



## 2024 MACDE 1st Quarter Minutes

February 16, 2024

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Draft Agenda

Board members Present: Mike, Jessica, Andy Albertsen, Meghan, Cody, Dan, Tasha, Ashley, Kay, Jamie, and LeAnn Buck - MASWCD

Board members Absent: Tara, Andy Arnes

### 1. Call to Order

- a. Meeting was called to order at 9:01 AM

### 2. Welcome

- a. Welcome to the new year and thank you for carving out some time today to meet and discuss some of the things we do!

### 3. Approval of the Agenda

- a. Motion by Meghan to Approve Agenda. Seconded by Dan. Motion Carried.

### 4. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Change Milk to Mike in minutes. Motion by Ashley to approve minutes with change. Seconded by Andy Albertsen. Motion Carried.

### 5. Treasurer's Report

- a. Current amount in Checking account is \$11,892.70 and total savings has \$8,156.92 for a total balance of \$20,049.62 after all deposits and payments. Bills paid were to WIX for website for a total of \$564. Total deposits were for \$5,475.38 which was for member dues and admin training funds. Motion by Cody to approve the Treasures Report. Seconded by Jamie. Motion Carried.
- b. Also discussed the Annual Budget. In 2023 we had total receipts of \$8,601.99, a total expenditure of \$6,387.64 and a total carryover balance of \$ \$15,138.01.

### 6. Partner Reports

#### a. MASWCD – LeAnn Buck

- i. Focusing on WIGS (Widely Important Goals) with the legislative.
- ii. Weekly check-ins with the various government agencies from now through May.
- iii. Recently adopted three legislative priorities
  1. Advocate for SWCD Aid adjustment for 2025 and beyond
    - a. Work to maintain our current funding of \$15 million per year and avoid a decrease to \$12 million per year for aids payable in 2025 and beyond.
  2. Pursue capital investment (bonding) dollars.

- a. Seek bonding funding to enhance and preserve the structural assets of our RIM Reserve wetland restoration easements and general one-time funds for a more comprehensive assessment of these structures.
  - 3. Updates to SWCD Law.
    - a. Support housekeeping updates to SWCD Law – Minnesota Statutes 103C – and language specifying SWCDs have the authority to take out loans.
- iv. District capacity was a huge win!
- v. Bonding Year
  - 1. Two Year budget planning starts this year.
- vi. House Keeping items:
  - 1. SWCD's are not allowed to go in debt or get a mortgage/loan. Pennington SWCD is trying to have the language in the statute rewritten to allow for this by means of a resolution. They are hoping to build a new building in the future.
  - 2. Other language change proposals are to charge for other services and ongoing maintenance on projects. (Statute 103C)
  - 3. 15-million-dollar allocations for the 2-year Biennium ends in December 2025. (Current Breakdown: \$15 million divided between July 2023 and December 2023, second installment is July 2024 and December 2024. 12 million begins in 2025 and 2026 to be divided in July and December for future years as wording currently stands.
- vii. Legislative Day on the Capital is set for March 12-13
  - 1. A big push for 15 million to hold steady is needed. Without this, budgeting and project work is going to be hard to complete.
  - 2. Plan on attending if possible.
  - 3. Show legislatives what we do not just tell them.
  - 4. SWCD's need to continue to provide support and customer service for landowners asking for help.
- viii. 39 applications submitted in for the soil health grant to help with staffing (Phase 1).
- ix. NRCS and SWCD are providing a bunch of joint soil health trainings.
- x. County aid received a large increase – something to be aware of as budget discussions begin.
- xi. Communication with BWSR is needed for if WBIF funding amounts are too much, too little, or just right.
- xii. Clean Water Funds – How to spend money with WBIF.
  - 1. CWF grants are available to supplement WBIF.
  - 2. Staff capacity is a big consideration.
  - 3. Projects are in overload.
  - 4. 70% of time for staff should be spent on projects and helping landowners.

