

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2016-05 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole March 8, 2016, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Government Services Building, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CST. Chair Steven Gray opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present: John Allen District #1
 Tim Tjosaas District #2
 Rodney Peterson District #3
 David Erickson District #4
 Steven Gray District #5

Members absent: None

Also present: Jim Elmquist County Administrator
 Becky Lubahn Deputy Clerk
 Adam King SWCD District Manager

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Manager Adam King met with the Board to discuss 2015 SWCD accomplishments and upcoming 2016 projects.

SWCD 2015 Year in Review

Mr. King reported the SWCD is a political subdivision of the State, with an elected board of Supervisors that serve four year staggered terms. Two or three of the SWCD's five elected supervisors are up for election every two years. Many of the SWCD's authorities are established under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103C – Soil and Water Conservation District Law.

The Dodge SWCD is a non-regulatory local unit of government that manages and directs natural resource management programs at the local level. The district works in both urban and rural settings, with landowners and with other units of government, to carry out a programs for the conservation, use, and development of soil, water, and related resources.

The SWCD's vision statement reads as follows:

The Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District will be a visible leader in the proper management of Dodge County's soil and water resources through its technical team providing education and implementation of the best management practices to ensure a healthy ecosystem.

The SWCD's mission statement reads as follows:

The mission of the Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide leadership in natural resources protection through promotion and implementation of soil and water's best management practices.

Dodge County's five member elected Board of Supervisors were listed as follows:

Supervisor's Name	District Number	Townships Represented
Bill Thompson	District 1	Milton, Mantorville
Don Hesper	District 2	Ellington, Concord
Larry Scherger	District 3	Claremont, Wasioja
David Livingston	District 4	Ashland, Ripley, Westfield
Glenn Hahn	District 5	Canisteo, Hayfield, Vernon

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

Mr. King informed the Board the SWCD currently has three staff members:

- Adam King, District Manager
- Tom Johnston, District Technician
- Blaine Delzer, Conservation Technician

The District Manager reviewed the 2015 budget vs. actual revenues and expenditures with the Board.

Projects were briefly discussed as follows:

Conservation Cost-Share

\$9,908 from the Board of Water and Soil Resources for FY2015

Technical-Assistance Option

- Worked with 22 Producers
- Installed four Conservation Projects (19 in 2014)
 - Four Water and Sediment Control Basins (Seven Basins & twelve GWW in 2014)
 - 255.17 lbs. of Phosphorous/Year (178.4)
 - 221.89 T of Sediment/Year (157.25)
 - 292.71 T of Soil/Year (298.6)

Financial Assistance Provided by:

- Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 - Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Brief discussion took place on tile systems in Dodge County.

Commissioner Peterson wanted to know if the SWCD's information on tile systems in Dodge County was shared with the Assessor's Office.

Mr. King informed the Board the tile system information they have collected isn't shared with the Assessor's Office, however it could be.

The SWCD District Manager discussed with the Board the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Project. The following information was shared regarding RIM:

- Wetland Restoration Program (WRP) [through NRCS] no longer exists.
- BWSR is picking up the slack through the RIM program.

- Had one RIM Wetlands sign-up in 2015, with one applicant from Dodge (not funded).
- Flood (2014) RIM sign-up currently
 - Funding is limited, may only submit one application.

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

Discussion took place regarding BWSR grants.

Commissioner Erickson reported much of Dodge County’s farm land is rented; Mr. Erickson wanted to know if anything is being done to encourage the renters of farm land to use best practices with the rented land.

Mr. King informed the Board it is up to the landowners to encourage conservation practices be used by renters.

County Attorney Paul Kiltinen arrived to the meeting at 9:20 a.m. CST.

County Attorney Arrived

The following feedlot statistics were reviewed:

Feedlot Description	Project #'s - Dodge/ Mower Counties
Farms Visited	505
Viewed Digitally	Over 400
Farms with MnFarm Evaluations Completed	458
Farms Passed	452
Feedlots Abandoned	9
Feedlot Fixes Needed*	22
Feedlot Fixes Completed	17
Feedlot Fixes Waiting for Cost-Share Approval	5

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

*Not all feedlot fixes require the use of cost-share funds.

