

## Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 17, 2019 6:00 p.m.

Heron Lake Watershed District office

Heron Lake, MN

### ATTENDANCE

Paul Pietz, Jerry Ackermann, Mona Henkels, Naomi Hill, Kevin Stevens, Allen Jensen, Jacob Rischmiller, Jan Voit, and Catherine Wegehaupt

#### 1. Call to Order

Paul Pietz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

#### 2. Agenda

A motion was made by Jerry Christopherson and seconded by Mona Henkels to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the July 23, 2019 HLWD Advisory Committee meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Jim Eigenberg and seconded by Kevin Stevens to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Discussion Items

##### United Message

Paul Pietz and Jan Voit revised the talking points into themes. The document was renamed United Message. A motion was made by Mona Henkels and seconded by Naomi Hill to approve the United Message. The motion passed unanimously.

##### HLWD

##### *Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) Meeting*

On June 11, the West Fork Des Moines River WRAPS strategies session was held. Attendees identified the physical and social strategies needed to meet the 10-year targets for the WRAPS. The strategies were ranked. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will include these in the WRAPS report.

##### *2020 Budget*

The financial newsletter was drafted. It was mailed on August 8. The HLWD budget hearing was held on August 20. A levy of \$250,000 was adopted.

##### *Summer Intern*

Ely Rogers gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining his summer activities on August 13.

##### *Minnesota Association of Drainage Inspectors (MADI) and Minnesota Viewers' Association Meeting*

The MADI met on August 15 at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria. Presentations were given by Tom Gile, BWSR; Maury Noonan, Rinke Noonan; Mark Origer and Jacob Rischmiller, ISG; and Ron Ringquist.

##### *Watershed Management Plan (WMP) Guidance Document*

The HLWD hired Houston Engineering, Inc. to draft this guidance document in 2017. Through this process, best management practices (BMPs) that can simultaneously improve water quality,

reduce flooding, and enhance ecological integrity are prioritized. This document was approved by the managers at the August meeting.

#### *Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Resolutions*

The statutory levy limit for watershed districts statewide is a percentage of market value or \$250,000, whichever is less, regardless of the size or tax capacity of each district. The levy limit was set by statute in 2001. The HLWD's general operating levy has been set at \$250,000 for the last 13 years. In today's dollars the \$250,000 levy limit is equal to \$361,000. At the August meeting, the managers adopted a resolution to ask for MAWD's assistance in raising the levy limit to \$500,000.

In the past, when an improvement project has been ordered within the HLWD, the respective county has assisted with the financing and has issued general obligation drainage bonds. The HLWD has made repeated requests asking Jackson County to bond for current drainage improvement projects. Those requests have been denied. Metropolitan watershed districts have the authority to issue general obligation bonds. Greater Minnesota watershed districts do not. At the August meeting, the managers adopted a resolution asking for MAWD's assistance to enact legislation that allows the HLWD the same authority to issue bonds to fulfill our responsibilities as drainage authority under Minnesota Statutes 103E.

#### *Des Moines River Watershed One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P)*

On August 26, Doug Goodrich, BWSR convened the Des Moines River Watershed Planning Group Scoping Meeting. The group would like to move forward with the 1W1P process. The first step is to secure resolutions from all local government entities. Resolutions will be presented at September or October meetings, depending on agenda availability. Murray County has offered to be the lead for the day-to-day activities. A request will be made to the HLWD to act as the fiscal lead.

#### *MAWD Annual Conference Planning Session*

On September 5, Jan Voit attended the planning session for the MAWD annual conference. Comments from the 2018 event were discussed. The 2018 booklet and schedule were reviewed. Thirty five abstracts were submitted. From those, 24 presentations were chosen.

#### *Governance 101*

A joint training session for Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and MAWD managers and staff was held on September 12 and 13. Topics included a general overview of the history of SWCDs and MAWD. Presentations were given on watershed district statutes, operations, and finance basics. Breakout sessions covered leadership and priority setting, strategic thinking, data practices act, and the open meeting law.

#### **Grant Applications**

- Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). Through the LSOHC, the HLWD applied for funding to use conservation easements and fee-title land acquisition to protect, enhance, and restore 990 acres of high-value wetland and prairie habitat and to hire a conservation technician. The hearing for the HLWD's LSOHC proposal was held on the morning of September 5. Jon Schneider, Ducks Unlimited, Eran Sandquist, Pheasants Forever, and Nick Bancks, Minnesota Land Trust, and Jan Voit attended. She gave a presentation regarding the proposal. Many questions were asked. Our partners were pleased with the presentation. A funding recommendation will be made by the LSOHC at the end of September.

- Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program. The interview was conducted on July 30 at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) office in Windom. Landowners in attendance were Paul Pietz, Harvey Kruger, Tony Thompson, Paul Henning, and Jerry Ackermann. Also participating were Tom Kresko, DNR; Scott Rall, Pheasants Forever; Doug Goodrich, BWSR; Cindy Penny, Abel Green, Greg Johnson, and Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA; Scott Kronholm, Staci Williams, Chuck Brandel, Catherine Wegehaupt, and me. MPCA staff asked questions. Responses were given and discussion was held. The final interviews were completed on August 2. On September 3, the HLWD was informed that they were selected as one of the grant recipients.
- Clean Water Fund. Efforts are focused on County Ditch 3 (CD3), which flows into Okabena Creek and then SHL and Judicial Ditches (JD) 14 and JD3, which also outlet into SHL. Projects include 15 alternative side inlets (ASI) on CD3, 4 on JD14, and a 4.2 acre wetland on JD3, providing an annual phosphorus load reduction of 2258 pounds, which equates to a 6.1 percent total reduction for the SHL watershed. The application was submitted on September 9.

### **Public Drainage Systems**

#### *Jackson CD 3*

There is ongoing discussion with Jackson County Commissioners, staff, and BWSR regarding bonding and other drainage authority and management issues.

At a special meeting on August 1, the HLWD held a special meeting to address the bids for CD 3. The bids were approved and Jan Voit was authorized to work with Northland Securities to obtain short-term financing. Bremer Bank submitted a bid for \$9.3 million at 2.4 percent interest. The bid was accepted at the August 20 meeting. A preconstruction meeting was held on September 17.

#### *Jackson County JD 36*

The petition was accepted and the Order Appointing Engineer were approved by the Board on August 20. The information was sent to Chuck Brandel on August 21. He submitted the bond and oath on August 22.

### **Other Items**

Discussion was also held regarding current requests for proposals for cover crop grants, water quality information, Schindler's pond, storage opportunities, and the need for ongoing maintenance funds for projects.

## **4. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Kevin Stevens and seconded by Jerry Christopherson to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Allen Jensen

Secretary