

EXHIBIT A: Meeting Minutes



KANABEC SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

Kanabec SWCD Board Room
2008 Mahogany Street, Suite 3
Mora, MN 55051
(320) 679-1391

Purpose Statement: *This Board of Supervisors meets regularly, utilizing civic standards to organize ourselves and building capacity and infrastructure as needed to support our goals of achieving better soil and water quality outcomes throughout Kanabec County.*

The public is welcome to attend monthly Board meetings in person at the Kanabec SWCD office (address listed above). Note: Meeting material, including agendas and minutes, is posted on the District website at www.kanabecswcd.org.

Remote Google Meet joining info:

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/qaj-aafx-ruq>

Or dial: (US) +1 505-738-3067 PIN: 922 739 424#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/qaj-aafx-ruq?pin=6566792966442>

November 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

2:01PM

A. Attendance:

- I. **Chair:** Norma Heggernes (arrived at 2:10 - the board was previously informed that she had to work up until 2pm), **Vice-Chair:** Kevin Belkholm, **Treasurer:** Kim Johnson, Jon Sanford, Gene Carda
 1. Supervisors absent:
- II. Others Present: Jaren Peplinski, Jerah Mattson, Emily Larsen, Mary Poelman, Nick Foss, Brian Steffen*, Shannon Bodle, Stephanie Paulsen, Peter Ripka, Kelly Condiff*
***Remote attendee**

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Review and Approval of Agenda (Action Item)

- A. Johnson moved to approve the agenda as amended with the addition of an update on the IRA forestry funding requested at the past meeting. The motion was seconded by Sanford. 4 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

4. Review and Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

- A. *Regular Board Meeting Minutes 10/09/2024* (Regular Meeting Minutes). Johnson moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Carda. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: The subject of assistance with subdivision reviews (from an environmental impact standpoint to manage additional water liability and the potential for soil losses) was raised as a

possible area of support from the SWCD to the county at a previous county commission meeting. Peplinski will bring this up to Ryan Carda at Kanabec County Environmental Services to show interest that the SWCD would like to be a part of this review process. Sanford raised water management and wetland impact concerns about the new Blaze Credit Union branch being built,, but Peplinski brought up that the plans don't create any wetland impact concerns - Peplinski had previously reviewed the plans with Kanabec County. Peplinski's only potential concern was on roof runoff management from new building plans that would be created at a later date, outside of the current site proposal. The landfill site and the potential for groundwater contamination spreading. Concerns about the original landfill had no liner. Is this runoff leading closer to the lake/streams? More information will be gathered after Steph Paulsen sends Peplinski contact info for the manager of the landfill.

5. Review and Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

- A. *Special Board Meeting Minutes 11/01/2024* (Special Meeting Minutes). Sanford moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Belholm. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: The (now defunct) Snake River Watershed Management Board voted to dissolve under the condition that the SRWMB would set aside \$7,700 (the pre-approved rate from the audit company) for the audit as well as \$1,900 to cover Kanabec County's 2024 fiscal and administrative costs prior to re-allocating the set-aside funding (\$11,900.52 back to Kanabec County) sometime in 2025. Peplinski mentioned that the SWCD should keep an eye on how that funding is being managed once it's able to be used.

6. Guest Presentation

- A. Kelly Condiff, formerly of Cass County SWCD, current DNR R2 Area Hydrologist, on his experience with NACD

Discussion: Condiff explained his experience with an Urban and Community Conservation grant from NACD, a type of grant which is only available to member organizations. This allowed Cass County to develop new community garden programs. They contracted with a master gardener and conducted a lot of outreach in promotion of the grant. Condiff additionally mentioned that reporting was simple and done quarterly.

Peplinski explained what our dues through MASWCD are covering, and how there is a lot of value in the MASWCD funding contribution, including the connection to conservation across the state. NACD offers similar value at the national level.

NACD collects annual dues. They are requesting this from our district. This will allow for additional opportunities to bring in more funding. There are resources available for districts and employees. Condiff mentioned that NACD does a lot with NRCS, so Brian Steffen can be a great resource or asset.

7. Reports of Partners

- A. NRCS (Brian Steffen, Shannon Bodle, Stephanie Paulsen). A written report was provided and reviewed

Discussion: EQIP

- FY2025 planning is underway. Staff is working on assessments, field visits, and 048 reviews.
- Staff is working on completing field visits for certification of practices like grazing, cover crops, and other applicable practices.
- Eligibility documents have been released and currently gathering signatures.
- The assessment and ranking deadline is Jan 10th, 2024

Work will continue with the SWCD office. Peplinski requested Steffen to assist in the hiring of the soil health position.

Working together to establish a better relationship with the SWCD/NRCS offices is a goal. MASWCD Convention will be held December 2-4.

UTV training will take place in Morrison County the week of December 9th.

Bodle shared a past golden-winged warbler project, showing before and after photos.

- B. BWSR (Zach Guttormson) – No report was provided.
- C. Technical Service Area III, (Matias Valero) - No report was provided.
- D. Kanabec County (Ryan Carda) – No report was provided.
- E. PCA (No primary point of contact listed) – No report was provided.
- F. MN DNR (Craig Wills) – No report was provided.
- G. MnDOT (No primary point of contact listed) – No report was provided.