- a. Good work makes the biggest impact.
- xiii. Fundraising with the State Envirothon
- xiv. Governance 101 Training is being planned for July, more info to come.
- xv. Webinar March 4 for MASWCD Legislative Platform
- b. BWSR**
  - i. No Report Provided
- c. NRCS**
  - i. No Report Provided

## **7. Director's Report**

- a. Area 1 – Andy Arnes was absent - No Report Provided**
- b. Area 2 – Andy Albertsen**
  - i. Soil Health Staffing Grant, plenty of interest in the area.
  - ii. Upcoming Lead Contacts Meeting
    - 1. Kay will be doing a presentation to Area 2 about upcoming trainings.
    - 2. Doug Thomas presentation about TSA staff capacity.
    - 3. TSA has a huge workload.
  - iii. Soil Health Contract Management Training
    - 1. Cover Crops and Reduce Tillage JAA
- c. Area 3 – Tara was absent - No Report Provided**
- d. Area 4 – Dan**
  - i. Technical Training Group “Yellow Pages” for staff to lookup and know who an expert in the field is – Mentoring Program.
  - ii. Not really utilized but using funds to help support new staff and sharing knowledge and expanding networking such as FAQ, mentoring and other new / existing staff resources.
- e. Area 5 – Kay**
  - i. Managers/All Employee Meeting was planned.
  - ii. Soil Health grant moving forward.
  - iii. Seeding Plans and advanced trainings.
  - iv. Training/Meeting on February 27 in Mankato plans are moving forward.
- f. Area 6 – Ashley (and Mike)**
  - i. Regional Soil Health Staff Funding applications submitted.
  - ii. Kicking ideas around with an All-Staff Meeting.
  - iii. Water Storage with Partners.
  - iv. MASWCD Board meeting attended, lots of projects and money coming down the pipeline.
  - v. Document needs and want list so we can adjust with legislation funding requests, grants and staffing/space issues.
- g. Area 7 – Cody**
  - i. Nitrate Reduction Projects.
  - ii. Lots of Soil Health Money available.
  - iii. MDA partially funding positions with Nutrient Management emphasis.
  - iv. WBIF – hands are full, staffing issues with hiring and space.

1. Even sent out post cards and have had staff go door to door, but still struggling on project delivery.
- v. Carbon Credit for 45Z (Tax Credit), Nitrate focused and Cover crops/ Soil Health.

**h. Area 8 – Tasha**

- i. TSA money has been distributed to all the SWCD's.
- ii. March 8 is the Next TSA/Area 8 Meeting.
- iii. Staff needs and shortages are biggest issues currently.

**8. Old Business**

**a. Committee Assignments for 2024**

- i. See below for updated names on Committee Assignments.

**b. Managers Meeting (March 26-27 Arrowwood Baxter)**

- i. Mike and Andy Albertsen are working on planning this. Agenda is just about finalized and was sent to all managers to register.

**c. MACDE Brochure**

- i. Way to Go! Looks very nice and professional! This will come in handy for explaining to everyone what MACDE is and how they work. Also, a good piece of information to hand out to the SWCD supervisors and at events like Managers/Admin Meeting.

**d. 2024 Statewide Admin Training Committee Update**

- i. Date Set for June 25-26 at the Arrowwood in Baxter.
  1. Day 1 – Roundtable discussions, LeAnn with MASWCD and other speakers
  2. Day 2 – MCIT, Employee Assistance Program and BWSR Updates.
- ii. Admin folder in the MACDE Google Drive.
- iii. Save the dates are going out in March.
- iv. 4 Topics so far:
  1. Advanced Excel
  2. New w-4's for state and federal withholdings
  3. Programs for managing Tree sales online
  4. Marketing/Outreach
- v. This will help support MACDE and MASWCD in educating others on what we do and how we do it.

**e. MASWCD/MACDE HR Workgroup Update**

- i. Lots of meetings were held, still working on collecting information and going to present more at the Admin and Managers meetings.

**f. MASWCD Leadership Program**

- i. Leadership program will be ending in August for the current session. Hoping to do another one in 2025.
- ii. Looking for advice on:
  1. Is there a Need? MACDE decided yes!
  2. Embracing staff and showing them all aspects of our jobs.
  3. Always having support with new staff.

4. Need new supervisors to attend.
5. Formal Evaluation of Participants is given to form the next year's training.
6. Investment in the office and to help polish positions and respected jobs.

**g. 2024 Wage and Benefit Survey Update**

- i. DDA – Consulting company for pay scales. Some districts went out and did this individually. Trying to set something up Area wide?
- ii. PRAP? Can be done at a local scale but not statewide for this.
- iii. Survey Poll?
- iv. Committee to work on this:
  1. Andy Arnes, Andy Albertsen, Jessica and Mike
- v. Controversial topics – not everyone wants to participate but everyone looks at the results.
- vi. What does this “new” survey or way to collect data look like?
  1. Click buttons instead of filling in a spreadsheet?
  2. More data acquired i.e. break down on paid benefits vs offered benefits.
  3. How does this information get used?
    - a. Pay Scales, Pay Grades, Staff Compensation, Pay Equity...
    - b. Survey can be complicated depending on similar titles and job descriptions and having same/different duties as well as location in state.
    - c. Survey should be completed with titles, consistency, and autonomy...
- vii. Subcommittee will meet to discuss options moving forward and will present findings at the next board meeting in April.

