



North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792

Regular Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2023

The meeting was held in person at the District office. A zoom link was available.

Supervisors Present at Roll Call: Chuck Bainter, Peggy Pearson, Mark Peterson and Gary Rantala were present in-person.

Staff Present: Anita Provinzino, District Administrator and Tristan Nelson, District Forester were present in-person; Phil Norvitch, Resource Conservationist; Victoria Ranua, Accounting & Human Resources Specialist; Becca Reiss, Community Conservationist; and Zach Evans, Regional Farm Bill Forester were present via Zoom

Others Present: Nick Rainey, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Chair, Peggy Pearson.

1. Agenda - Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to add item 12c. Juneteenth holiday and approve the agenda. Motion carried.
2. Minutes of May 10, 2023, Meeting – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve the minutes. Motion carried.
3. Financial Reports & Program Summary for May - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Gary Rantala to approve the financial report and program summary. Motion carried.
4. Accounts Receivable and Payable – Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve accounts payable and accounts receivable as updated on 06/13/2023. Motion carried.

Frank Modich arrived at 10:37 a.m.

5. Guest Introductions and Comments – Tristan Nelson introduced himself as the new District Forester and shared his background. He was welcomed to the District by Chair Peggy Pearson.

NEW BUSINESS

6. BWSR Area 3 Technical Training Team Update & Board Resolution 2023-11
 - a. BWSR Sustainable Landcare Training Grant
 - b. Proposal from Blue Thumb for Area 3 Technical Training – Moved by Mark Peterson/Frank Modich to approve Board Resolution 2023-11. Motion carried.
7. Certificate(s) of Deposit – New – Moved by Frank Modich/Gary Rantala to purchase six \$8,000 certificates of deposit for 26 weeks at 4.02% unless the rate changes by 50% for a total of \$48,000. Motion carried.
8. Data Access Policy for Data Subjects – annual update – Moved by Gary Rantala/Frank Modich to approve the policy as updated. Motion carried.
9. Data Access Policy for the Public – annual update – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve the policy as updated. Motion carried.
10. DNR Groundwater Monitoring Contract & Board Resolution 2023-12 – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to approve Board Resolution 2023-12. Motion carried.
11. NRCS Arrowhead Forest Partnership Contract Amendment & Board Resolution 2023-13 – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve Board Resolution 2023-13. Motion carried.
12. Staffing

- a. Jon Utecht – Annual Salary Adjustment effective 6/30/23 – Moved by Gary Rantala/Chuck Bainter to approve a 5% increase in Jon Utecht's hourly rate effective 6/30/2023. Motion carried.
 - b. Zach Evans – Annual Salary Adjustment effective 7/6/23 – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Frank Modich to approve a 5% increase to Zach Evan's hourly rate effective 7/6/23. Motion carried.
 - c. Juneteenth Holiday – Moved by Gary Rantala/Mark Peterson to defer a decision on declaring Juneteenth a holiday for employees. Pearson abstained. Motion carried.
13. Upcoming Supervisor Meetings and/or Trainings
- a. Rainy Headwaters/Vermilion Planning Policy Committee – July 7
 - b. St. Louis River Implementation Policy Committee – June 22
 - c. Technical Service Area III – June 28
 - d. Other – Local Work Group Meeting – June 21

REPORTS

14. District Administrator Report – See reports on file
- a. AIS Decon Unit Insurance Claim
 - b. Legislative Update
 - c. Open Meeting Law highlights
15. Accounting & Human Resources Specialist Report – See reports on file
- a. Tree Sale Report (with Community Conservationist)
16. AIS Program Coordinator Report – See report on file.
17. Community Conservationist Report – See report on file.
- a. Rainy Headwaters/Vermilion Shoreland Conversion Video – The board opted to postpone this as staff have learned the presenters are willing to make live presentations virtually. Staff will schedule the presenters for a future meeting.
18. Regional Farm Bill Forester – See report on file.
19. Resource Conservationist Report – See report on file.
20. NRCS District Conservationist Report – See report on file.
21. Supervisor & Committee Reports
- a. Area 3 Resolutions Meeting – June 9 – See Chuck's report on file. Anita indicated the forestry resolution did not pass, the others did.
 - b. Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development – May 22 – Peggy indicated they acted on salary for the executive director, paid expenses and had a report on the Enbridge Carbon Credit program. There is a landowner near Wadena that is working toward it. The annual meeting will be August 3&4 in Carlton.
 - c. Rainy Headwaters-Vermilion Policy Committee – June 2
 - d. SWCD Forestry Association – May 18 – Mark reported on presentations from Bruce Johnson at Traverse SWCD and Steve Cole of NRCS.

