

# MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES OF MEETING

**Thursday, March 14, 2024 9:00**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Thomas called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 am

**II. ROLL CALL**

**Staff:** Chance Porsborg, Ethan Gress

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

**Others:** Landon Weiser NRCS

**Absent:** Malissa McKee, Steve Tomac, Jonathon Moser

**III. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**George motioned to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. Rocky seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

**IV. TREASURER’S REPORT**

Review of financials, August 2023 – February 2024.

**V.**

**Rocky moved to table financials, George seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

**Rocky motioned to bring Lynnell to help fix quick books with Richard and Malissa. Aaron seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

Richard discussed bank account balance being large and potential fraudulent charge possibilities. Richard and clerk discussed possibility of moving excess funds out to a CD. [Clerk recommended \$150k at this time of discussion and Richard thought less] Richard stated he thought half in account would be appropriate. Richard stated he requested a report of monthly expenses from clerk on date of discussion in office [no request was made for a report] and stated probably wasn't done.

**George motioned to have district clerk prepare a report of annual operating costs and check current CD rates for next meeting. Aaron seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

**VI. REPORT OF COOPERATING AGENCIES**

a. District Conservationist – Landon Weiser

Meadowlark application did not get funded, EQIP application did not get funded.

EQIP act now have 7 applications in, currently being told there will be very little money for first round.

CSP currently working on application, expect to be ranked by next Friday.

NRCS staff have been busy in office working on act now applications and CSP trying to get in system.

March 4-29 general sign up for CRP, some what limited funding as towards end of Farm Bill. A lot of producer meetings with those interested in different programs and cost share options.

Discussion regarding carbon capture grants for several counties as pilot counties in ND.

Chance indicated he has received several concerned calls regarding carbon capture facility going in north of Danzig Dam. Nothing like it in North America. Rocky asked staff to contact county commissioners regarding this matter.

b. County Extension Agent

Chance indicated no update from extension

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Conservation Award Nominations – due to NDASCD beginning of May  
Landon had a few suggestions - Wayne Duckwitz, grazing management, previously worked for plant material center, average size operation NW of Mandan.

**Aaron motioned to have Wayne Duckwitz Conservation Award Winner. George seconded**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

- b. Morton County SCD Award(s) – Investing in the Future, December 12  
Discussion regarding other awards. Ethan asked board opinion of several tree awards, just for previous year planting acknowledgement or several years ago showing progress of trees. Rocky mentioned Oliver Co SCD awards, recommended looking at their newsletter for awards given. Discussion of having two tree awards and a 319 award. Yearly, tree care award and long term tree care award. Discussion of slide show presentation with awards.
- c. Rural Development Council updates – Steve  
Steve did not present an update in his absence.
- d. Area IV Clerk hour reimbursement – f/u from Area IV Farm mtg  
Rocky indicated that Area IV board approved the presented hours for reimbursement to MCSCD. Discussion regarding splitting costs of QuickBooks between MCSCD and Area IV Research Farm.

#### **VIII. REVIEW WORK PLAN/CALENDAR**

- a. March 1 – end of continuing resolution (one week continuation to March 8)
- b. March 11-13 – District Annual Meeting (DAM), Fargo
- c. March 14 – Morton Co SCD board meeting
- d. April 3 – Waterfest, Engage Church, Mandan
- e. April 15 – DART, NRCS TA agreement 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024 due
- f. April 15 – Newsletter due to Image Printers
- g. May 1 – Morton Co Ag Day, Dakota Centennial Park
- h. May – beginning of month, Conservation award nomination due to NDASCD
- i. May – send out postcards for handplant pick up
- j. May – pick up trees at nurseries, date tbd
- k. May – begin plantings
- l. June – surplus tree sale, date tbd
- m. June – begin mill levy conversations (due Aug 10)

Discussion regarding Waterfest logo and printing of shirts for volunteers and staff. Morning sessions are full, afternoon has several spots filled. George recommended to contact Christ the King and St Josephs Elementary.

Discussion regarding District Annual Meeting (DAM). District Manager and District Tech have role lists, Chance is going to be helping on a list for Watershed Coordinator. Chance attended event coordinating break out session, taking pointers from this to help plan SCD events. Ethan indicated a session from Jay at Burleigh SCD regarding items they are doing in the garden at Menoken Farms. Break out session with Betty Brown about tree care, took away a couple of pointers. Discussion regarding pesticide certification, regarding Casoron, granular for weed control, some SCD interested in becoming authorized dealers, non cost sharable. Discussion regarding having as educational information provided by SCD.

#### **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Photo Contest – 2023 Jan-March  
Discussion regarding putting ad in the newsletter. Thomas recommended to have staff come up with start and end dates.

