

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District Board of Managers
May 7, 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: Paul Langseth, SWCD supervisor; Julie Buntjer, Globe editor/reporter and Dan Livdahl, administrator.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Mahlberg and Livdahl met with Houston Engineering staff to discuss progress on the Crailsheim Pond project. The pond needs to be redesigned to meet both federal and state dam safety standards. The redesigned dam will be one foot lower and the pool will be 2.5 feet lower. The pond will remove about 257 pounds of phosphorus per year – 21% lower than the original design. The project must receive a section 401 water quality certification from MPCA that may include conditions imposed on the project. This will take 120 days. Permits are also needed from Worthington and the DNR. It is possible that permit conditions could be known, designs completed, and the project advertised for bids in August.

A dumpster was placed in Centennial Park on April 15th with decals stating “No Dumping – For Carp Disposal Only” in English and Spanish. To date no carp, but a few bigmouth buffalo, bullheads and one catfish have been thrown in the dumpster. Carp or Buffalo seem to be spawning now in Whisky Ditch and around the lake.

Two trail cameras and camera warning signs were purchased for Bella Park. The signs and cameras will be installed soon. The sheriff's office will be consulted about security for the park and camera placement.

The picnic table stolen from Bella Park was returned this week. Two picnic table kits and lumber were purchased at Menards. The new tables will be assembled, painted and delivered to the park before Memorial Day.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Windy and wet weather has prevented Les Johnson and his crew from doing the planned prairie vegetation burns at Bella Park and on the St. John property. Les hopes to do them if the weather permits.

The Prairie View water quality pond is a few inches above the riprap spillway elevation today. The 15" low flow tube valve was opened yesterday.

Matt Tripp's class was given a guided tour last week of Whiskey Ditch and the Prairie View pond areas to talk about sediment and nutrient pollution entering Lake Okabena from urban and agricultural land.

NEW BUSINESS

The District will work with the DNR to hold a meeting with the Lake Ocheda riparian landowners during the third week of August to discuss changing the lake's plan to allow for a full season water level drawdown.

An audit engagement letter from Katie M. Jacobson, CPA was discussed. Bousema moved to sign the engagement letter with an estimated cost \$3000 to \$4000 to do the audit. Milbrandt seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular board meeting will be held on June 4, 2024, in the Nobles County Public Works Department building conference room at 960 Diagonal Road, Worthington. Milbrandt moved to adjourn the meeting. Ingenthron seconded the motion. Affirmative: Bousema, Ingenthron, Mahlberg, Milbrandt, Rogers. Opposed: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Administrator's Report
June 4, 2024

Prairie View Inspection Pipes

Three of the Prairie View sand filter bench inspection pipes are missing this spring. The water there is too turbid to see what is going on. I hope the pipes got dislodged by the high water and are nearby on the filters so they can be reassembled after water levels recede.

The sand should still be replaced in the filters if possible this year.

Prairie Burning Attempt at Bella Park

Les Johnson assembled a crew of 6 people and 4 ATV on May 13th to burn prairie at the north end of Bella Park. When we called to activate the burn permit, we were surprised to find new fires were not allowed due to a statewide air quality alert. Persistently wet weather prevented us from burns after that date.

Okabena Shoreline Erosion
Todd Wietsema