

**Whitewater Joint Powers Board
March 19, 2015
Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Matt Flynn called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.
Board Members Present: Matt Flynn, Roland Wood, Steve Jacob, Richard Hall, Arlene Nelson
Others Present: Sheila Harmes; Winona County Planning & Environmental Services; and Joyce Tloutan; Winona County Planning & Environmental Services.

Absent: Board Member, John Keefe.
- 2. Approve Minutes of February 19, 2015**
A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Richard Hall to approve the minutes.
Voting yes: 5; Motion carried.
- 3. Approve Agenda**
A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Arlene Nelson to approve the agenda.
Voting yes: 5; Motion carried.
- 4. Approve Consent Items**
Bills & Payroll
Sheila Harmes explained the bills and payroll listed. A motion was made by Roland Wood and seconded by Richard Hall to approve the Consent Items.
Voting yes: 5; Motion carried.
- 5. Board Reports**
Arlene Nelson
Reported the SWCD had accepted a letter of resignation from Brien Maki; she will continue to assist SWCD with payroll during the transition period (until June). SWCD will look into options for Winona County to assist. The 2014 Cost share was discussed and the 2015 budget was passed. Arlene attended an organic conference and she mentioned Xerces Society is a non-profit that helps with buffers and other conservation programs.

Steve Jacob
Advised Winona County is working on getting a Feedlot Officer. Recommendations had been submitted to the Board of Commissioners and the Board is following those recommendations. Recommendations included separation of enforcement and low cost fixes. Steve stated he had been appointed to the Southeast Minnesota Water Resource Board and that he had attended a meeting in Mezeppa, MN regarding buffers. Steve advised the group of two events: 1) Promoting Modern Agriculture will take place at the Riverport Inn on March 26th and 2) "Mysterious of the Driftless" will be shown this evening.

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

Richard Hall

Reported Wabasha County looked at jointly supporting a Feedlot Officer position with Winona County, but that it was not going to work due to cost. He stated they are also looking at the buffer issue.

Roland Wood

Advised that Jen Wahls was hired to work on the Aquatic Invasive Species program. He asked Steve Jacob if other SWCDs meet regularly with the County Board of Commissioners. Steve stated that Winona SWCD does not in a formal meeting but a representative attends the Board meeting and that is working well. Matt Flynn advised that Olmsted County Board is updated by staff.

Matt Flynn

Reported Floyd Whitaker is retiring. He also advised independent investors are considering a Zip Rail project in Olmsted County; it would run along the Hwy 52 corridor.

6. Board Discussion and Action Items

- a. Financial Update: Sheila Harmes explained the Checking and Money Market, Reconciliation Summary.
- b. Rental Agreement between WJPB and SWCD: Sheila explained the rental contract and advised the network fee for the computer would be dropped next year. She requested the Board to approve the contract. A motion was made by Steve Jacob and seconded by Richard Hall to approve the rental agreement. Vote yes: 5; motion carried.
- c. Ag Certainty Update: The Ag Certainty program was awarded the UDSA Regional Conservation Partnership Program in January. These funds will be used to transition the four-pilot program to a state-wide agricultural certification program. The current Ag Certainty grant agreement the JPB has with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is effective until December 2015. During 2016, MDA would like the project to transition to a regional focus area. As demonstrated in the four pilot areas, SWCD staff is best equipped to work with farmers interested in certification. For this reason, MDA is considering a transition to a regional boundary that matches Minnesota SWCD Area 7; this includes 11 counties. The question to the board is "How should a regional transition occur in SE Minnesota and in what way will the JPB be involved?" There will be \$150,000 available for the transition for a lead certifier and for administration activities. Does Sheila need to work with the 11 counties to get the program to the regional scale? At this time Sheila conducts the reporting, handles billing, etc. for the three counties involved in the Ag Certainty program.

The Board members discussed options. No decisions can be made until more information is available. Roland suggested asking the other eight counties to assess interest in the Ag Certainty program. Rich expressed concern that working more regionally might spread resources too thin. Matt noted that it is important to have numbers showing results of the program – number of certified farmers, number of acres, number of practices added to landscape as a result of certification, etc. Roland questioned what farmers have to do to get certified, how many had to do something and how many didn't have to do anything. In 2016, Matt would like to have 100 certified farmers in the watershed.

Sheila advised that in June, The Whitewater JPB will be hosting the State Ag Certainty Advisory Committee meeting. This is a two-day meeting that includes a tour of the watershed. She asked if this Board would like to be a part of the tour, if it is scheduled after the regular

June meeting. If so, the meeting could be held at the St Charles Community Room; this is a good starting point for a bus tour. The June meeting will be 18th.

d. Mississippi River – Winona Civic Engagement grant report update:

Sheila Harmes stated the grant is close to getting done. The Watershed Restoration and Protection table is almost done.

7. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

8. Agency Reports

Sheila advised Eugene Kalmes and William Hunt had passed away; she sent cards to both families on behalf of the WWJPB.

8. Next Meeting: April 16, 2015

Adjournment: 10:52 a.m. Steve Jacob made a motion and Richard Hall seconded the motion to adjourn. Voting yes: 5; Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joyce Tlougan
Recording Secretary

Signed _____
Roland Wood, Secretary/Treasurer