

Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 20, 2016 6:00 p.m.
Heron Lake Watershed District office
Heron Lake, MN

ATTENDANCE

Paul Pietz, Rose Schultz, Shelly Lewis, John Shea, Dave Hussong, Julie Lopez, Marv Zylstra, Allen Jensen, Bob Dieter, Mona Henkels, Jerry Christopherson, Catherine Wegehaupt, and Jan Voit

1. Call to Order

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

2. Minutes

The minutes of the September 20, 2016 HLWD Advisory Committee meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Allen Jensen and seconded by Marv Zylstra to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

3. HLWD Advisory Committee membership

New members for 2017 will include Jim Eigenberg, Matt Widboom, Shelly Lewis, and Jean Christoffels. Clarence Madsen will no longer serve due to health concerns. Bob Dieter said that he intended to retire. Jan Voit will work with Paul Pietz and Wayne Smith to identify potential members to replace those members that are retiring.

4. HLWD Board of Managers Meeting Observations

- September – The meeting was very orderly and seemed to be going well – like a regular meeting.
- October – The meeting was normal, with questions asked and discussion held. The biggest change was the managers are respectful of opinions. There is a general sense of cohesiveness and respect, regardless of differing opinions.
- November – The meeting was good. Gary Ewert brought up the possibility of a resolution to require a manager to be individually responsible if he or she takes action that is not authorized by the board. The motion to pursue the resolution passed unanimously.

5. Discussion Items

HLWD Cover Crop Research Plots

Information regarding a five-year cover crop program recommendation, the culmination of the work done by the Cover Crop Steering Committee (Committee), was sent to managers in October. The Committee identified the need for further education and local research. Their recommendation was the implementation of side-by-side field trials along with annual field days over a five-year period. The project will include four farm sites, one in each county – Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood. Samples from the four fields will be taken each year for five years. The purpose is to provide long-term, local data about cover crop management. One field day will be held each year, rotating through the four counties. The final results will be presented at the end of the five years at one of the trial sites. The Committee also recommended that project funding would be provided by the HLWD rather than through a state or federal grant. Promotion should focus on water quality improvement. It is important for landowners to know that the information gathered will be used locally for education purposes, not enforcement. The managers approved this program at their meeting on October 18, 2016.

Jack and Okabena Creek Sediment Reduction (JOSR) Project Final Report

The narrative for the JOSR final report was revised and resubmitted on October 3, 2016. The report was approved on October 18, 2016.

2017 Priorities

Managers submitted their top four ideas on which the HLWD should focus in 2017. The results were presented at the October meeting.

1. Update Watershed Management Plan
2. Five-year cover crop program
3. Obtain more information about the buffer program, share with advisory committee, and get their recommendation
4. Impoundment site study
5. Staff billing rate

Cover Crop Champions

On September 29, 2016, information regarding crop consultants was compiled. As part of the grant requirements, crop consultants were to receive material about HLWD cover crop endeavors. This was done on October 4, 2016.

The narrative and budget for the grant were drafted. The final report was submitted on October 26, 2016.

WFDMR Targeting and Prioritizing Endeavor

On October 27, 2016, Catherine Wegehaupt and I met with Drew Kessler and Larry Kramka at Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) in Maple Grove. The purpose of the meeting was to see a demonstration of the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp), review the grant work plan, and determine next steps.

Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement

On October 11, 2016, Catherine Wegehaupt met with Justin Wildfeuer, Gass Trenching, to discuss removing sediment from the two small ponds on the HLWD RIM site located on the west side of the City of Fulda. Plans were made to remove sediment from the ponds and level the spoil piles. The project was completed on October 31, 2016. The spoil piles were seeded with winter wheat on November 1, 2016.

Annual Review Process

Catherine Wegehaupt and Jan Voit met on November 8, 2016 to review job descriptions and discuss performance. Wage and benefit information was compiled. The Personnel Committee met on November 9, 2016. Their recommendation was presented during the Performance Review session at the November meeting.

Office Equipment

InMovement standing desks were installed on November 28, 2016.

2017 Section 319 Funding Session

On November 29, 2016, Jan Voit attended the 2017 Section 319 Funding Session workshop at the MPCA office in Mankato. Pete Fastner gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding program requirements. Items of particular importance include the need for a 40% match of the total project cost, a minimum request of \$50,000, and applicants must have an approved Total Maximum Daily Load or Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy report to be eligible to apply.

Understanding the Art of Facilitation

On December 1, 2016, Harvey Kruger and Jan Voit attended the MAWD Pre-Conference Session entitled *Understanding the Art of Facilitation: Effective Practices for Public Processes*. This was a hands-on, interactive session that allowed participants to practice reflective listening, asking powerful questions, and embracing creative chaos for group facilitation.