**Richard motioned to have the photo contest. Aaron seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

b. Scholarship

Board discussion, unaware of deadline, discussion of extending deadline. Previously letters were sent to guidance counselors, discussion of adding to send to FFA instructors in Morton County and sharing on facebook. Scholarship information is posted on website. June 1 deadline determined.

c. Annual Work Plan

Discussion regarding need to go through this annually. Thomas indicated that his understanding was that notes were sent [to employee association] but no annual work plan was sent. Supervisor packets noted have a work plan 2011- 2020, discussion regarding thinking updated but not certain. Discussion regarding long range work plan compared to annual work plan. Long range work plan meeting was done in 2021. Discussion regarding template. Richard indicated can ask those in charge for the template and take notes ourselves prior to next meeting and define at next meeting. Thomas indicated can have Hannah Nordby from NDSU extension come to meeting to assist.

Discussion regarding information provided regarding executive session and advisory board members. MCSCD has always operated under full voice, no vote. Rocky indicated that he spoke to state association and called somebody on the state committee; 'real problems with some of the statements that she [Jodi DeLozier, NDSU Extension] is making, she is totally exceeding the authority of the job she is supposed to have, telling people what to do. I was told, not to worry about it, its being taken care of.'

Richard stated 'the information that we were provided on how we are to conduct an executive session was completely different than every executive session that I've been in and I've been in a lot of them. So where that came from is beyond me. I don't believe a word of it.'

Kent asked 'even the information from the Attorney General.' Richard stated, from Malissa [information provided was directly from the Attorney General notes and reports were provided to board members via email on 2/7/24 with links to attorney general open records and executive session format and were confirmed with Andrea Bowman, NDSU Extension]

d. Newsletter – adjusting responsibilities

Aaron recommended to move responsibilities of the newsletter from the District Clerk to the District Tech.

**Aaron motioned to move the newsletter responsibility to the District Tech after the April Newsletter.**

**Rocky seconded the motion.**

**Aye – (4)      No – (0)**

**Richard amended the motion to change responsibility to the District Tech after the July newsletter.**

**George seconded the amendment.**

**Aye – (4)      No – (0)**

**X. REPORT OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES**

a. District Clerk

Malissa submitted her monthly report.

Discussion regarding secure alerts, free service on district checking account. Discussion regarding Positive Pay, paid service brought before board by clerk in January and declined. Secure alerts were set up on the new checking account with a limit of \$250 and invitation was sent to Richard's email per his request on March 7 right after conversation in office. He has not activated his access as of March 29 per our alert information in Dakota Community account. Clerk resent the code on March 29.

Board feels would not need fraud protection, positive pay service, if they had someone looking at the checking account every day. [Kerry, representative at Hebron branch of Dakota Community bank indicated that fraud is here to stay. Scammers just punch in account numbers at random until they find one that works]

**Rocky moved to add Richard to 'Secure Alerts' on District Checking account. George seconded the motion.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

- b. District Technician  
George asked Ethan about signs for trees planted by MCSCD. Bottom Line Ag Summit attended, interesting. Have both prior year seasonal employees committed for this years tree season. Discussed with Chance possibility of helping out when available for tractor driver. OHF has changed process, only one window for applications through end of July, first come first serve. New cost share opportunity through petroleum council. Submitted one for this spring, awaiting response.  
Rhonda Kelsch presented at District Annual Meeting regarding Lincoln Oaks updates, will box trees for people if wanted. Will be looking into. New financial employee has been let go. Actively working on quality and performance.  
Will be going to New Salem within next week to look at equipment, etc to prep for tree season.
- c. 319 Watershed Coordinator  
One producer sent for reimbursement, one producer waiting on specs. List of projects has not changed other than some producers have been paid for portions of their projects, one has been removed and one has been added.  
Bank club meeting on February 20, Glen Ullin, great turn out. A lot more prospective projects. Some concerns on meeting NRCS needs and feasibility check list.  
NWQI has been sent back and will be final time as has been over a year.  
Healthy watershed seminar attended when teleworking at end of February, national. GIS training on February 29, ARCPPro for mapping.

**XI. CORRESPONDENCE –**

Morton County Fair Advertisement

**Richard motioned to do a Morton County Fair Book Ad Option as a ½ page at, \$250. Rocky seconded.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

**XII. APPROVE APPLICATIONS AND AGREEMENTS –**

- a. NRCS - 4 applications
- b. 319 – none at this time

Call for executive session. [Break in recording]

**Richard motioned to have the personnel committee to meet with district clerk to set definite goals and timelines to deal with her performance. Rocky seconded the motion.**

**Aye – (4) No – (0)**

**XIII. PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING – April 11 at 9:00**

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

**XV. ADJOURN – Richard motioned to adjourn at approximately 12:30 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Malissa McKee  
Recording Secretary

Approved:

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Thomas Osterbauer - Chairman