

GBERBA Executive Board Minutes

Friday, February 17, 2023

WebEx Media Communication – Cottonwood SWCD Office

(Addresses of all participants (if meeting by WebEx) have been notices with agenda)

Present: Tony Berg, Jim Eigenberg, Rich Enger, Clark Lingbeek, Bill Miller and John Shanahan.

Others Present: Dave Bucklin, Danielle Evers, Anna Fairbanks, Kay Gross, Nathan Harder and Jill Sackett Eberhart.

Chair Clark Lingbeek called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda

Motion by Enger, second by Eigenberg to approve the Executive Board Meeting Agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

Minutes

Motion by Shanahan, second by Enger to approve the December 16, 2022 minutes as presented.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

INFORMATION/ACTION

Financial Report

The Financial Report dated 1/1/23 to 1/31/23 was presented for the Board's review. Motion by Miller, second by Berg to approve the February financial report as presented.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

Motion by Enger, second by Eigenberg to approve the accounts payable totaling \$20,045.55.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

MAWQCP Contract Approval and Payment

Riley Williams MAWQCP(42-5-27) Worksheet Incentive \$100.00

Motion by Enger, second by Berg to approve the MAWQCP incentives for Williams (\$100.00).

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

Review Grant Reports

Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant

Motion by Enger, second by Eigenberg to increase the cover crop category by \$262.44 to complete a 70 acres single species contract and moving funding from Urban Practices to Cover Crops.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan

Motion carried, all yes.

1W1P Le Sueur River Planning Grant

Just ending their 60-day review. The group will be working on Joint Powers Collaboration, By-laws, and policy for implementation. Wishing Haley Bryon, Waseca County, well in her new position at the DNR.

Watowan Drinking Water Protection Grant

Work Plan revision request was sent to BWSR on January 30, with review and submission of work plan revision questions concerning pollution reduction outcomes, permission was given to complete the work plan update through Elink.

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant: Groundwater Protection Initiative

The MN Department of Health is working on an extension for this grant effective June 30, 2024. Working to set up a committee meeting and put together a planning calendar to map out our objectives and timelines through 2023-2024.

CWF Soil Health Grant RFP Update

The first training for JAA was held on Tuesday, February 14 and will focus on Crop Rotation, No-Till, Reduce Till, RUSLE and WEPS – 11 GBERBA staff members were in attendance. NRCS just announced a cover crop training for JAA with sites in Marshall, MN on Monday, March 27 or Austin, MN on Friday, March 31.

Also working on the Hwy-14 and I90 CLASIC (Crop, Livestock and Soil Innovation Conferences). GBERBA will be assisting with sponsorship of the Heron Lake, Fairmont, Sleepy Eye and Owatonna sites.

MAWQCP Agronomist Incentive

Motion by Miller, second by Shanahan to approve contacting local agronomist for landowner referrals and pay an incentive if the referral results in a MAWQCP worksheet completion. Incentive would be \$50/referral and worksheet completion or \$100/referral and certification completion.

Roll Call Vote – Y – Berg Y – Eigenberg Y – Enger Y – Lingbeek Y – Miller Y - Shanahan
 Motion carried, all yes.

Coordinator Report: Dave Bucklin and Kay Gross

☆ MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Update on progress made in areas 5 and 6 – See Certification Specialist Reports. Over 910,000 acres and over 1250 certified producers statewide! **That is over 1,421 square miles and equals more than Cottonwood and Watonwan counties combined!** The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program has launched four new endorsements in addition to 10-year certification a farmer or landowner receives in the program. The endorsements are for soil health, integrated pest management, wildlife, and climate smart. Looking to add an incentive for agronomists who give landowner referrals that result in a MAWQCP worksheet completion.

Anna Fairbanks accepted the MN Corps MAWQCP 2023 position and she started at the Cottonwood SWCD office on January 18. She has been a real asset to the office.