MAWD Annual Meeting

The MAWD Annual Meeting was held December 1-3, 2016. Sessions attended included *Strategic Plan Committee Report, Examining the Red River Algal Community to Understand Eutrophication in High Turbidity Waters, Adopt-a-Drain: Marketing and psychology to engage residents in water protection, One Watershed One Plan – Recent Experiences of Two Watershed Districts; Planning to Mitigate Altered Hydrology with Multiple Benefits, and Watershed District Buffer Enforcement*.

Buffer Enforcement

On December 12, 2016, Jim Buschena asked Jan Voit to contact the counties regarding buffer enforcement. Cottonwood County will be doing enforcement. Nobles, Jackson, and Murray Counties have not made a decision.

On December 15, 2016, Jan Voit met with Andy Geiger and Chris Bauer. Discussion was held regarding the buffer program and enforcement. Jackson County staff intends to make a recommendation to accept enforcement authority.

Third Crop Phosphorus Reduction Effort

Work was done to amend the work plan and budget for the Third Crop Phosphorus Reduction Effort. The revised documents were submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Contracting Specialist on November 17, 2016. The amendment was approved on December 16, 2016.

Due to lower than estimated budget expenditures for seed, seeding, and soil sampling, a fourth year of cover crop establishment will be done. Broadcast or aerial seeding will be done, rather than only via airplane, and we will be able to develop the Cover Crop Steering Committee recommendation.

Major Watershed Project (MWP)

On September 26, 2016, Erin Nordquist informed Jan Voit that she had accepted a job with the Sauk River Watershed District and that her last day would be October 20. I met with Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA Project Manager on September 28 to discuss options for moving forward. While dedicated staff for this project would be ideal, the learning curve and time constraints make it unlikely that hiring is an option. Because Ross Behrends was a previous employee and has experience working with the Missouri River Basin MWP, a part-time position was offered to him.

On November 8, 2016, Ross Behrends confirmed that he would accept the part-time position to work on the MWP. On November 14 and 15, 2016, Jan Voit spoke with Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA about the budget and amendment process. Toby Spanier, University of Minnesota Extension and she discussed the civic engagement and education plan on November 15. The amended work plan and budget were submitted to the MPCA Contracting Specialist in St. Paul on November 21, 2016. She signed the amendment contract on December 19, 2016. Once the contract has been signed by all MPCA staff, work can again be done on this project.

Line of Credit

Jan Voit worked with Mike Schmitz, Security State Bank (SSB) on the judicial ditch (JD) line of credit (LOC) renewal. During the update, it was determined that not all of the interest was properly allocated to the JD #30 project. Reimbursement requests were sent to Jackson County that reflect the additional amounts due. Once the reimbursement funds have been received the payments will be made to SSB. In order to streamline the process, each ditch will have a separate account rather than one LOC that covers the combined costs.

The line of credit request from the November meeting could not be met in its entirety because the amount requested would have exceeded the \$500,000 limit. Mike Schmitz, Security State Bank (SSB), has assisted HLWD administrator working through the loan requests to figure accurate interest charges for each project. He has also begun the internal process for increasing the line of credit.

Mike Schmitz recently inquired about HLWD moving certificates of deposit (CDs) from various banks to SSB as they mature. The CDs are currently pledged as collateral for the HLWD line of credit and SSB is competitive from a rate perspective. In addition to the competitive rate, SSB has proven to be a valuable resource for HLWD. They have helped on a number of occasions in monitoring/problem solving situations with the line of credit and also assist in routine operations of the HLWD (ACH payroll processing).

The majority of the CDs mature in January 2017. One matures in March 2017. Current interest rates for the CDs are: Bank of the West: 0.15%; United Prairie Bank: 0.30%; and Fulda Area Credit Union: 0.65%. SSB will offer 0.45% for all of the CDs, which is a net increase.

Discussion and action needed regarding moving CDs from Bank of the West, United Prairie Bank, and Fulda Area Credit Union to SSB.

Final and Semi-Annual Reports

- On December 13, 2016, drafting the MWP grant annual report began.
- Work continued on the MDA annual report throughout the months of November and December.
- On November 21, 2016, drafting the annual report for the Heron Lake Phosphorus Reduction Project 2 started. The report was submitted to MPCA on December 12, 2016.
- On November 28, 2016, drafting the Third Crop Phosphorus Reduction Effort annual report began. The annual report was submitted on December 20, 2016.
- On November 29, 2016, drafting the West Fork Des Moines River Prioritizing and Targeting Endeavor annual report started. The annual report was submitted on December 20, 2016.

Discussion was held regarding a possible impoundment study for the watershed and the importance of no-till farming.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Marv Zylstra and seconded by Julie Lopez. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Allen Jensen

Secretary

