

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers
February 6, 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, Rolf Mahlberg and Jay Milbrandt. Also present were: Bob Demuth, Jr., county commissioner; Paul Langseth, SWCD supervisor; Julie Buntjer, Globe editor/reporter and Dan Livdahl, administrator. Casey Ingenthron attended the meeting via Zoom.

The draft January minutes were discussed. Bousema moved to approve the minutes. Milbrandt seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Mahlberg, Milbrandt. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

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

OLD BUSINESS

The Crailsheim project engineer, Alex Schmidt, still plans for permits and designs to be ready for a completed bid package in April. The project will likely fall under a Army Corps of Engineers nationwide permit. The Corps is waiting for MPCA water quality certification before issuing the permit. Small grains will likely be planted in the easement area during 2024.

Drafts of the 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Annual Plan were emailed to the board before the meeting. Board members will review the documents and suggest additions and corrections before the March meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Worthington and Nobles County will install a waterless boat cleaning station near the Sunset Park parking lot this spring. A significant amount of the County's invasive species state grant money will be spent this spring on media with the "Clean, Drain, Dry" message.

Information about the district's filter strips incentive payments will be reported into the Missouri River Watershed plan software so the partnership gets credit for the sediment and nutrient pollution reductions.

The district's employee handbook needs to be updated to include the state's new Safe and Sick Leave requirements. Other changes are needed to clarify how vacation, sick leave and holidays benefits apply to employees working less than 40 hours per week. Livdahl emailed a draft of the employee handbook with suggested changes to the board. Nobles County's safe and sick leave policy will be obtained and may be used as a model. Mahlberg will review the suggested changes and make a recommendation to the board.

NEW BUSINESS

The Carp Solutions proposal to remove carp from Lake Okabena in 2024 using box nets was discussed. The proposal also includes installing PIT tag readers in the culverts between Sunset Bay and the lake to record carp movement during the year. The Lake Okabena Improvement Association, city and county spent their money for the year on the Sunset Park boat landing and the boat cleaning station. Milbrandt moved to decline the proposal. Bousema seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Mahlberg, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The DNR fisheries staff advised against paying a bounty for carp removed from Lake Okabena. Placing a dumpster on park property near Whiskey Ditch for disposal of carp removed there during the spawning season was discussed. Todd Wietzema will be contacted about whether a dumpster can be located on park property for a few weeks during the spawning season. If so, Mahlberg will contact Schaap Sanitation.

The Lake Ocheda Plan Management Advisory Committee will meet at 1:00 on February 21st. The committee will review the results of the drawdown and discuss why water quality did not improve and vegetation did not grow. Next steps considered will likely include asking the riparian landowners for permission to amend the plan and do a full season water level draw down, conducting an assessment of the aquatic plant seed bank, and deciding whether to apply for a grant to install pumps.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular board meeting will be held on March 12, 2024, in the Nobles County Public Works Department building conference room at 960 Diagonal Road, Worthington. Milbrandt moved to adjourn the meeting. Bousema seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Mahlberg, Milbrandt. Opposed: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Administrator's Report
March 12, 2024

Dumpster for Carp