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SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

June 21, 2007

APPROVED

Board of Water and Soil (BWSR) Citizens Advisory Committee

1. A special meeting of the Wild Rice Watershed District was held at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 21, 2007, at the office of the District, located at 11 Fifth Avenue East, Ada, MN. The purpose of the meeting was for BWSR representatives to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Citizens Advisory Committee. The following members were in attendance: Warren Seykora, Joe Spaeth, Jim Wagner, Sr., Diane Ista, Bob Wright and Mike Christensen. Absent: Dave Vipond. In addition the following persons were in attendance: Doug Thomas and Brian Dwight, BWSR, Administrator Dalen, Secretary Loretta Johnson, Joe Slette, Charlie Pazdernik, Mark Harless, Brian Borgen and Sam Larson.

Chairman Seykora called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Doug Thomas, BWSR, distributed information on a Watershed District Advisory Committee Basics, Minnesota Statutes 103D.331 and a copy of Rules adopted by the Wild Rice Watershed District on February 21, 1989. Thomas gave a brief background of his personal history and went on to say that he is here today to answer questions and provide perspective to assist the District in gaining insight when interacting with the Advisory Committee and give some additional thoughts and ideas on working with the Advisory Committee.

Following is a copy of the **“Watershed District Advisory Committee Basics”** distributed by Thomas:

- Advisory Committee is required
- Purpose is to:
 - Advise and assist Managers on matters affecting the Watershed District
 - Make recommendations to the Managers on all contemplated projects and proposed improvements
- Members – appointed by the Watershed District – minimum of at least five – must reside in the watershed – at a minimum should (not must) include a representative from each:
 - SWCD (May live outside of the WD)
 - County (may live outside of the WD)
 - A member of a sporting organization
 - A member of a farm organization
 - Others at the discretion of the WD managers
- Expenses – Watershed District may reimburse members for actual travel and other necessary expenses

- Duties
 - Establish meeting schedule (must be at least annually)
 - Elect a chair and recorder from its membership
 - Consider issues pertinent to the function and purpose of the WD
 - Review and comment on reports, minutes, activities and proposed projects
 - Report to the Managers on the general discussion of the Advisory committee and any resulting recommendations
- Manager attendance – Watershed District Managers should refrain from attending Advisory Committee meetings if they have staff that can present information on proposed activities and projects.
- Advisory - of, giving, or containing advise: *an advisory letter from a stockbroker.*

Also distributed was the following copy of “**103D.331, Minnesota Statutes 2006**”

103D.331 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Subdivision 1: **Purpose.** The managers must annually appoint an advisory committee to advise and assist the managers on all matters affecting the interests of the watershed district and make recommendations to the managers on all contemplated projects and improvements in the watershed district.

Subd. 1a **Duties.** For purposes of carrying out its duties under this section the advisory committee shall:

- (1) elect a chair from its membership;
- (2) elect a recorder from its membership;
- (3) establish a meeting schedule, which at a minimum meets annually;
- (4) consider issues pertinent to the functions and purposes of the watershed district;
- (5) review and comment on reports, minutes, activities, and proposed projects of the managers; and
- (6) report to the managers the general content of advisory committee meetings and resulting recommendation.

Subd. 2. **Members.** (a) The advisory committee consists of at least five members. If practicable, the advisory committee members elected should include a representative from each soil and water conservation district, a representative of each county, a member of a sporting organization, and a member of a farm organization. Other advisory committee members may be appointed at the discretion of the managers. The members must be residents of the watershed district, except representative from soil and water conservation district and counties and serve at the pleasure of the managers.

(b) In addition, the managers may appoint other interested and technical persons who may or may not reside in the watershed district to serve at the pleasure of the managers.

Subd.3. **Expense reimbursement.** The managers may reimburse members of the advisory committee for actual traveling and other necessary expenses incurred in the performance of duties in the amount as provided for state employees.

History: 1900 c 391 art 4 s 24; 1995 c 199 s 15

Also distributed was a copy of the following rules as adopted by the Board of Managers on February 19, 1989.

RULES GOVERNING THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE WILD RICE WATERSHED DISTRICT

The guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of an Advisory Committee are found in Minnesota Statutes, Section 112.44. The Board of Managers has followed as closely as practical and possible the parameters of the statute in the appointment of the Committee. The Board of Managers intends to utilize the Committee in carrying out its own duties.