CLOSING

22. Next Meeting Date – The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.

Gary Rantala left the meeting at 12:16 p.m.

23. Adjourn – Moved by Frank Modich/Mark Peterson to adjourn the meeting at 12:18 p.m. Motion carried.



Mark Peterson, Secretary

July 12, 2023



Resolution 2023-11

North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000
www.nslswcd.org

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District received Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) funding in 2021 on behalf of the Area 3 Technical Training Team for area-wide technical training of which \$3,685 remains for training costs and \$70.19 for administration; and

WHEREAS, there the Area 3 Technical Training Team has identified sustainable land care training as a need; and

WHEREAS, Blue Thumb has submitted a quote for 20 SWCD or NRCS employees to attend five online modules & two days of in-person training on this topic at a cost of \$8,585; and

WHEREAS, the BWSR has authorized a joint powers agreement for an additional \$4,900 in contracted training and \$300 for administration in order that the District contract with Blue Thumb for sustainable land care training; and

WHEREAS, the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to accept this BWSR funding and enter into contract with Blue Thumb to provide the training.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents for the joint powers agreement with BWSR, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign the contract with Blue Thumb to provide sustainable land care training.

Moved by: *Peterson*
Seconded by: *Modrch*
Affirmative: *Bainter, Pearson, Modrch, Peterson, Kantala*
Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 14th day of June 2023 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.


Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



Resolution 2023-12

**North St. Louis
Soil and Water Conservation District**
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000
www.nslswcd.org

Resolution to Authorize FY24 DNR Groundwater Contract

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has four observation wells they desire to be monitored within the District boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan identified "Create a work plan that capitalizes on staff strengths and optimizes funding opportunities" as a priority; and

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors recognizes the \$30 reimbursement rate per reading does not cover costs if staff were to take readings; and

WHEREAS, Chuck Bainter, Frank Modich, and Mark Peterson volunteer to take the measurements and may use district vehicles to do so; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota DNR has authorized these members of the Board Supervisors to take the readings eight times per year at \$30 per reading;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports DNR Groundwater measurements and authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents related to such funding.

Motion Made by: *Modich*

Seconded by: *Bainter*

Affirmative: *Bainter, Modich, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*

Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board held on the 14th day of June 2023 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



**North St. Louis
Soil and Water Conservation District**

505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 749-2000

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District accepted a 2022 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Collaboration Grant for the Arrowhead Forest Partnership (Board Resolution 2022-11) in the amount of \$400,000, and

WHEREAS, the Carlton, Cook, Lake, and North St. Louis SWCD's make up the Arrowhead Forest Partnership and provide forestry services to landowners applying for USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and

WHEREAS, the grant agreement currently funds one regional farm bill forester position who is handling the existing workload, and

WHEREAS, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 allocates a significant increase of EQIP funding over the next four years, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) estimates that will double to triple funding available to Minnesota landowners, and

WHEREAS, NRCS and North St. Louis SWCD see the need for another regional farm bill forester position to handle the added workload, and NRCS will allocate additional funds to pay for the position, and

WHEREAS, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to add another staff member and accept this funding to provide services related to its mission.

NOW THERE BE IT RESOLVED, the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors accepts said funding and hereby authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents related to said funding.

Moved by: *Bainter*
Seconded by: *Peterson*
Affirmative: *Bainter, Madich, Pearson, Peterson, Rantala*
Opposed: *none*

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St. Louis SWCD Board on the 14th day of June, 2023; and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary