



*Land and Water Shall be Preserved*

## **Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Board of Directors Meeting, June 24, 2015 Duluth, Minnesota**

**Board members present:** Lee Coe, Larry Kuseske, Jerome Deal, Linda Vavra, Craig Leiser, Barbara Haake, Ruth Schaefer, and Darrel Ellefson.

Others: Ray Bohn, Sara Noah, Ross Gronfield, Kevin Bigalke, Doug Thomas, Gene Tiedemann.

Members and guests introduced themselves and told of their involvement with MAWD.

The agenda was approved. Motion by Craig Leiser. Second by Jerome Deal. Approved.

**Secretary's Report – Linda Vavra** -Minutes of the March meeting were amended to note that Lee Coe called the meeting to order and on page three under legislative issues, the minutes should state “one size rather than on size”.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended by Barb Haake. Second by Darrel Ellefson. Approved.

### **Treasurer's Report – Craig Leiser and Barbara Haake**

Projected income and expenses are distorted by the timing of the Annual Meeting & Trade Show.

Motion to approve the report as submitted by Craig Leiser. Second by Barbara Haake. Approved

### **President's Report – Lee Coe**

Coe attended the Local Government Roundtable. Discussions centered on buffers and the wetland bill.

Coe attended a Legacy workshop in Bemidji.

### **Coordinator's Report – Ray Bohn**

(Suspended for Sara Noah)

### **Salary Survey – Sara Noah, Noah and Associates**

The salary survey compares the salaries of watershed district staff in each region. The survey has been tabulated to show comparisons for region and budget size. The survey is available to all watershed districts. Administrators suggested the survey be updated every three years. Since the watershed information is public information and the survey does not disclose names or watersheds specifically it does not need to be treated as confidential. It is to be used as a piece of the puzzle in hiring staff, not the whole puzzle.

### **Coordinator's Report continued:**

MAWD may want to revisit the commitment to the clean water fund. It has become a resource for agency funding rather than the intended resource for water quality projects and programs. The new buffers law has created a lot of questions and concern so Bohn anticipates it will be a big part of the MAWD Annual Meeting in December.

**ADA – Kevin Bigalke**

ADA is discussing the development of a watershed assistance group for districts having problems within the board or with specific entities.

They are interested in additional training – specific and long-term. This is a step toward sharing resources as encouraged by One Watershed One Plan.

ADA endorses the salary survey and finds it to be a useful tool.

**BWSR – Doug Thomas**

One Watershed One Plan is not articulated in statute.

WCA – policy changes came out of a three-year workgroup.

Clean water funds will be used to support technical training for watershed districts and other groups.

Drainage grants must be compliant with clean water fund regulations and CREP. Better language is needed to secure funding and Thomas encouraged MAWD to kick that door open in defining language.

There was discussion on 103D mandates and 103F funding.

**Committee Reports:**

**Summer Tour**

One Hundred thirty seven people have registered for the Summer Tour in Duluth. There was discussion about changing the month, dealing with multiple issues, and perhaps a survey asking why people do not attend the tour.

**Transition Committee**

Discussion included a complete look at positions and responsibilities. The cost to the organization will increase and additional information is needed to determine the approximate increase likely.

Bigalke suggested MAWD be similar to SWCD's and have several positions, not just duplicate the present situation. There was not a consensus.

**Annual Meeting**

The first call for abstracts has been sent. The committee will meet in August to select topics and plan the schedule. The meeting will be held at Arrowwood in Alexandria on December 3-5.

**New Business:**

**Buffers discussion**

There is not a mandate for watershed districts to follow 103F. Thomas suggested watershed districts and SWCD's meet to assure their message is on the same page.

Schaefer submitted that some farmers like the law because it is consistent for everyone and farmers want to do the right thing.

Vavra said it is very important to show how this helps everyone and how important it is to not single out farmers because it makes it hard to work together. She feels the governor has singled out so called "greedy farmers".

**Directors' Reports:**

Craig Leiser

The Brown's Creek Trail has opened. 250 people responded to a public opinion survey in the Brown's Creek booth. Brown's Creek has made a pledge to plant land for pollinators.

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Barbara Haake

Bylaws will need to be changed to allow for the interim treasurer to become the treasurer after the December Annual Meeting. After discussion, Haake tendered her resignation as treasurer.

Motion to accept Haake's resignation by Linda Vavra. Second by Darrel Ellefson. Motion made by Jerome Deal, seconded by Larry Kueseke to appoint Craig Leiser as treasurer until the 2015 Annual Meeting. Approved.

Darrel Ellefson

Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District has 98 redeterminations of benefits to do.

Linda Vavra

Bois de Sioux is busy with the Red Path Project, developing a team format and WRAPS.

Lee Coe

Red Lake Watershed District has approved the rules and guidance for tiling permits and impoundments. Pine Lake project has been approved to go ahead.

Larry Kuseske

Kuseske is active in the Drainage Workgroup. The discussion centers on DNR permitting promptly and ditching in public waters.

Sauk River is working with buffer grants.

Jerome Deal

The red tape involved in federal projects such as PL566 cost benefit ratio is obnoxious. It will be a 2 ½ year process.

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:12. Motion by Craig Leiser. Second by Darrel Ellefson. Approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Vavra  
Secretary