☆ Watonwan River Watershed - Implementation Grant

Working with vendor to update and add pages to the GBERBA website to accommodate the Watonwan River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and Water Based Implementation Funding grants.

As of January 31, we have encumbered or paid for \$426,419.47 with \$274,057.53 remaining.

Breakdown:	Category	Funding Allotted	Remaining	Encumbered	Paid
	Administration	\$100,157	\$46,925.78		\$53,231.22
	BMPs	\$510,320	\$155,491.97	\$319,697.62	\$35,130.41
	Tech/Eng.	\$10,000	\$10,000		
	Project Dev.	\$15,000	\$11,790.12		\$3,209.88
	Inventory/Map.	\$5,000	\$5,000		
	Planning/Asses.	\$45,000	\$30,000		\$15,000.00
	Education/Infor.	\$15,000	\$14,849.66		\$150.34
	TOTAL	\$700,477	\$274,057.53	\$319,697.62	\$106,721.85
			(39%)		

☆ 1W1P Le Sueur River Watershed Comprehensive Plan

The Le Sueur 1W1P document is out for 60-day comment. Haley Byron with Waseca County will continue to act as coordinator for the 1W1P effort for implementation and Waseca SWCD will do the fiscal coordination. The group will be working on Joint Powers Collaboration, By-laws, and policy for implementation.

☆ CWF 2020 Watonwan Drinking Water Grant

The Work Plan Revision request submitted to BWSR, response received with discussion at GBERBA Technical meeting.

☆ MDH 2022 Watonwan Groundwater Protection Accelerated Implementation Grant

First mailing is being sent out as of January 1, with an emphasis on MN Nutrient Management Initiative through the MN Department of Agriculture. Approximately 1,218 letters and brochures were sent out by Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Martin and Watonwan SWCDs/Counties. Working on a one year extension from MN Department of Health with end date of June 30, 2024.

State grant funds total \$21,898 with a grant start date of July 15, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. The Cottonwood and Watonwan staff have met and will be working on groundwater education/outreach efforts from the Watonwan Comprehensive Watershed Mgmt. Plan. Displays – Livestock, Irrigation, Nutrient Mgmt., and the purchase of a rainfall simulator. Brochures – Livestock, MAWQCP, Irrigation, Nutrient Mgmt., Groundwater Quality. Mailings – MAWQCP, Groundwater and Irrigation, Well and Water Quality Testing, Field Day.

☆ BWSR Soil Health Grant

Program start date 11-7-2022. The first training for JAA is being held on Tuesday, February 14 and will focus on Crop Rotation, No-Till, Reduce Till, RUSLE and WEPS. NRCS just announced a cover crop training for JAA, please sign-up as soon as possible!

Also, working with the I90 and Hwy 14 Soil Health Workshops in Heron Lake, Fairmont, Sleepy Eye and Owatonna.

Staff Reports

Area 6 Certification Specialist – Herman Bartsch – Written Report

Area 5 Certification Specialist – Danielle Evers – Written Report

MDA – Conservation Corp Member – Anna Fairbanks – Written Report

Agency Reports

BWSR – Jill Sackett Eberhart – Grant reporting and reviews by BWSR are being completed. Work plan completed and approved for Watonwan Watershed Groundwater Protection grant. Next round of RFPs will be going out for Watershed Comp Plans. Legislature is in full swing, look into the Clean Water Council and Governor’s Budget – a large increase in soil health funding, water storage, easements, SWCD Aid funding. Jill will be going on leave starting in April through July/August.

OTHER – None

Meeting adjourned by Chair Clark Lingbeek at 2:00 p.m.

Next meeting date:

Policy Board Meeting	Friday, March 17, 2023	1:00 p.m.
Technical Committee Meeting	Wednesday, March 22, 2023	9:30 a.m.
Executive Board Meeting	Friday, April 14, 2023	1:00 p.m.

Secretary’s signature of approved minutes _____ Date _____