

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers
March 11, 2025

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

The February meeting minutes were discussed. Rogers moved to approve the minutes. Ahlberg seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's report and bills payable were discussed. Ahlberg moved to approve the report and pay the bills. Rogers seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried. Options for opening an interest-bearing account for some of the money in the First State Bank SW checking account was discussed. Bousema moved to open a money market account at First State Bank SW and transfer \$200,000 from the DDA checking account into the new account. Tom Ahlberg, Steve Bousema, Casey Ingenthron, Rolf Mahlberg, Jeff Rogers and Dan Livdahl will be authorized signatories. Rogers seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

A memo from the DNR Southern District Manager, Todd Kolander, asking whether the District was interested in a project on the Crailsheim site that includes a small pond and installing stream meanders was discussed. After meetings between the DNR and BWSR and the DNR and Senator Bill Weber, the district was expecting a written response from the DNR stating its objections to Alternative 3. This would inform the OOWD and engineers about the type of structures permissible on the site.

Any project designed and built on the site needs to be approved by the school district since they own the property. Tom Kresko wrote that he envisioned a meeting between the OOWD, DNR, School District and BWSR to discuss projects that could get a permit on the site, be acceptable to the school district and remove enough nutrient and sediment pollution to be eligible for the Clean Water Legacy grant funding. Tom is on family leave in March. The OOWD hopes to set up a meeting between the parties when he returns.

A draft of the 2025 Annual Plan was distributed to the managers by email. Ahlberg moved to approve the plan as drafted. Rogers seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Stake holders and managers have completed the PRAP survey during the past month. District and BWSR staff completed the minimum standards checklist for the district. As a result, the district will need to agree to review and update its rules and update its operational policies and data practices handbook within 18 months.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Minnesota Watersheds is holding a special meeting on March 21st in Waite Park to update the organization's policies and procedures.

Nobles County is planning a media campaign to educate the public about avoiding the spread of zebra mussels, curly leaf pondweed and other invasive aquatic species. Print, radio and electronic ads will be run during the 2025 boating season. Livdahl will help in any way he can.

The district's Quickbooks subscription expires on March 22nd. A one-year subscription to the desktop version with payroll is prohibitively expensive. The online program is cheaper but existing records will need to be converted and imported into the new platform.

NEW BUSINESS

The Lake Ocheda Management Plan Addendum public hearing will be at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18th in the Farmers Room of the Nobles County Government Center.

Monitoring and comparing water quality and flow in an urban and agricultural watershed was discussed. Ahlberg presented a

list of equipment needed to measure flow in the culvert flowing under Nobles County 25 into the Prairie View property. The cost was approximately \$21,500 but could rise soon due to tariffs. Ahlberg moved to spend up to \$25,000 to purchase and install the flow sensor and data tracker. Bousema seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

An example easement for the East Okabena bicycle/pedestrian trail through the district's St. John property was discussed. Rogers moved to support the easement and charge no fee for its acquisition. Ahlberg seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried. The easement document will be signed when it is presented to the board.

The managers requested that Runck, or someone else from the SWCD, do a presentation at the June meeting about buffer strips and other USDA and state programs available to district landowners.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular board meeting will be held on April 1, 2025, in the Nobles County Public Works Department building conference room at 960 Diagonal Road, Worthington. Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting. Ingenthron seconded the motion. Affirmative: Ahlberg, Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.