

**Whitewater Joint Powers Board
January 16, 2014
Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Matt Flynn called the meeting to order at 8:47 a.m.

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

Others Present: Nathan Hanson; Winona Daily News, Jim Frederick; Farmer Led Council; Kevin Kuehner; MDA, Sheila Harmes and Joyce Tlougan

- 2. Approve Minutes of December 19, 2013**

A motion was made by Roland Wood and seconded by Richard Hall to approve the minutes.

Voting yes: 5 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 3. Approve Agenda**

Sheila Harmes made an amendment to the bills payable to include a replacement check. She stated she would explain the circumstances when the Consent Items were introduced. A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve the agenda as amended. Voting yes: 5 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 4. Approve Consent Items**

Bills & Payroll

Sheila explained she had added a FLC (Farmer Led Council) Incentive (replacement) check in the amount of \$200.00. The first check was sent out, but never received/cashed. The bottom line remains the same.

A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve the Consent Items.

Voting yes: 5 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

- 5. Board Reports**

Arlene Nelson

Reported at the last Winona SWCD meeting, elections were held. Jim Riddle is the Chair, Paul Schollmeier is the Vice-Chair, she (Arlene) is the Secretary and Leo Speltz is the Treasurer. She advised she will be attending the January 18th Frac Sand Summit at the Tau Center in Winona.

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

Steve Jacob

Reported he has been busy working on the (Winona County) Comp Plan. They (the committee), is working on outreach. He has been working toward a partnership between the SWCD and the County for the purpose of assisting with cash flow. Steve asked the board how other counties handle SWCD/County relationships.

Matt Flynn advised that Olmsted County SWCD employees are county employees, but the SWCD maintains its board. When budgets are reviewed, expenses and revenues are brought before the county board. Department expenses are internally paid by the County. Roland Wood advised that Wabasha County SWCD is on its own. They ask the county for money, and may not get it.

Matt Flynn advised that Olmsted Public Works Director oversees the SWCD as well as Feedlot, Road Crew, Incinerator, Surveyor Crew, and Parks Department. This has worked well; there are more financial and personnel resources available to SWCD. Matt also stressed the importance of FSA, NRCS and SWCD staff to be housed together.

Richard Hall

Reported that the Wabasha County Board had officer elections. New Chair is Don Springer; Vice-Chair is Mike Wobbe.

Michael Plante, the current Assistant County Attorney is serving as the County Administrator. After October he will go full time. The County has advertized his position; in the meantime he is the interim administrator.

Roland Wood

Reported that Jenny George has resigned as SWCD Manager. There will be restructuring of staff and looking at finances before hiring a replacement.

John Keefe

Advised that Dave Copeland, NRCS, is coming back to this area.

John will be attending the Environmental meeting on Dairy Operations elections next week.

Matt Flynn

Reported there is an abundance of construction taking place in Olmsted County.

6. Board Discussion and Action Items

a. Election of Officers:

John Keefe suggested leaving the board officers as is. A motion was made by John Keefe and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve leave the board as is. Chair – Matt Flynn, Vice-Chair-Steve Jacob, Roland Wood – Secretary/Treasurer
Voting yes: 6 Voting no: 0 Motion carried.

b. Financial Update

Sheila explained the first grant agreement check (\$50,000) was received for the Ag Certainty project work.

She will submit the quarterly invoice to the MPCA for the Mississippi Winona grant when the semiannual report is submitted on February 1st.

c. Corn Stalk Nitrate Study Presentation

Kevin Kuehner presented: Adaptive Nitrogen Management. He gave background information on work he has been doing with area farmers in assisting them with nitrogen management. Achieving optimal nitrogen applications is a challenge, as it is so weather/climate dependent. One tool that he uses is the end-of-season basal stalk nitrate test (developed by the Iowa State University in 1980's). Corn stalk samples are collected from fields at the end of the growing season. These stalks are ground up and analyzed. If N is in the corn stalk, the corn plant had more N than it needed to produce the crop. Kevin uses the corn stalk tests in conjunction with aerial imagery (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index) of the fields to help farmers better understand the relation between the nitrogen application rates and yield.

