



11360 Highway 212 STE 6
Cologne, MN 55322

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Carver SWCD Board Meeting Minutes – March 20, 2025

Held in conference room 1 at the Carver County Public Works facility in Cologne, MN

Board Members Present:

Member, Michael Lynch
Vice Chair, Marcus Zbinden
Secretary/Treasurer, Jeffrey Sons

Board Members Absent:

Chair, Mark Zabel

Others Present:

Farm Service Agency Director, Jennifer King
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Cindy Hoffmann
Carver County Public Services Deputy Director, Paul Moline
Carver County IT Technician, Colin Leck

SWCD Staff Present:

District Manager, Mike Wanous
Admin. & Finance Spec., Felicia Brockoff

1. Call to Order.

Vice Chair Zbinden called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The Board recognized Stanley P. Wendland for 8 years of service on the SWCD Board. Stan passed away on March 16, 2025, after a two-year courageous battle with lymphoma.

Lynch announced that the Watertown wrestling team captured first at the Minnesota state tournament. This is the first time Watertown has captured first place.

2. Public Comments – None.

3. Agenda Review and Adoption.

Resolution 014-2025: Lynch moved, Sons seconded, to approve the March 20, 2025, Board Meeting Agenda as printed. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel- absent; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

4. Agency Reports

- a. NRCS report – Cindy reported they are working on 2025 EQIP applications, 7 have been received for Carver County. Field offices have been instructed to pause all work on any applications receiving inflation reduction act (IRA) funding. Landowners who were waiting to get paid for projects they had already paid for, have now been able to receive their reimbursements.

Four CSP applications have been received for Carver County, the deadline is Friday, March 21. Local work group (LWG) meetings need to be held before June 25. She also reported that NRCS has not heard anything about CRP. There is currently no travel authorized for NRCS employees, which includes any training.

- b. FSA report – Jennifer reported that there are federal employees who were working at home, who are now looking for a federal office to go to, since all federal employees were ordered to go back to work in an office. FSA does lease space in the Waconia Service Center, and there is one FSA State employee working out of that office currently.

She also reported on the dairy margin coverage (DMC) and the emergency commodity assistance program (ECAP). The deadline to sign up for DMC is March 31, and ECAP is August 15, 2025. The funding FSA used to have for supplies and programmatic items is currently in limbo. Some loans through FSA had to be secured with liens for collateral. Collateral may not be able to be secured in the future, without the programmatic funding.

She also commented there are currently no signups for CRP, regular or continuous.

- c. Carver County report – Paul reported that the 2026 budgeting process has begun, and there are talks of budget cuts, since the Governor’s budget will be lower. He reported the WMO has a lot of projects happening this year, and that several feasibility studies will be completed by June.

Paul and his staff attended the City of Waconia Council meeting on Monday night. Paul stated they explained how the water rules worked, and felt the meeting went well. He also reported on the Public Works campus’ master plan with the new Highway 212, and possible expansions to the current building, as well as new structures on the property.

Paul commended Mike Wanous for all his efforts with the recent ditch redeterminations of benefits. Paul explained that Mike is the most knowledgeable about the ditch systems in Carver County, and that he was an asset during this process.

6. Consent Agenda Items

Resolution 015-2025: Sons moved, Lynch seconded to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of February 20, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
 - b. Acceptance of the February 2025 Treasurer’s Report
- Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel- absent; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

7. Regular Agenda Items

- a. The MASWCD Area 4 meeting is scheduled for April 7. Supervisors Zbinden and Lynch expressed interest in attending.
- b. Mike reported the June Board meeting falls on Juneteenth, an official holiday, and will need to be rescheduled. It was the consensus of the Board to move the meeting back one week to June 26, 2025.

As previously reported, the LWG needs to be conducted before June 25. It was decided that the LWG meeting will be held immediately following the Carver SWCD April 17 Board meeting.

- c. Mike reviewed the 2024 Annual Report he put together at this time. This is no longer required by BWSR, but Mike feels it is a good practice. He also showed the Board a 2-page summary that Felicia put together of the 2024 activities. The Board agreed that the 2-page summary should be posted on the website.
- d. Mike contacted BWSR after the last Board meeting, to ask about a presentation to the Board about BWSR’s Lawns to Legume’s program. Erin Loeffler out of the Duluth office has agreed to attend the April Board meeting and make a presentation. Zbinden would like to know how the Carver SWCD can partner with BWSR to promote our program more.

Strategic planning was discussed at this point. The Board felt a facilitator did not need to be hired, and that this could be done with a staff member, perhaps Madeline Seveland. This will be added to the April Board Agenda, to discuss when this strategic planning session should be held.

9. SWCD Board Committee & SWCD Staff Monthly Reports

- a. Personnel Committee (Zabel, Zbinden) – Seth’s 9-year anniversary with the SWCD was March 1 (actual hire date was 2/29/2016).
- b. Metro Conservation District’s (MCD) Committee (Zbinden; Lynch alt.) – Mike reported on the meeting, which covered the normal ETA, Ag Water Quality Certification Program, and the Children’s Water Festival reports. He reported with interest rates being higher over the past year, that the proposed dues for 2025 have gone from \$1,600 per SWCD to \$50 per SWCD. There was a minor change to the By-Laws that added hybrid meeting language.
- c. Education & Outreach Committee (Sons) – has not met.
- d. Budget Committee (Sons, Zbinden) – has not met.
- e. WMO Advisory Committee (Zbinden) – Paul reported they will be working on the SSTS program in one final area in Watertown Township and a few missed systems in other areas. He anticipates there are about 19 systems that will be targeted for upgrades, and that this should take care of all the SSTS funding remaining. In total, since the County started this program, approximately 500 septic systems have been updated. There was discussion on the 201 system around Reitz Lake, which was designed over 40 years ago, and was expected to last 20 years. There have been some issues with the system recently, but there are no funds for the County to assist with an upgrade.
- f. South Fork Crow River 1W1P (Zabel; Lynch alt.) – has not met.
- g. The SWCD staff monthly progress report was presented and discussed.

10. Board of Supervisors Announcements

- a. Upcoming meetings/events:
 - April 7 – MASWCD Area 4 meeting, Cabela’s in Rogers
 - April 10 – Native Plant Workshop, Chanhassen Community Center (6:00-7:30 PM)
 - April 17 – SWCD Board Meeting, 8:00 AM. NRCS LWG meeting following at 10 AM
 - June 26 – SWCD Board meeting, 8:00 AM

11. Adjourn

Resolution 016-2025: Sons moved, Lynch seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 a.m. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-absent; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 8:00 AM
Location: Public Works Headquarters, Conference Room 1
11360 Highway 212, Cologne, MN 55322

Approved: _____

Secretary/Treasurer

Date signed: April 17, 2025