

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers
July 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, Jay Milbrandt and Jeff Rogers. Also present were: Paul Langseth, SWCD supervisor; Tom Ahlberg and John Ahlers, advisory committee members; Natalie Karels, Worthington resident; Julie Buntjer, Globe editor/reporter and Dan Livdahl, administrator.

The June minutes were discussed. Rogers moved to approve the minutes. Bousema seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

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

OLD BUSINESS

A draft of the Crailsheim pond project plans will be completed later this week for review. It will be emailed to the board and school district as soon as it is received.

Mahlberg has been mowing the trails at Bella Park as best he can this year. Some stretches of the trails are impassible due to flooding. Planks placed to allow passage across a small stream were washed away. The Bella WMA pond spillway was plugged by beaver and has been overflowing at the emergency spillway onto park property all spring. There was some erosion of the park's roads caused by excessive rains but they remain passable and can probably be fixed by grading. Ingenthron will look at the park restrooms and make a recommendation for repairs or replacement.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Bill Keitel submitted a proposal to Worthington to create an area for bird watching at the old dredge fill site wetland. Livdahl wrote a letter of support for the concept stating the OOWD would be willing to help pay for signs that educate the public about the value of protecting wetlands about floodwater storage, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat and recreation.

Information on the potential use of Phoslock to remove and sequester soluble reactive phosphorus from Lake Okabena was discussed. Tyler Wadzinski did some research and stated in an email that he believes the technology is effective but expensive. A vendor will be contacted to see if they think Phoslock could be beneficial for the lake and to get a quote.

Tom Bomgaars asked if public assistance is available for repairing his driveway across Okabena Creek. Livdahl told him the the OOWD does not have a program to help pay for repairs.

NEW BUSINESS

More than 6 inches of rain was received district wide on June 20 and 21 causing flooding. Lake Okabena reached the highest levels recorded and overflowed into Worthington's streets. Agricultural land and township roads were damaged. Lake Ocheda reached a level about 3 feet above its ordinary high-water elevation. Bella's surface elevation was higher than portions of County Road 57 and 330th Street.

District owned and maintained structures seem to be doing okay. The Prairie View pond spillway had extremely high flows but remained intact. The Ocheda dam and its levees are mostly submerged but seem undamaged. The Lake Bella dam spillway is running at capacity, but the structure appears to be undamaged. Riprap around the spillway plunge pool seems to be holding up well.

ADJOURNMENT

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