

**Whitewater Joint Powers Board  
February 20, 2014  
Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**

**Minutes**

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Matt Flynn called the meeting to order at 8:44 a.m.

Board Members Present: Matt Flynn, Roland Wood, Steve Jacob, Arlene Nelson, Richard Hall, John Keefe

Others Present: Sheila Harmes and Joyce Tlougan

- 2. Approve Minutes of January 16, 2013**

A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by John Keefe to approve the minutes. Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 3. Approve Agenda**

Sheila Harmes requested to amend the agenda with two additions: 1) Conservation Innovation Grant request for proposal and 2) Landscape Stewardship Plan. A motion was made by Roland Wood and seconded by John Keefe to approve the agenda as amended. Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 4. Approve Consent Items**

Bills & Payroll

Sheila Harmes explained the bills and payroll listed.

A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by John Keeve to approve the Consent Items.

Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 5. Board Reports**

Arlene Nelson

Advised the Legislative Day at the Capitol is in March. Funding will be a discussion item. She advised that using autoCAD software from the county has been instrumental in getting projects done quicker.

Steve Jacob

Reported that he is continuing work on the Winona County Comp Plan. Steve reported that he is the county liaison to Winona SWCD. SWCD funding is a concern as well as recent publicity on GMO use. He read a resolution pertaining to health risks associated

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Joint Powers Board Members

Matt Flynn, Chair  
Olmsted Co. Commissioner

Steve Jacob, Vice-Chair  
Winona Co. Commissioner

Richard Hall  
Wabasha Co. Commissioner

Roland Wood, Secretary/Treasurer  
Wabasha SWCD Supervisor

Arlene Nelson  
Winona SWCD Supervisor

John Keefe  
Olmsted SWCD Supervisor

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with GMOs. He asked if other board members had any suggestions about SWCD/relations. Roland Wood stated that it has got to be worked out in each county. Matt Flynn stated that ten years ago Olmsted County SWCD staff transitioned to county staff; it's going great now. He suggested that Steve contact Olmsted SWCD for insight. Arlene Nelson stated that Jim Riddle wrote a great article in the Winona Daily News about GMO use; it is always going to be a controversial topic. Winona SWCD works with all farmers who need assistance.

#### Richard Hall

Reported that Wabasha County has a new interim Administrator. The Assistant County Attorney, Michael Plante, would be taking the County Administrator position shortly. He advised the feedlot made it through the main hoop. Wabasha County is closer to clearing up the issues.

#### Roland Wood

Reported that Matt Kruger now has technical authority. The County Water Plan is being worked on and is due in June. He stated that Forestry Day is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup> at the Sportsman Club in Lake City. He also added that the computer crashed in the office and it would take some work to recover information.

#### John Keefe

Advised he has been on vacation in St Thomas. Referring to the resolution Steve Jacob read, he doesn't agree with the obesity association with GMO's. Other factors are contributing to those trends.

#### Matt Flynn

Mentioned that there is consideration to establish a Zumbro Joint Powers Board. He noted that the Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board is already established; it may be more efficient to work through this entity rather than establishing a new joint powers board.

### **6. Board Discussion and Action Items**

- a. Financial Update: Sheila Harmes explained the Check and Money Market, Reconciliation Summary.
- b. Audit Contract: Sheila Harmes explained the Audit Contract and referred to the information in the committee packets. Michael Peterson has submitted a contract for conducting an audit for 2013.  
A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Roland Wood to approve the Audit Contract.  
Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.
- c. Resolution of Authority for MDA contract: Sheila Harmes explained that before a contract can be signed, the MDA has asked that a resolution of authority be signed. The resolution authorizes that the Watershed Coordinator can review and execute on behalf of the Joint Powers Board the Adaptive Nitrogen Management contract.

A motion was made by John Keefe and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve that Sheila be able to review and execute the MDA Adaptive Nitrogen Management contract. Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

d. Item had been removed from the agenda

e. Environmental Defense Fund/NRCS Project Update

Sheila Harmes explained the handout that was presented by the science team for the Environmental Defense Funds work in the Middle Branch. The handout has draft versions of maps developed from LiDAR, soils and land use data. These maps detail where recommended conservation practices can be placed to effectively reduce nitrogen loss in the watershed. The intent is that the maps can be used as a conservation planning tool. The science team will be back in the spring to do some “ground truthing” to confirm the accuracy of the maps. Recommended practices include woodchip bioreactors.

Roland Wood asked if bioreactors can be placed at all the springs. A number of springs within the watershed can have bioreactors installed and these would not interfere with production land. Matt Flynn commented that this information could be tied with Ag Certainty.

f. Mississippi River – Winona civic engagement grant report

Sheila Harmes explained that the stressor ID work for the watershed will be complete in May. There should be a solid draft completed by November. Jake Overgaard had organized two workshops with various speakers for the Farmer-Led Council. The first one was held on Feb 18 and was well-attended (21 people). The next watershed newsletter will be distributed next week. This issue features Laverne and Arlene Nelson.

g. MN Ag Certainty Update

Sheila advised the EQIP funding list is out. In addition, the funding from the state (\$80,000) will soon be available. The advisory committee will be discussing how those funds are used for Ag Certainty. As long as the farmer signs an application with intent to seek certification, he will be eligible to receive assistance. The MDA is working on the assessment tool. Sheila would like someone who represents organic farming on the Advisory Committee; names were suggested. Matt Flynn asked when farmers can sign up; Sheila advised sign up starts anytime now.

h. Conservation Innovation Grant

The NRCS is accepting applications for Conservation Innovation Grants; application deadline is March 7<sup>th</sup>. The grant would tie in with follow-up EDF work; demonstration projects could be done. Matt Flynn asked how much money could come from the grant. The average would be \$375,000.00 per project.

A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by John Keeve to approve Sheila for applying for the grant.

Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

**i. Landscape Stewardship Plan**

The Whitewater Watershed has been identified as a priority for a landscape stewardship plan to be completed. Funding is available through the US Forest Service to complete a plan before the end of the year. The Watershed Restoration and Protection work being done under the Mississippi Winona grant would dovetail a landscape stewardship plan. The plan would identify priority sub-watersheds within the Whitewater as well as sub-watersheds that are in good condition.

A grad student is working on his theses and would be able to write the plan and it would be directed by a steering committee. The plan will serve as a reference for land owners in developing forest stewardship plans. The Root River Watershed had a landscape stewardship plan completed last year; this plan would be similar. Steve Jacob had a question on what the bottom line (benefit) would be. Sheila advised that this plan addresses forest resources; benefits are long term.

A motion was made by Roland Wood and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve the proposed contract for the plan writing.

Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

John Keefe suggested having a booth for Ag Certainty at the Farm Show in March; a lot of farmers go to there. Sheila stated that it was a great idea and that she would follow up.

**7. Public Comments**

There were no public comments

**8. Agency Reports:**

No agency reports

**9. Next Meeting:** March 20, 2014

**Adjournment:** 9:42 a.m. Steve Jacob made a motion and Richard Hall seconded the motion to adjourn.

Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried

Respectfully submitted by:

Joyce Tlougan  
Recording Secretary

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Roland Wood, Secretary/Treasurer