

*Helping Producers Implement
Best Management Practices
For Conservation Purposes in
Kittson County*



410 South 5th Street - Suite 106 - Hallock MN 56728 - Phone (218) 853 2619 - www.kittsonswcd.org

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Kittson Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors
Held on Wednesday, December 13th, 2023, at 8:00 AM at the
Kittson County Courthouse.**

The Board of Supervisors of the Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular scheduled meeting on Wednesday, December 13th, 2023, at 8:00 AM at the Kittson County Courthouse. This meeting was the December board meeting. Members present included Vice Chairman Andrew Muir, Treasurer Joe Wilebski, Secretary Carey Mortenson, Chairman CJ Peterson, and Public Relations Sam Anderson.

Others present were District Manager Jamie Osowski, District Technician Jeremy Benson, District Technician Kevin Olsonawski, District Outreach Specialist Sky Olsonawski, District Technician and Soil Conservationist Technician Jillian Fejszes.

Additions to new business: Jeremy Benson proposed adding the Klondike WCA permit to new business. Jamie Osowski proposed to add changes to the employee handbook to new business. A motion was made by Muir and seconded by Wilebski and unanimous vote of supervisors to add these topics to the agenda under new business.

Adjustment to the meeting schedule was proposed by Jamie Osowski to move the Klondike WCA permit to the beginning of the meeting. This adjustment was approved upon motion by Muir and seconded by Wilebski and unanimous vote of supervisors.

The meeting was closed for yearly staff evaluations. All staff asked to leave the meeting room.

The meeting was recalled together to continue with the normally scheduled December board meeting.

The minutes from the November 1st, 2023, board meeting was approved upon motion by Wilebski and seconded by Anderson and unanimous vote of supervisors.

The financials from October and November 2023 were discussed and the motion was made by Mortenson and seconded by Anderson.

New Business:

Klondike WCA Application: Jeremy gave an update on the Klondike WCA application that we had previously denied. It was found that our decision was not filed within the 60 day required notice. We acknowledged that and added measures to our filing system to ensure this doesn't happen again. After discussion was had amongst the board it was decided to approve the application for the Klondike. This decision was approved upon motion by Muir and seconded by Anderson and a unanimous board of supervisors.

Employee Handbook Changes: Jamie brought forward that the employee handbook needed a few changes. She talked about needing an addition to the drug and alcohol policy regarding cannabis use. There was discussion amongst staff and the board, and it was decided to wait for further guidance before making the adjustment to that. She also brought forward the sick leave policy. The state of Minnesota has adjusted the earned sick leave and safe time employee notice policy. Discussion was had amongst staff and the board and it was decided to wait to make these adjustments until we received further guidance on how to do so.

Health Insurance Plan and Health Savings Account- Discussion was had regarding health insurance premiums for the employees. The premiums had gone up again for the year 2024, as did the allowable amount that can be put towards an employee's HSA account. Jamie Osowski asked the board if they would consider either upping the amount they give for premiums or increasing the yearly contribution towards the HSA to help mitigate this increase. The board had a discussion, and a decision was made to increase the yearly contribution towards the employees HSA from \$2,500 to \$3,000. This decision was approved upon motion by Wilebski and seconded by Mortenson and a unanimous vote of supervisors.

2022 Kittson SWCD Audit Report: Jamie presented the 2022 audit report for the board. Discussion was had amongst staff and the board. A motion was made by Muir and seconded by Mortenson and a unanimous vote of supervisors to approve the draft audit report done by Peterson Company.

FY24 Cooperative Agreement with the JPB: Jeremy presented the FY24 cooperative agreement made between the Kittson SWCD and the Two Rivers JPB to the board. It states that the Kittson SWCD would be able to use the funds in the JPB funds to complete projects and contracts in Kittson County on a 1st come 1st serve basis. A motion was made by Wilebski and seconded by Mortenson and unanimous vote of supervisors to accept the FY24 cooperative agreement.

Hallock Dam FY22 WBIF Project Request: Jeremy presented a request the JPB received from the City of Hallock for additional funding for their dam project. The dam project is set to be completed in the

spring of 2024 and they are requesting we apply for supplemental funding through BWSR to help mitigate some of the project costs. Discussion was had amongst the staff and board members on how to vote on this proposal. No motion was made on this at this meeting.

Staff Reports:

Jill gave the NRCS Update, she reported that Bonnie is taking time off for the holidays. She will be in the office except for occasionally working from home. She stated they are looking for more EQIP contracts so to send people that might be interested in.

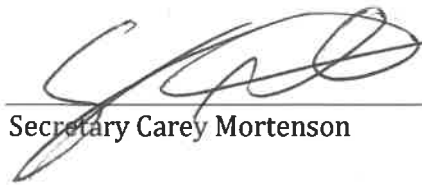
Kevin gave his technician report and mentioned that one landowner had put in for culvert request. Him and Jeremy had gone out, surveyed it and approved the culvert as a no loss as far as WCA is concerned. He got results on another landowner's survey done by the watershed district and determined that they can clean out the ditch but it can not be dug any deeper to keep in compliance with WCA.

Sky gave an outreach update. She discussed the turn out for pint night and asked for suggestions for next year. She asked about the upcoming crop improvement day and what should be talked about on behalf of the office. She mentioned sending out rain gauge reader appreciation gifts after the new year. She gave an update on the school programs she has been doing the past month including the poster contest and the Christmas tree lesson. She brought up the livestock producers' dinner and got input on the invitation list and prizes for the attendees. She reminded the board about the tree ordering open house coming up. She showed them options for promotional items for the office to use as giveaway and they gave her the go to purchase those. She also updated them on the strip till event scheduled for February and who she was planning on having speak at that.

Jeremy gave his technician report, he brought forward a state cost share contract for cancellation. Contract SCS15-07 was requested to be cancelled by the contract holder. After discussion the cancellation of this contract was approved upon motion by Wilebski and seconded by Mortenson and unanimous vote of supervisors. Jeremy also brought forward a contract request by a landowner for a ½ strip till ½ no till contract through our sugar beet strip till program funds. Discussion was had amongst staff and the board on this contract. He also gave an update that our FY24 funds for 1W1P are ready for people to sign up and he reported that as of this time they already had seven contracts.

Jamie gave her report, she stated that she received an email from the MN DNR on the observation well contract. They have proposed an increase in compensation for observing readers well. She stated that if everybody agreed, she would sign that contract when available. She gave an update on the county upgrades that are being put into motion after the first of the year. That will affect our office will be window replacements and the demolition of the boiler room. She also updated the board on the county administrator search and informed them that the county had narrowed it down to two candidates. The decision should be made soon on who they plan to offer the position too.

**The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday January 10th, 2024, at 8 AM at the
Kittson County Courthouse.**



Secretary Carey Mortenson

1-10-24

Date