Minnesota Statutes Section **"112.44 Advisory Committee"** provides:

"The managers, upon qualifying, shall appoint an advisory committee of at least five members. They must be selected if practicable as follows: a supervisor of a soil and water conservation district; a member of a county board; a member of a sporting organization; and a member of a farm organization. Others may be appointed at the discretion of the managers. The appointees must be residents of the district and serve at the pleasure of the managers. The committee shall advise and assist the managers upon all matters affecting the interests of the district and make recommendations to the managers upon all contemplated projects and works of improvement in the district. The managers may also appoint other interested and technical persons who may or may not reside in the district to serve at the pleasure of the managers. Each member of the advisory committee, in the discretion of the managers, is entitled to reimbursement for actual traveling and other expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of duties as provided for state employees."

The Advisory Committee shall meet at least once each year to review the purpose, duties, policies and work load of the District. Committee members shall be advised of regular and special meetings, legal hearings, and all other notices. Minutes of all special and regular meetings shall be furnished to Committee members.

The Committee shall elect a Chairman from its membership to conduct meetings in a formal manner. A recorder shall be elected from its membership to record proceedings and transmit recommendations to the Board of Managers. All meetings shall be called, noticed and conducted in compliance with applicable Minnesota Statutes. No recommendation or actions of the Committee shall be binding on the Board of Managers. The Committee may bequest the Board of Managers for assistance in carrying out their duties.

Agenda items for Committee meetings may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. A review of past activities of the District.
 - A. Recommend course of future action.
2. An analysis of the "RULES" of the District.
 - A. Recommendation for needed changes.
3. A review of the operational policies of the District.
 - A. Identify possible changes in policy.
4. An analysis of responsiveness to "natural resource" issues.
 - A. Recommend course of action to enhance responsiveness.
5. Discuss relationship of the District to other local, state, and federal governmental agencies involved in natural resource management.
 - A. Provide awareness of shortfalls in the present system.
6. Discuss the public relations aspect of the District's operation.
 - A. Recommend needed improvements.
7. Other items as the Committee deems appropriate.
 - A. Provide suggestions for implementation.

Doug Thomas reviewed the basic purpose and requirements of the Citizens Advisory Committee including the fact that it is the Managers' responsibility to determine when the advisory committee meets and how it fits into the Board's timing throughout the year. Managers attendance at Citizens Advisory meetings is not recommended, if the District has staff, rather the purpose of the committee is to act independently. The Citizens Advisory is not meant to be an extension of the board; Thomas recommended that managers and committee members remember the concept of the term "Advisory." The citizens advisory meetings are not meant to be a forum where committee members come and criticize the Board. Brian Dwight after looking at the list of organizations, questioned if there had ever been Soil and Water Conservation District members, if they had been invited and if they had participated. Thomas stated that the Board of Managers may craft and appoint members to the Citizens Advisory who are best suited to advise the Managers and to get extra perspective is very valid.

Manager Spaeth commented that he was glad for the opportunity to have the concepts and purposes explained to him. Spaeth stated that it is difficult to ask people to serve on the committee and participation is not always the best as there is no pay for their services, only compensation for travel and/or expenses and this adds to poor attendance.

Brian Dwight asked Thomas whose responsibility it is to call the Advisory meetings. Thomas stated that the statute is not clear but it seems to work best when the Watershed District staff works with the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee to determine times of the year for meetings that are best suited for everyone. Thomas also recommended that Board members not attend the meetings and that Watershed District staff report meeting discussion back to the Watershed District Managers. Mark Harless commented that the statutes state that the Advisory Committee elects its chair, sets the schedule for meetings and that the Advisory Committee will report back to the Board, the report is not from staff back to the Board. As a former chair, he called meetings quarterly, but then cut back to two meetings a year. Doug Thomas said that the best working advisory committees are the ones where the chairman and staff of the Watershed District work together.

Charlie Pazdernik felt it was important to have a minimum of one meeting a year and more depending on the work load of the District and committee members.

Administrator Dalen stated that the Managers have started annual goal setting and suggested scheduling end of year meetings to discuss goals, and additional meetings throughout the year. Brian Dwight recommended preparation of a "goal setting document."

Dalen also commented that he felt sometimes citizen advisory meetings were called in reaction to something that was done. Mark Harless stated that he as chairman, never called a meeting in response to anything. Joe Slette recommended that Watershed District staff provide the committee with a list of potential projects to discuss at the next committee meeting and felt that none of the project information was discussed at the last advisory committee meeting and that it was not a very constructive meeting. Mark Harless reviewed the agenda from the last meeting and indicated that projects were included on the agenda and stated that the agenda items were brought to the advisory committee in hopes of getting them changed. He felt things like this should be handled through the committee and it is a perfect forum to bring these issues forward.

