



11360 Highway 212 STE 6  
Cologne, MN 55322

(952) 466-5230 | [carverswcd.org](http://carverswcd.org)

## Carver SWCD Board Meeting Minutes – June 26, 2025

Held in conference room 3 at the Carver County Public Works facility in Cologne, MN

### Board Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

Farm Service Agency Director, Jennifer King  
NRCS District Conservationist, Katie Mattila  
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Cindy Hoffmann  
BWSR Board Conservationist, Jen Dullum  
Carver Co. Public Services, Paul Moline (*arrived at 9:09 a.m.*)

### SWCD Staff Present:

District Manager, Mike Wanous  
Administrative & Finance Specialist, Felicia Brockoff  
Resource Conservationist, Terry Meiller  
Landscape Restoration Specialist, Seth Ristow (*arrived at 8:23 a.m.*)

### 1. Call to Order.

Chair Zabel called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

### 2. Public Comments – None.

### 3. Agenda Review and Adoption.

One addition has been added to the regular Agenda items, to discuss the CRP incentive program.

Resolution 027-2025: Zbinden moved, Lynch seconded, to approve the June 26, 2025, Board Meeting Agenda with the addition of discussing the CRP incentive program. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

### 4. Agency Reports

- a. FSA Report – Jennifer submitted a written report, which she reviewed with the Board. The National office has not accepted or denied any of the CRP offers, but they are guarantying a second batching period. There COC Board has two open positions. One incumbent is running again, but the other has served the maximum of 9 years. The nomination deadline is August 1.

She also reported on the supplemental disaster assistance programs. The emergency livestock program for drought has already been paid out. In August there will be a signup period for producers to sign up for flooding disasters from 2023-2024. She also reported a supplemental disaster relief program is coming, which depends on if the producer had a big enough loss, and will vary if they had crop insurance or no insurance.

- b. NRCS report – Katie reported that 7 EQIP contracts were preapproved and have been preapproved and obligated in Carver County. The EQIP batching deadline for 2026 applications is August 1<sup>st</sup>. The EQIP payment rates are expected to be reduced from prior years. The CSP

applications for Carver County were preapproved and obligated. NRCS staff will be working on status reviews in the next upcoming weeks.

The NRCS team boundaries will be changing effective July 14. Carver and Scott Counties will now be joining Sibley, McLeod and Meeker Counties, with Jake Stitch being the new team lead. She also reported that Jeff, the NRCS Soil Conservationist from Jordan, has accepted a position with the Scott SWCD.

- c. Carver County Report - Paul reported that the 2026 preliminary budget allocation to the SWCD is an increase of 4.3%. He also reported that the 2027 budget process could be quite different, with lots of cuts. Administrator Hemze has issued a soft hiring freeze for current employment vacancies. Budget hearings will be held in early August.

## **5. Consent Agenda Items**

Resolution 028-2025: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of May 15, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
  - b. Acceptance of the May 2025 Treasurer's Report
- Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel- aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

## **6. Regular Agenda Items**

- a. Mike reported that a public notice for the Supervisor District 1 Vacancy ran for 3 weeks in the paper, but no letters of interest have been received. Chair Zabel feels it is important to fill the position before the 2026 election. The advertisement will be updated to read the position is open until filled. Felicia will contact the online Carver County Local News again, to see if they will post the notice on their website.
- b. Chair Zabel presented a resolution for federal support for FSA and NRCS staffing levels at this time. If the SWCD Board approves this resolution, it will be brought to the MASWCD Area IV meeting for approval.

Resolution 029-2025: Sons moved, Zbinden seconded to approve the following resolution:

### **Federal Support for FSA and NRCS Staffing Levels**

WHEREAS, trained, competent, professional staff are required to assist local landowners and land managers with implementation of conservation on the land; and

WHEREAS, FSA and NRCS staff at the local level have direct contact with producers and landowners; and

WHEREAS, conservation programs are best implemented at the local level; and

WHEREAS, recent cuts to USDA have created staffing shortages which result in delays of program implementation

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that MASWCD work with NACD to direct USDA to provide adequate staffing at the local level for FSA and NRCS to promote, market, plan, implement, and maintain conservation practices to meet the needs of local producers and landowners.

Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel- aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- c. MASWCD is hosting a governance workshop September 10-11 in St. Cloud. Supervisors will review the materials and discuss at the July board meeting.
- d. Seth presented four pollinator program cost-share applications at this time, totaling \$12,528 in cost share assistance and covering 30,720 square feet.

Resolution 030-2025: Zbinden moved, Lynch seconded to approve the following pollinator applications:

- 1) Julie Trabant, NYA - \$2,000 to convert 8,200 square feet of turf grass to a pollinator habitat
- 2) City of Chaska - \$5,000 to convert 12,000 square feet of turf grass to a pollinator habitat, with the stipulation that the City of Chaska will contact the homeowners whose property borders the proposed project area.
- 3) Glenn Wuetherich, NYA - \$2,670 to convert 8,000 square feet of turf grass to a pollinator habitat.
- 4) Nathan Roise, Carver - \$3,528 to convert 1,872 square feet of turf grass to a pollinator habitat.

Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel- aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- e. The MASWCD Area IV meeting and tour will be hosted by Hennepin County on July 9 at the Ridgedale library. Chair Zabel, Zbinden, and Mike Wanous all plan to attend.
- f. The SWCD has received a \$20,000 grant from BWSR to provide an incentive for landowners enrolled in the CRP program. The WMO has agreed to match another \$10,000 for this incentive. Mike also reported he's working with Jen from BWSR, to see if we can use the Lake Waconia SWA funds to also enhance this CRP incentive.

Mike asked the Board for direction on how to proceed with signing up landowners for the incentive. After discussion, the consensus was that the SWCD will keep track of landowners who are interested in the CRP incentive payments. Applications will then be ranked and scored by the SWCD, according to high priority watersheds, and brought back to the SWCD board for approvals in July or August.

#### **8. SWCD Board Committee & SWCD Staff Monthly Reports**

- a. Personnel Committee (Zabel, Zbinden) – has not met.
- b. Metro Conservation District's (MCD) Committee (Zbinden; Lynch alt.) – has not met.
- c. Education & Outreach Committee (Sons, Lynch) – has not met.
- d. Budget Committee (Sons, Zbinden) – has not met.

- e. WMO Advisory Committee (Zbinden; Sons alt.) – Zbinden reported on the June tour. Sites included the Lake Waconia AIS inspection site at the new park boat landing, a landowner raingarden, and the Crow River area cutoff site in Camden Township for a possible feasibility study. The phosphorus issue in Eagle Lake was also discussed. Alum treatments have been done and there's discussion of harvesting the curly pond leaf. The group also saw a SAFL baffle stormwater treatment site in Norwood.
- f. South Fork Crow River 1W1P (Zabel; Lynch alt.) – Lynch reported on the June 13 meeting report. Most of the proposed projects being completed in the watershed will use up all of the grant funds. Kyle from Renville County will be applying for additional funds for projects. The next meeting is June 12, 2026.
- g. The SWCD staff monthly progress report was presented and discussed.

#### **8. Board of Supervisors Announcements**

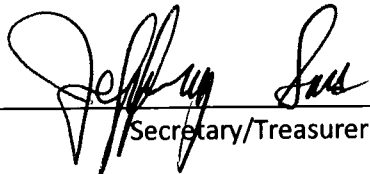
- a. The second quarter Supervisor compensation forms are due today.
- b. Chair Zable reported on the last BWSR board meeting. The regional conservation partnership program (RCPP) funds from NRCS are significantly lower than expected. However, there has been \$22 million added for soil health project. He also reported that the MN Department of Health is working with the MN Ground Water Association (MGWA) to conduct groundwater mapping that would be surface watershed based.
- c. Upcoming meetings/events:
  - June 26 – SWCD strategic planning session (immediately following today's meeting)
  - July 4 – Independence Day, SWCD office closed
  - July 9 – Area 4 summer meeting and tour, Hennepin County
  - July 17 – SWCD Board meeting 8:00 a.m.
  - August 21 – SWCD Board meeting 8:00 a.m.

#### **9. Adjourn**

Resolution 031-2025: Lynch moved, Sons seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

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

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Secretary/Treasurer

Date signed: July 17, 2025