

**Shell Rock River Watershed District
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2021**

Managers present: Mick Delger, Joe Pacovsky, Gary Pestorious, Dan DeBoer, Brad Kramer, Mike Hanson, and Al Bakken

Chairman Pestorious called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on December 14, 2021 at the Shell Rock River Watershed District, 214 W. Main St., Albert Lea, MN 56007.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- a. Minutes of the November 9, 2021 SRRWD Monthly Board Meeting
- b. Minutes of the November 30, 2021 SRRWD Personnel Committee Meeting
- c. November 2021 Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- d. November 2021 Project Fund Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- e. Authorize Payment of Claims
- f. Authorize Payment of Project Fund Disbursements
- g. Quarterly Transfer

Manager Pacovsky seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager DeBoer offered the following motion:

Move to approve the agenda without any further additions, corrections, or deletions.

Manager Delger seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel provided details about the Personnel Committee meeting. The meeting took place on November 30, 2021 and the Committee reviewed cost of living and wage adjustments since 2019 for Freeborn County, City of Albert Lea, and the Shell Rock River Watershed District. It was noted that Freeborn County will implement a 3% COLA and the City of Albert Lea will implementing a 2.5% COLA in 2022.

Manager Delger offered the following motion:

Move to approve Personnel Committee Recommendation of 3% COLA Effective January 1, 2022.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel provided an overview of the 2022 budgets and levies. The total proposed Administrative budget for 2022 is \$267,000.00 and the proposed Project Fund budget is \$8,900,000.00. The proposed Administrative levy is \$250,000.00, Liability Insurance Fund levy \$17,000.00 and the Debt Service levy is \$178,625.00.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve 2022 Administrative Levy and Certify the Administrative Levy to the Freeborn County Auditor-Treasurer.

Manager Pacovsky seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve 2022 Debt Service Levy and Certify the Debt Service Levy to the Freeborn County Auditor-Treasurer.

Manager DeBoer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve 2022 Liability Insurance Levy and Certify the Liability Insurance Levy to the Freeborn County Auditor-Treasurer.

Manager Pacovsky seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve 2022 Administrative Budget.

Manager Pacovsky seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve 2022 Project Fund Budget

Manager DeBoer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel provided a legislative update. The SRRWD recently presented to the House and Senate Capital Investment Committees and the Governor's bonding staff regarding the Fountain Lake Restoration Project. The SRRWD is requesting \$8.45 million from the Minnesota Legislature in 2022 to complete Phase 3 of the project. Letters of support will be mailed to the Governor's office in the coming days.

Administrator Henschel provided a Minnesota Association of Watershed District (MAWD) update. The MAWD Annual Conference was held virtually last week and included many workshops. Manager Kramer and Manager Delger attended as delegates and represented the SRRWD. Administrator Henschel informed the Board of some of the resolutions that were discussed including SWCD capacity funds, Clean Water funds, Open Meeting Law, and crop insurance.

Project/Program Manager, Courtney Phillips, provided an update on the Pickerel Lake property. In June, the Board of Managers voted to execute an option agreement on the approximately 56-acre property located east of Pickerel Lake. The SRRWD plans to close on the property in December. The wetland restoration and native planting project is funded through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Courtney provided updates on several projects. The Owen's Waterway installation, located near the corner of U.S. Highway 69 and County Road 17, was recently completed. This project was the final project from the Board of Water and Soil Resources Targeted Watershed Grant and included the installation of three waterways to protect the wetland at the bottom of the hill from receiving deposited sediment and its associated nutrients.

The Shell Rock River Restoration Project located between the Aquatic Management Area (AMA) and Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) near Panicum Prairie was discussed. Minnesota Native Landscapes recently completed installing toe wood along the northwest bank of the Panicum Prairie site. Toe wood is a streambank protection technique used to protect undercut streambanks from erosion while providing instream cover for fish using natural materials. Toe wood dissipates flow energy and eliminates the need for rock. Work at the Panicum site will continue as they move to the southeast portion of the property. That work is expected to be complete by the end of the year and then the work will move to the AMA site in January. This project is funded by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and is in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The Miller Tract Wetland Restoration Project was discussed. This phased project is located approximately 2 miles east of Alden and south of Freeborn County Highway 51. Phase 1 of the project was completed and included the creation of wetland basins from private tile modifications. Engineering recently began on Phase 2 of project and will focus on the public drainage system. The wetland restoration work is expected to be constructed during the summer of 2022. This project is funded through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and is a collaboration with the SRRWD, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and private landowners.

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant for the Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program was discussed. The Phase 11 proposal allocation amount increased by \$161,000 making the total allocation nearly \$1.4 million. The workplan is due at the end of the week.

Manager Kramer praised the SRRWD for the quality of projects presented at the MAWD Annual Conference.

Manager Pestorius asked about the sale of Country Club property. The District is working with Jones, Haugh & Smith to determine the infrastructure on site and Jensen Excavating to perform water pressure tests.

Manager Bakken questioned the sale of unused property at the Headwaters Property. All property was awarded except for the house. Courtney notified the Board of Managers that there is an individual interested in the house. Administrator Henschel plans to put the house out for bid again. Property must be removed by July 31, 2022.

The next SRRWD monthly board meeting has been scheduled for January 11, 2021. The One Watershed, One Plan 60-day public comment period is open. A public hearing has been scheduled for January 20, 2021.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Manager Pacovsky seconded the motion.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.