**h. MACDE Website**

- i. Tasha with a little help from Jessica are getting the website updated.
- ii. Membership data will be updated to reflect the paid membership of 2024 to date.
- iii. Send out Google Drive Access for Board members.
  1. Certain items and information are restricted based on different committees.

**i. Glossary for Budget Items**

- i. Thank you, Andy Albertsen, for starting on this. Meghan will assist with this and possibly Dan as well to finish updating this and then it will be ready by the Spring meeting for distribution.

**9. New Business**

**a. Training Funds Increase Discussion**

- i. Previously funds allocated in MACDE were \$300 per area. Motion by Meghan to increase to \$500 per area. Seconded by Cody. Motion Carried.

**b. Memberships**

- i. Currently sitting with 122 members through the mail and 97 members through the online portal for a total of 219 Members. Last Year we had 320 Members. Please push your areas to get membership information turned in.
- c. Farm Fest Booth Discussion Area 5 and 6 – Redwood County**
  - i. Should MACDE consider taking this on in the future?
  - ii. Area 5 is the “Banker” for the booth.
  - iii. NRCS as a possible partnership for the future?
  - iv. Budget for the future?
  - v. Discussion on possibly extending the education grant deadline for this in the future?
- d. MACDE Meeting Schedule**
  - i. April. Check emails for a Doodle Poll.

## 10. Other

- a. July- Trainings with Open meeting law, and professional instructors. Focus on Priority, picking and strategies.

## 11. Adjourn

- a. Motion by Dan to Adjourn, Second by Kay. Motion Carried.
- b. Meeting Adjourned at 11:06 AM

## Future Discussion Items:

- a. Education Grants
- ~~b. Training Funds (discuss increasing funds at 2024 Q1 mtg)~~
- ~~c. MACDE Brochure (Meghan Completed)~~
- ~~d. Managers Meeting (Spring and Fall Annually)~~
- e. Website
- f. Strategic Plan Update
- ~~g. Human Resources Training with Ann Gehring. (address through HR Workgroup)~~
- h. Glossary for Budget Items (currently in works by Andy, Meghan, and Dan )
- ~~i. MCIT / BWSR Sponsored Admin Training (Slowly coming available through MCIT)~~
- j. Wage and Benefit Survey (subcommittee created to discuss options)
- k. Scholarship funding to attend various career development trainings
- l. Meeting on transferring off USDA Network
- m. SWCD Board Member Orientation Process, New Hire, any materials, stuff highly specific to SWCDs. (address through HR Workgroup?)

## **Parking Lot: (Information to keep and retain for future)**

### **Committee Assignments for 2024**

1. Awards: Andy Arnes\*, Kay, Tara
2. Membership Development: Jessica\*, Cody
3. By-laws: Dan\*, Mike Ashley
4. Communications: Tasha\*, Ashley, Meghan
5. Website: Tasha\*, Jessica, Mike
6. Events: Cody\*, Meghan
7. Grants: Dan\*, Cody, Andy Albertsen
8. Professional Development: Kay\*, Cody
9. Strategic Planning: Dan\*, Tara\*, Jessica, Andy Arnes, Andy Albertsen
10. Wage and Benefit: Mike\*, Andy Arnes, Andy Albertsen, Jessica

### **BWSR Advisory Member: MACDE Board of Directors**

1. LeAnn is willing to present on behalf of the MACDE Board of Directors. MACDE will attend as needed.
  - a. LeAnn suggested attending the August meeting since it will be a Tour.

### **2024 MASWCD Advisory Member: MACDE Board of Directors will rotate meetings.**

\*\*\* Dates have been switched from 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday to the 1<sup>st</sup>. 9:30 – 2 PM. Potential virtual option but would recommend in person if possible. \*\*\*

January – Mike

April 10 – Dan

June 12 – Meghan

August 14 – Tasha

September 11 (Resolutions) – Andy Albertsen

October 9 – Kay

November 13 – [REDACTED]

December TBD