



North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792

Special
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2024

The meeting was held in person at the District office. A virtual link was available.

Supervisors Present at Roll Call: Chuck Bainter, Frank Modich, Peggy Pearson, Mark Peterson, and Gary Rantala were present in-person.

Staff Present: Anita Provinzino, District Administrator; Corey Denning, Resource Conservationist; Erin McMichael, Conservation Corps member; Joe Murphy, Community Conservationist; Jon Utecht, AIS Program Coordinator; Kaela Viehman, Watershed Conservationist; Miranda Frenning, Accounting & Human Resources Specialist; and Tristan Nelson, Forester; were present in-person. John McCormick, Regional Farm Bill Forester; Phil Norvitch, Conservation Manager; and Zach Evans, Regional Farm Bill Forester were online.

Others Present: Beth Kleinke and Josh Prudhoe, Natural Resources Conservation Service were present in person.

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Chair, Peggy Pearson.

1. Agenda - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to add Woodland Stewardship Plan Renewal Cost Share Rate and to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting – Moved by Gary Rantala/Frank Modich to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Financial Reports & Program Summary – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Frank Modich to accept the financial reports and program summary. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Accounts Receivable and Payable – Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve the accounts payable and accounts receivable as updated 10/16/24. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Guest Introductions and Comments – Corey Denning was welcomed as the District's new Resource Conservationist and Josh Prudhoe, NRCS Engineer was introduced.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Audit 2023 – Presented by Peterson CPA Ltd. – Act on Management Discussion and Analysis, Management Representation Letter and Audit – After a presentation by Michael Peterson on the 2023 audit indicating there were no findings and nothing of concern, it was moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve the Management Discussion and Analysis, Management Representation Letter and Audit for 2023. Motion carried unanimously.
2. BWSR
 - a. '25 Buffer Implementation Funds & Board Resolution 2024-14 – Moved by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to approve Board Resolution 2024-14 accepting 2025 Buffer Implementation funds. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Woodland Stewardship Plan Renewals – As the current policy did not address this, it was moved by Gary Rantala/Frank Modich to amend the cost share policy to include woodland stewardship plan renewals at a standard cost share rate of 50% of DNR plan rate. A rate of up to 100% of the DNR plan rate can be made with board approval. Motion carried unanimously.

- c. Woodland Stewardship Plan Cost Share Agreement with Landowner – Moved by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to approve a cost share contract with Duane Niska at \$485.00 or a maximum of 50% of the DNR plan rate, whichever is less. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Human Resources
 - a. Employee Health Insurance (PEIP 4-year renewal) - Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to renew with Public Employees Insurance Program for a 4-year term. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. John McCormick wage adjustment effective 10/16/24 – Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve a 4% increase effective 10/16/24 for John McCormick who has completed his first year of employment with the District. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Shared Forester Position with Lake SWCD – Discussion was held about the possibility of sharing a forester with Lake SWCD who would work in the Ely area in both counties to better serve landowners and to alleviate travel costs for both Districts. The board was supportive of the concept. No action was necessary at this time.
 4. Financial
 - a. Lease for heated storage of decontamination units, if available – Moved by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to approve a 8.5 month lease for heated storage for 8 decontamination units with Super Cub Flyers at a rate of \$600 per unit or \$4,800 total. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Supervisor Stipend Payment Question – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to approve paying Gary Rantala a stipend for the September 25, 2024 Technical Service Area meeting that he was unable to get connected to online. This is a non-precedent setting action. Motion carried with Rantala abstaining.
 - c. Tree Sale Initial Purchase Limit - \$15,000 – Moved by Frank Modich/Mark Peterson to authorize staff to purchase up to \$15,000 of tree stock for the 2025 tree sale, not including shipping and handling. Motion carried unanimously.
 5. MDA Grant Application – Noxious Weeds & Board Resolution 2024-15 - Moved by Gary Rantala/Frank Modich to approve Board Resolution 2024-15 authorizing staff to apply for a \$15,000 Noxious Weed grant through the MN Department of Agriculture. Motion carried unanimously.
 6. Upcoming Supervisor Meetings and/or Trainings
 - a. MASWCD Resolution Voting – Some discussion was held on resolutions. Supervisors will either vote online or send their votes to Anita for her to submit.
 - b. Other

REPORTS: See packet for reports on file

7. District Administrator Report – Anita
8. Conservation Manager Report – Phil
9. Accounting & Human Resources Specialist – Miranda
10. Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator Report – Jon U.
 - a. Conservation Corps Member Update – Erin (if available) – Erin McMichael reported on the projects she has transitioned the Resource Ranger Camp to an after-school program. Currently there are 7 youth attendees. She continues to promote the Lake Steward Program on Pelican Lake.
11. Community Conservationist Report- Joe
12. District Forester Report – Tristan
13. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – John M.
14. Regional Farm Bill Forester Report – Zach
15. Resource Conservationist Report – Corey

16. St. Louis River Watershed Conservationist Report – Kaela
17. Natural Resources Conservation Service Report – Beth Kleinke presented conservation plans completed in the past year for Board signature. Motion by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to authorize the Board Secretary to sign the plans. Motion carried unanimously. This was followed by a motion by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to authorize the plans to be split up and signed by any board supervisor to alleviate the burden. Motion carried unanimously.

Beth also indicated that deferral letters went out to those whose applications were not funded.

18. Supervisor & Committee Reports

- a. Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development – September 16 – Peggy indicated that the landowner near Meadowlands backed out of the Enbridge-funded reforestation project so another Wadena County landowner was enrolled.
- b. MN SWCD Forestry Association – September 19 – Mark indicated the presentation on Climate and MN Forests by Dr. Ken Blumenfeld of the MN Climatology Office was very interesting.
- c. Technical Service Area III – September 25 – No report.
- d. Other – Mark indicated he attended a meeting on selling produce to schools.

CLOSING:

19. Confirm Next Meeting – November 13 – The meeting was confirmed for November 13.
20. Adjourn – Moved by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to adjourn the meeting at 12:36 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.



Mark Peterson, Secretary
November 13, 2024



Resolution 2024-14

North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000
www.nslswcd.org

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) authorized grant agreements for the following grants and amounts:

FY25 Buffer Law \$2,500

AND WHEREAS, this funding supports the Districts each of its three goals 1) Provide Services, 2) Spread the Message and 3) Strengthen our Capacity; and

WHEREAS, these grants will provide funding for technical and financial assistance to landowners and support the District's ongoing operations; and

WHEREAS, the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to accept this funding to continue conservation practices and delivery in northern St. Louis County.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to secure the above grants and sign all documents related to such funding.

Motion Made by: *Modich*
Seconded by: *Rantala*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Modich, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*

Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 16th day of October 2024 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



Resolution 2024-15

North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

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(218) 749-2000
www.nslswcd.org

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture announced the Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant Grant program to address noxious weeds and invasive plants, with priority given to species on the noxious weed list, and

WHEREAS, the District staff may develop and submit a proposal for up to \$15,000, the grant maximum, that would meet those requirements; and

WHEREAS, no match is required; and

WHEREAS, this funding, if secured, would be utilized to assist the with removal and treatment of noxious weeds and replacement with native species; and

WHEREAS, this funding relates to the mission of the District; and

WHEREAS, North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to accept this funding, if awarded.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the staff to apply for and the District Administrator, Designee, or Board Chair to secure and sign all documents related to any such award.

Motion Made by: *Rantala*
Seconded by: *Modich*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Modich, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*

Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 16th day of October, 2024 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.



Mark Peterson, Board Secretary