

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers
January 2, 2024

The regular meeting of the Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Present were managers Steve Bousema, Casey Ingenthron, Rolf Mahlberg, Jay Milbrandt and Jeff Rogers. Also present were: John Shea, BWSR conservationist; Scott Runck, SWCD manager, Julie Buntjer, Globe editor/reporter and Dan Livdahl, administrator.

The draft December minutes were discussed and a correction is needed to the motion approving the Treasurer's report. Rogers moved to approve the minutes with the correction. Ingenthron seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's report and bills payable were discussed. Bousema moved to approve the Treasurer's report and pay the bills. Rogers seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

It appears that the Army Corps of Engineers will not require stream mitigation for the Crailsheim pond project. If wetland impacts can be kept to less than 0.5 acres, the project will be covered by the nationwide permit. Houston Engineering will submit Corps and DNR permit applications soon. The board reviewed an updated schedule showing bidding in May, contracting in June with construction beginning as soon as August.

Activities to be included in the 2024 annual plan were discussed. The plan will include implementing carp population controls in Lake Okabena and taking the next steps necessary to complete a successful water level drawdown in Lake Ocheda. The Ocheda management plan committee will be asked to meet soon to discuss whether to hire Ducks Unlimited to estimate of the cost of building and operating pumping stations. The plan will address installing more permanent signs educating the public about harmful algae blooms at Lake Okabena beaches and boat landings. The plan will also call for assessing the need to repair or replace the Bella Park outhouse.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Livdahl will meet with John Landgaard to discuss the need for conservation practices along the stream on the school district's new farmland north of the ALC and Community Education buildings. It may be advantageous to do the needed work at the same time as construction on the Crailsheim pond project.

The managers' annual Minnesota Campaign Finance Board reports must be certified by January 29th.

The OOWD's normal monthly board meeting location may be used for elections in March, August, and November. Alternative meeting dates and locations were discussed.

The employee handbook needs to be updated to be compliant with the new Minnesota Safe and Sick Time law. Other clarifications are needed for paid holidays and vacation time accrual for employees working less than 40 hours per week.

NEW BUSINESS

The OOWD's 2023 annual report needs to be approved by the middle of March. A draft of the plan will be reviewed at the February meeting.

Carp Solutions will be contacted and asked to provide a proposal for removing carp from Lake Okabena before the February meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular board meeting will be held on February 6, 2024, in the Nobles County Public Works Department building conference room at 960 Diagonal Road, Worthington. Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting. Milbrandt seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.