8. Public Comment

- A. None

9. Financial Report (Action Item)

- A. *10/31/2024 Year-to-Date Financial Report* (Financial Report). The Financial Report was detailed by Jerah Mattson and reviewed by the Board of Supervisors. Treasurer Johnson recommended acceptance of the Financial Report on behalf of the Finance Committee. Belkholm moved to accept the Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Carda. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

10. Action Items

- A. *Contribution to the National Association of Conservation Districts for FY25*. Discussion: Sanford moved to pass on the approval of the Contribution to the National Association of Conservation Districts for FY25 (the motion is to decline on making a contribution to NACD for FY25). The motion was seconded Johnson by. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: It is proposed to contribute \$775 for 2025 NACD dues. It was questioned how this would benefit the District. NACD can lobby at a Federal level. It was mentioned this would not be beneficial to the District, as other federal funding can be applied for. Supervisors will seek more information at the convention in December and share this information with the rest of the Board at the December regular meeting.

- B. *Supervisor compensation rates for 2025*. Johnson moved to update the Supervisor compensation rates for 2025 on behalf of the Board, as amended, beginning January 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Belkholm. 4 in favor/ 1 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: Kim gathered information from surrounding Districts on what the Supervisors are being compensated. This will ensure that time and energy will be put into the work.

- C. *Website migration costs and recurring website costs*. Sanford moved to approve website migration costs and recurring website costs of \$300/month on behalf of the Board. The motion was seconded Belkholm. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: Jaren explained the issues we are facing with our current website. He reviewed a new platform we could switch over to which specializes in small districts across the country. This new platform is called Streamline. He has worked with them in the past and explained how easy this will be to use and we will also be compliant with ADA restrictions which will be required January 1, 2026. All platforms we are using will be transferred to Streamline. The options of the core setup and monthly rates were discussed. It is requested to find out how many views our current site has.

- D. *District Manager to draft MOU with Pokegama Lake Association, subject to review by Kanabec SWCD Board at a later meeting prior to approval*. Sanford moved to have Jaren create a draft MOU agreement for the PLA on behalf of the Board. The motion was seconded by Belkholm. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: PLA gives donations to our District frequently. They are asking to formalize this agreement giving us around \$2,000 per month. Jaren would like to have a draft agreement ready for Board review and possible approval at the December regular meeting.

11. Other Reports/Discussion

- A. Subcommittee reports

Johnson reviewed the personnel recommendations policy. He is happy with the draft.

The COLA met last Thursday. There are concerns and issues with the 2025 budget.

Sanford attended a couple of the county board meetings.

The Snake River Watershed Management Board has voted for dissolution.

Belkholm attended the Pokegaman Lake Association meeting. He was impressed with how they are moving ahead with the nanobubbles. Sanford shared an article that was in the local paper featuring this project. If this project works in their lake, other lakes will benefit. In the past the COLA has met with the SWCD then the Board has voted on action items. The assumption is the advising board is our SWCD, not the County Board. We are looking to hire one less boat inspector than last year and offer a bigger compensation. The issue with the voting was raised by Peplinski, where he detailed accounts of how voting seemed to have no structure - Peter Ripka, who also attends COLA meetings and is directly related to this AIS Prevention Program through his position on the Board of Commissioners, shared that he thinks this should be strictly be a decision voted on by the SWCD Board, with no members on the COLA Board. Peplinski mentioned that if this is the case, we don't want to discourage involvement from the COLA in seeking input, but agreed that the organization of this program, and roles and responsibilities, do need to be clarified so that everyone is on the same page and the program can operate successfully.

Johnson requested to add the Kettle River/Upper St. Croix Partnership to the subsequent meeting agendas as a subcommittee report area - the November meeting was canceled.

B. Funding opportunities

No changes from the last board meeting. There is a Solid Waste Management Grant Program. This money could become useful for the landfill for what they envision.

12. Other Business

A. Presentation from Nick Foss on District Land Woodland Stewardship Plan.

Discussion: Foss created a Stewardship Plan for the District Land. The DNR and the State Office approved the plan. Foss reviewed the areas around the land, including which tree species could use management and additional areas of focus. Foss suggested hosting outreach events at the land to promote certain conservation practices.

B. 2025 Salary Realignment Strategy

C. Discussion: Update on Soil Health Conservationist Position Hiring. Peplinski is checking the references of a candidate who has great skills and potential for the District. He will provide an update next month.

D. Discussion: 2025 Draft Budget

E. Discussion: Signature Process.

F. Discussion: Kanabec County HWY 65 Fish Lake/Ann River Bridge 2024 Riprap-move until next meeting

G. Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Forest Service funding. There will be funding available for re-forestation projects. This includes land owned by local government units. This can be used for projects on the district land. There will be \$5 million distributed per state. Foss will attend the forestry meeting tomorrow and will bring back more updates.

13. Consent Agenda Action Items (none)

Adjourned Sanford moved to adjourn, seconded Belkholm. 5 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carried.

5:08 PM

Submitted by: Jerah Mattson