

**CASS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 5, 2015**

IT IS THE MISSION of the Cass Soil and Water Conservation District to provide leadership and technical assistance to landowners and cooperating agencies in the wise use, conservation, and management of Cass County's natural resources.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman James Ballenthin at 10:03 am.

Present were: Chairman-James Ballenthin, V Chair.-Thomas Kuschel, Secretary-Kenneth LaPorte, Member-Jane Ekholm, Dist. Man.-John Ringle, Dist. Clerk-Brenda Davis, ESD-Kelly Condiff, and NRCS-Jessica Weis. At 11:30 am U of M-Mardi Harder, Cass Cty Land Dept.- Josh Stevenson, Cass Cty Commissioners Neal Gaalswyk and Jeffrey Peterson joined us.

**M/S Jane Ekholm/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the Rotation of Officers as follows.
Motion carried.**

Chairman-James Ballenthin	Vice Chairman-Thomas Kuschel
Secretary-Kenneth LaPorte	Treasurer-Clifton Peterson
Member-Jane Ekholm	

**M/S Thomas Kuschel/Jane Ekholm to approve the agenda with the following additions:
Crow Wing Forage Council. Motion carried.**

M/S Jane Ekholm/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.

John Ringle Reports:

John handed out the 2015 SWCD work plan and proposed budget. The SWCD uses the county's comprehensive local water plan for their work plan. The proposed budget is primarily based on last year's actual expenses and revenues. The county grant, BWSR Cost Share and General Services are not expected to change. As of today's meeting, the SWCD has not been approved for any further grants in 2015. Therefore we will be working off of the Ditch Grant, the County/SWCD AIS Grant, Cisco Lake Cost Share and Forest Plans Grant and the Wild Rice Grant. The district's expenses aren't expected to change much either. **M/S Kenneth LaPorte/Thomas Kuschel to approve the budget for 2015 as proposed (copy attached). Motion carried.**

John informed the SWCD that the county is expecting to receive \$500,000 for AIS in 2015. He is expecting to spend \$279,000 for 2015 and \$221,000 for 2016, in addition we will spend the balance of 2014 funds in the amount of \$171,000, for a total of \$450,000 in 2015. Jim wanted to know if the SWCD might receive any financial assistance from any of the townships or lake associations this year. Kelly and John thought not.

The Mississippi Headwaters is expecting to receive a grant and are willing to donate some funds towards the completion of the AIS video.

The U of M AIS position is still in the works but may not really work for Cass County. One of the stipulations....they do not want to do any involvement in the boat inspections.....they feel that is a DNR responsibility. This is basically what Stephanie did last year and John would really like to have her back this coming summer. John has had some talks with Josh Stevenson, who will be the new Cass County Human Resource person when Doug Stark retires this spring. Josh thinks the county could come up with a new job description for AIS and ESD could direct the employee as we did this last summer. The SWCD has not had any employees for several years now (expect for seasonal) and really does not have the finances to create a full time employee position. However, the SWCD was the only logical group to lead/direct the county in AIS prevention. John thinks that there should be at least 4 years of funding for AIS. Beltrami, Crow Wing and Itasca counties all have a full time AIS staff person. More on the U of M/AIS position next month.

M/S Thomas Kuschel/Jane Ekholm to approve and negotiate the RMB/ACCL/Ten Mile Lake AIS project titled “Enhancing the Role of Resorts and Other Private Businesses in Preventing the Introduction and Spread of AIS” contract with Patrick G. Welle of BSU. Motion carried.

M/S Jane Ekholm/Kenneth LaPorte to approve the County/SWCD AIS budget for 2015 (copy attached). Motion carried.

John and Kelly met with BWSR staff on 2/4/15 to discuss SWCD Capacity Building. John distributed 2 copies of articles about Cass County/SWCD that have recently been published.

NRCS – Jessica Weis Reports:

Jessica distributed lots of information including a sheet with NRCS Acronyms. She had a copy of a 026E Form or Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination. There was also some information regarding Crop Cash Rent in MN for 2013-2014.

Jessica is working on yearly status reviews and payments/modifications. She participated in 2015 EQIP training and the expected ranking date is February 20th. She has completed a few online trainings and attended a REAP and CWRBFC meeting.

There were 12 total applications in 2014 that were approved and funded at \$50,000. So far in 2015, 21 applications have been submitted. Won't know for a while how many are actually funded.

Kelly Condiff Reports:

Kelly has been in contact with the UAV (drone) operator and he is trying to work through all the “bugs” regarding privacy and access issues. He should have more information in March. So far the 11 miles of ditch that has been inventoried looks good.

Supervisor's Reports:

Jim provided copies of minutes from the Area VIII meeting that was held in January. Cass SWCD will host the June Area VIII meeting. The next Area VIII meeting is scheduled for March 6. Jim, Tom, Jane, Ken, John and Brenda will be going. **M/S Jane Ekholm/Thomas Kuschel to expenses for anyone wishing to attend. Motion carried.**

Jim mentioned that Jane was unable to attend Legislative Days with him. We should be getting a refund back for her room reservations. The meeting went ok. There just isn't a lot of time to meet with the legislators.

M/S Kenneth LaPorte/Jane Ekholm to pay \$55.00 to the Pillager Fair Board for advertising. Motion carried.

Ken, Jane and Tom will attend the Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council Field Days. **M/S Kenneth LaPorte/Thomas Kuschel to donate \$300.00 to help sponsor the field days and by doing so....at least 3 people can attend without paying the registration fee. Motion carried.**

The next NCJPB meeting is scheduled for the same day as the above field day. Jane was appointed to the NCJPB but will not be able to attend. John will be going though.

Hubbard County is sponsoring the 4th Annual Hubbard County Winter Grazing Workshop on February 11th. Jane may go. **M/S Thomas Kuschel/Kenneth LaPorte to pay expenses for anyone wishing to attend the Hubbard workshop. Motion carried.**

Brenda would like to attend the Year End Workshop scheduled for February 10th & 11th to be held at Northern Lights Casino. No room will be needed. There is a cost but it is to be divided between all attending. **M/S Thomas Kuschel/Jane Ekholm to pay expenses for Brenda to attend. Motion carried.**

At this time the SWCD Board met with other members of the Liaison Committee including: Commissioners-Neal Gaalswyk and Jeffrey Peterson, U of M Extension-Mardi Harder, NRCS-Jessica Weis, Cass County Land Department-Josh Stevenson as well as ESD/SWCD staff John Ringle, Kelly Condiff and Brenda Davis. Minutes to follow.

Vouchers:

M/S James Ballenthin/Kenneth LaPorte to pay the vouchers as presented. Motion carried.

Adjourn:

M/S Kenneth LaPorte/Thomas Kuschel to adjourn (1:16 pm). Motion carried.

Secretary, Board of Supervisor's

Date