Kevin noted that results are highly variable, and one test result is only an indication of whether N was over or under-applied for that growing season. During dry years, N in the stalk will be high; in wet years the N will be low. Test results are needed for several years before management decisions can be made.

Kevin has worked with Whitewater Farmer-Led Council members for three years. He introduced the possibility of an agreement with MDA to expand this work to include variable rate strip trials. This can better correlate nitrogen application rates to yield. The agreement deadline is April 1st.

Matt Flynn suggested having the contract agreement placed on the February meeting agenda.

Kevin also relayed that this is a good project for producers in the Plainview-Elgin wellhead protection areas. Jim Frederick suggested having a subgroup in the Plainview Elgin area may lead to good input.

Steve Jacob supported the program; it's a good example of how to effectively apply nitrogen. Less cost to farmers will result in less loss of nitrogen in the ground.

d. 2013 Year-end Report of Activities

Sheila explained the accomplishments of the Whitewater Joint Powers Board for the 2013 year.

The CWP Bacteria Reduction grant ended in June 2013 and included a conservation tour and conservation practice incentives for the Farmer-Led Council. The Mississippi River –Winona civic engagement grant included a Citizen Summit, contracting with Olmsted County to complete a watershed water quality data analysis, survey of watershed residents, newsletters and website development. Ag Certainty has started and will provide cost-share funding for producers seeking certification.

e. Mississippi River – Winona Civic Engagement Grant Report Update

Sheila advised she is planning for the next Citizen Summit on February 27th at 5:30 p.m. at the Tau Center. MPCA staff is working on the stressor identification work for informing the draft strategies work. Nancy North is working on a strategy document on how to deal with the impairments to the watershed.

f. MN Ag Certainty Update

Sheila referred to the handout: MN Agriculture Water Quality. She attended the meeting in St. Paul on January 15th with Sue Glende, Mark Root and Mike Muzzy. NRCS will have EQIP funding dedicated to Ag Certainty. Up to 250 points can be used to rank applicants at the local level. Local SWCD & NRCS staff recently met and drafted the local questions to evaluate EQIP applications. The draft was submitted to the state to use as a local point system.

In addition to the EQIP funding, each watershed has \$80,000 to design incentives for the Ag Certainty program. These funds can be used to supplement EQIP cost share or to do something different.

Sheila put an Advisory Committee together for input to Ag Certainty in the Whitewater. This group will meet for the first timer on Jan 21st. Steve Jacob expressed an interest in attending this meeting.

Another Advisory Committee meeting will be held in February. Dr Karlyn Eckman will be at this meeting. Dr Eckman was contracted by the MDA to do a KAP GAP study in each of the four pilot watersheds. Her research can help identify how a program can best be promoted to the public.

Sheila advised the Whitewater Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday the 21st from 10:00 – 12:00. The Farmer Led Council will meet afterwards at 12:30.

Members of the Whitewater Advisory Committee include: Jim Frederick, Glen Haag, Glen Groth, Jack LaValla, Dan Brandt, Jon Schmitz.

Steve Jacob advised that he will attend the meetings.

7. Public Comments:

Jim Frederick stated he had attended the MDA Nutrient meeting and the PCA meeting in early December and that both were worthwhile meetings. Found no farmers at the meetings.

8. Agency Reports:

No agency reports

9. Next Meeting: February 20, 2014

Adjournment: 10:35 a.m. Steve Jacob made a motion and Richard Hall seconded the motion to adjourn.

Voting yes: 5 Voting no: 0 Motion carried

Respectfully submitted by:

Joyce Tlougan
Recording Secretary

Signed _____
Roland Wood, Secretary/Treasurer