Warren Seykora stated that he has received calls from advisory committee members who have not been coming to meetings because they feel the meetings are more of a personal agenda against the board, and they are tired of that, the finger pointing and that is why they are not here today. Brian Dwight stated that there were times when the meeting did get out of hand and it may be better if staff rather than managers attend. Dwight also recommended the development of an annual plan for the District and present this to the advisory committee for review. Charlie Pazdernik felt the advisory committee roles should be better defined. Administrator Dalen stated that what he would like to accomplish today is for the advisory committee to come and assist the board with the issues. The Board needs all of the help they can get, it is a monumental task that the board is trying to accomplish and setting up a good working relationship is critical.

Brian Borgen stated that he and Manager Ista recently met with others, including Representative Kent Eken, at the Billy Lee Bridge and discussion was held regarding getting together with the District and working on erosion control and playing our role in assisting in pursuing legislation. Borgen stated that Representative Eken is very strong on trying to help us. Charlie Pazdernik stated that erosion problems are also one of the issues in Mahanomen County. Brian Dwight suggested holding a breakfast meeting with SWCDs and other resource people and establish a resource team to address these problems.

Doug Thomas stated that these are the items that should be discussed at an advisory meeting. Erosion control would be an issue that the board can look at and there may a project or program in response to some of these ideas that could be implemented. Administrator Dalen stated that the District does have a small project funds account that is available for these types of projects/programs. Sam Larson suggested having someone from the NRCS in addition to the SWCD as they have other programs. Brian Dwight stated that he would make a commitment to work with both the Board and the advisory committee. Mark Harless stated that his opinion is the advisory committee is a platform to talk about the tougher issues, there needs to be this venue for those discussions. Doug Thomas felt the advisory committee may not be the best forum to bring these things forward; an "open mike" may be a better idea.

Thomas stated that the advisory committee meeting is not the place where everyone comes with a bone to pick and that is why he recommends not having board members at the meeting. Rather let the report recommendations come back to the regular board. The meetings need to be managed and structured to make sure that there is a productive element. Thomas stated that his board has a 15 minute "open mike" forum at every meeting.

Mark Harless asked if it would be appropriate for the chairman of the advisory committee to be on the Project Team. Mike Christensen asked that the difference between the advisory committee and Project Team be explained.

Manager Spaeth stated that when/if advisory committee members have a complaint they should bring them to the district office and run it through the whole board. The issue should be brought to the administrator and then the whole board; an individual board member cannot make a decision. Brian Dwight stated that there is concern about how complaints are addressed, both technical water and administrative complaints, and one way to identify them could be in writing and bring the complaint to the office staff. He asked if a written response to the questions and recommendation of the citizens' advisory committee may be a good idea. Manager Wagner stated that these issues need to be brought to the board; there is a misperception that a board member alone can do things.

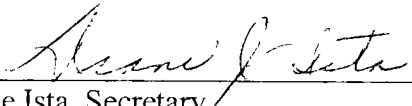
Dwight stated that we are just interested in setting up an operation that works but does not operate in a vacuum. Doug Thomas stated that you can't make hard and fast rules. Brian Dwight stated that you don't want to get extremely detailed. Dwight stated that he knows the board has discussed revising the laws, policy and rules for the District; and the administrative by-laws; it may be a good idea to do the amendment and take it to the advisory committee for review. This would inform the committee on how things are going to operate and they can become champions on how the district operates. Dwight stated to remember that "perception is real."

Charlie Pazdernik suggested using the local radio station as a tool to get the District's message to the public. Mark Harless talked about the rotation of officers. Manager Spaeth stated that he has an issue with rotation of officers. Many board members do not have the time to do the job and stated that he is not willing to take the job. Manager Wright stated that he himself has never been to an advisory meeting but several members have told him that the reason they don't attend meetings is because they go on and on about the same thing and felt that they weren't doing anything. He stated that moving forward with a couple of the ideas that have come forth today might make the advisory committee work better and develop better communication with the Managers and the committee. Administrator Dalen agreed. Charlie Pazdernik stated that he is a Mahanomen County Commissioner and the appointing authority for Managers for the District. He likes to have trust in the people he appoints.

Sam Larson commended the board for working on detention. Brian Dwight reminded everyone to remember it is not the Watershed District Board who is the show stopper, they are being pressured by the statutes the agency folks use and abide by and the Board ends up in a real tough predicament. We need to assist in selling this information to the public. Manager Wagner stated that the District managers are in a tug of war situation and have people on both sides of them. Manager Wright questioned Thomas whether advisory members may/may not live in the District. Thomas stated that members may live in the District but they don't necessarily have to live in the District.

Administrator Dalen thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

A motion was made by Manager Spaeth and seconded by Manager Wagner to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Seykora adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.



Diane Ista, Secretary

6/21/07 BWSR → Doug Thomas
mting Brian Dwight

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