The following project information was shared:

Dodge County Water Plan

Six Point Plan Including:

1. Public well testing and associated services.
2. Maintenance of Dodge County well database and associated services.
3. Aid in the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP), maintenance of stream monitoring stations and other surface water related programs.
4. Aid in the Nitrate Monitoring Network, and other related ground water related programs.
5. Assist in inventory, and planning and development work necessary to prepare viable groundwater and surface water projects for inclusion in 2015 Dodge County grant applications.
6. Upon request of Dodge County, assist with other duties which satisfy the objectives of the Dodge County Comprehensive Water Management Plan, as determined by the Environmental Services Office.

Special projects were listed as follows:

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG): Edge of Field (EOF) Monitoring
Discovery Farms: Edge of Field Monitoring
Saturated Buffer Monitoring

One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

Root River Watershed

- Funded as a Pilot in 2014
- To be completed spring of 2015
- BWSR to approve early 2016

Cedar River Watershed

- Anticipating application in 2016

Zumbro River Watershed

- Currently working on WRAPS
- Anticipating application in 2017

The following 2015 accomplishments were reviewed:

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) – Day at the Capital

- Met with eight of nine legislators in Dodge County with talks focusing on the need for stable and consistent funding for SWCD, to go above and beyond current capacity.
- \$100,000 for every SWCD, to go above and beyond current capacity.
 - Retain current staff (Delzer) – Education Promotion
 - Provide District Cost-Share

Conservation Corps of Minnesota – Academy Apprentice

- Krysta Hovendon was hired to work in the SWCD office – summer 2015.
 - Assisted with feedlot MnFarm models/site visits
 - Digitized district tile maps into GIS

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) – Clean Water Funding

- Applied for three Clean Water Fund Grants
 - Dodge Saturated Buffer Project Implementation (projects and practices)
 - \$50,625
 - Middle Fork Zumbro Critical Source Area Restoration (projects and practices)
 - \$140,925
 - Ripley Nitrogen Reduction Implementation (multipurpose drainage management)
 - \$36,675

2016 budget figures were listed as follows:

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

Total 2016 Budget \$349,988.00

Total 2015 Budget \$188,974.00

The following 2016 upcoming projects information was shared:

FY2016 Clean Water Fund Grants (three years)

- Implement and install at least nine saturated buffers in the Headwaters of the Cedar River and the Salem Creek Watersheds
- Implement and install six sediment reducing projects in the Middle Fork Zumbro River (Ellington and Milton Townships)
- Implement and install six nitrogen reducing projects in the Ripley Ditch System

New Education/Outreach Position

- Raingarden Workshops
 - March 17, 2016 – Hayfield
 - March 24, 2016 – Dodge Center
 - March 31, 2016 – Mantorville
 - April 6, 2016 – West Concord
 - May 11, 2016 – Kasson

Outreach Events

- Dodge County Expo
- Dodge County Fair

Soil Health Committee

School Education

- 5th Grade Presentations
- Envirothon

Field Days/Outreach for Clean Water Fund Grant Projects

Buffer & Soil Loss Law

- Implement and assist landowners with the Buffer & Soil Loss Law
 - Dodge County has already done much of the work

Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program

- Implement and assist landowners with the Buffer & Soil Loss Law
 - Dodge County has already done much of the work

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has contracted with the Zumbro Watershed Partnership to write the WRAPS for the Zumbro Watershed
- Anticipated to be completed in one year

Commissioner Allen pointed out the Conservation Technician position is funded for two years.

Mr. Allen wanted to know what happens after that funding is gone.

SWCD 2015 Year in Review - Continued

The SWCD Manager stated he hopes funding will continue to be available for the Conservation Technician position and noted they will continue to pursue other grant funding for the position.

Commissioner Peterson thanked Mr. King for the update and elaborating on the slide presentation.

Saturated buffer projects in the county were discussed. The county will continue to encourage saturated buffer projects in the area as well as field days. It was noted Dodge County has three saturated buffers which is a relatively new concept in Minnesota.

The Board thanked Mr. King for the report.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:27 a.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

**STEVEN GRAY
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD**

**BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK**

DATED: