, turning off water, etc.

c. 319 Watershed Coordinator

Chance submitted a report of monthly activities in his absence. Called in to share a brief report. Drill taken to Dakota Fluid Power, cylinder was blown and had to be replaced.

Discussion regarding updating risk assessment questions for Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Board went over questions, updated accordingly.

Richard motioned to make the changes as discussed. George seconded.

Aye - 2 No - 0

Landon shared an item from the report, request to update sponsorship dollars for the Community Gardens, Parks & Recs shed of \$1800 to \$2000. Discussion regarding update on the shed for Parks & Rec, matching funds for building materials vs buying a separate shed, match current buildings.

Richard made the motion to update the dollar amount of sponsorship pledge to \$2000. George seconded the motion.

Aye – 2 No - 0

X. CORRESPONDENCE –

a. Fechner Legal – Infringement of Copyright letter, spam

Discussion regarding how identified as spam. Previously received email in spring.

b. NDASCD – Length of Service Award, Names of Deceased for Time of Remembrance

Discussion regarding any recommendations for acknowledgement. Rocky Bateman – Length of Service (18), Robert ‘Bob’ Schwagler – Time of Remembrance

XI. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS –

a. NRCS – 9 CRP grassland contracts for signature

b. 319 – none at this time

XII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING – 10/12/23 @ 8:30

Discussion regarding winter Ag event, topic brain storming, and title brain storming. Board asked Malissa to put together list of topic ideas, email out to the board. Rank ideas. Email to generate ideas of title for the event. Discussion also regarding updating name of Women's Ag Night to non-gender title in the future as all welcome to attend.

Richard motioned to proceed with a producer event, hopefully in December or January if December is booked, to be held at the Baymont in the evening. George seconded the motion.

Aye – 2 No – 0

Discussion regarding supervisor wages, thoughts of raising with hopes of future to bring in additional/replacement board members. Base \$75 – max \$193 per century code updates as of 8/1/23. Discussion of doing research across the state for other county's rates as a reference point.

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

XIV. ADJOURN – George motioned to adjourn at 11:37

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee

Recording Secretary

Approved:

 Aaron Steckler - Chairman