



**PENNINGTON SWCD BOARD MEETING**  
**(Held via Zoom Video Conferencing**  
**Due to Covid-19 and Governor's**  
**Peacetime Emergency Order)**  
**December 15, 2020**  
**9:00 A.M.**

**Supervisors Present:**

Ricky Peterson, Vice-Chair  
Linda Hanson, Secretary  
Grant Nelson, PR&I

**Staff Present:**

Bryan Malone, District Manager  
Barb Molskness, District Coordinator  
Peter Nelson, Water Plan Coordinator  
Bryanna Grefthen, District Technician  
Matthew Sorvig, Resource Technician  
Donna Christianson, Outreach Coordinator  
Jill Fejszes, Farm Bill Biologist  
Nico Bennett, NRCS

**Guest Present:**

ADawn Nelson, Pennington SWCD Supervisor Elect  
John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director  
Matt Fischer, BWSR Board Conservationist  
Neil Peterson, Pennington County Commissioner  
Debra Kiel, Minnesota State Representative  
John Burkel, Minnesota State Representative Elect

**Absent:**

Brenda Szymanski, Chair  
Greg Hilgeman, Treasurer

The meeting was held via Zoom Video Conferencing. Ricky Peterson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

Ricky completed a roll call of all supervisors and staff and asked if there were any visitors joining the meeting. All supervisors present, except for Brenda Szymanski and Greg Hilgeman. All staff present except for Jill Fejszes who joined the meeting late. Guest present, ADawn Nelson, John Jaschke, and Matt Fischer.

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to approve the revised agenda. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to approve the November 17, 2020, meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Barb reviewed the November 2020 Financial Report. Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to approve the November 2020 Financial Report. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to approve payment of the following bills:**

<b>Chase Card Service</b>	<b>\$ 820.63</b>
<b>Verizon</b>	<b>\$ 50.16</b>
<b>Innovative Office Supply</b>	<b>\$ 192.65</b>
<b>TRF Times</b>	<b>\$ 350.00</b>

**All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to amend the expiration date on all Buffer cost-share contracts to 12/31/2021. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to amend contract RLR\_FY20-01 (CD96 Outlet Project) as follows:**

- 1. The cost-share amount authorized will be increased by \$89,246.50 for a total of \$144,262.50. FY2020 Red Lake River WBIF will provide \$16,162.50 and FY16 CWF Red Lake SWCD will provide \$128,100.00.**
- 2. As this project is considered a capital improvement project, the Operation and Maintenance requirements will be increased from 10 years to 25 years.**
- 3. The land occupier's signature on the contract indicates agreement to: Not accept cost-share funds from state sources in excess of 75%, or state and non-state funds that when combined will not exceed 100% of the total cost to establish the conservation practice.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to make a partial payment on Pennington County contract RLR\_FY20-01 in the amount of \$141,974.18 for invoices submitted on the CD96 Outlet Project. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to pay Pennington County \$59,924.50 for invoices submitted for tech and engineering work in the amount of**

**\$29,924.50 and geotechnical work in the amount of \$30,000.00 on the CD96 Outlet Project. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to make the final payment on Pennington County contract CWF16-01 in the amount of \$23,625.00 for the installation of nine SWI's on the CD96-21-16 Project, contingent upon the voucher being corrected to reflect that amount. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to make a partial payment on Pennington County contract RLR\_FY18-01 in the amount of \$15,787.50 for the installation of seven SWI's on the JD25 Project. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to pay the Northland Community & Tech College invoice of \$57,352.12 for drone inventory and mapping from December 2019 – November 2020. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to pay the following percent-based Thief River Grade Stabilization and Cover Crop Implementation cost-share contract:**

**TRSWI\_FY20-02                  Rodney Hoffman                  \$21,000.00**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to make a partial payment on the following percent-based Thief River Grade Stabilization and Cover Crop Implementation cost-share contract:**

**TRSWI\_FY20-03                  Paul Srnsky                  \$ 3,423.54**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

**Bryan discussed the following capital outlay items with the Board:**

- Trimble Unit R12I, accessories, and training - \$35,119.10
- Chevy 1-ton pickup - \$42,356.38
- New copy machine, supplies, and training - \$4,895.00
- Large screen TV
- Office furniture
- Insulated garage doors

**Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to approve the purchase of the Trimble Unit, tabling the rest of the items for now. All in favor, motion carried.**

**The Personnel Committee recommended offering the District Manager position to Peter Nelson. Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to hire Peter Nelson, as the new District Manager, starting December 21, 2020, at \$28.25 per hour. All in favor, motion carried.**

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The Personnel Committee presented their wage recommendations for 2021 to the Board. **Grant made a motion, seconded by Linda to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendations of a 3% wage increase for the District Coordinator, and a \$1.00/hour wage increase for the District Technician, the Resource Technician, and the Outreach Coordinator. All in favor, motion carried.**

Neil Peterson, Pennington County Commissioner, Minnesota State Representative, Deb Kiel, and Minnesota State Representative Elect, John Burkel, joined the Zoom meeting at 10 a.m.

John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director, announced Peter Nelson was chosen as Minnesota's 2020 Outstanding District Employee and a press release would be forthcoming. Everyone congratulated Peter on this well-earned award.

We were very pleased to have Minnesota State Representative Debra Kiel and Minnesota State Representative Elect John Burkel join the Zoom meeting for an informal Q & A discussion. Topics included: budget and capacity funding; new committee assignments for members of the house; the challenge of communicating during the COVID pandemic; SWI installations and the Buffer Law; Watershed Based Implementation Funding as a source of dollars for projects; staff retention; and a possible tour of Hanson's robotic milking facility sometime later this summer. The Board thanked the representatives for listening and sharing their thoughts with us.

Matt Fischer's update included:

- An announcement that the Clean Water Fund application for Phase II of the CD96 Outlet Stabilization Grant has been recommended for funding.
- Information about 1W1P - The Clearwater River Watershed and Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed have both been selected for funding.
- Accolades for the agencies that worked together to create a virtual NW MN Water Festival for fourth grade students in the area. An article about the event was printed in the BWSR December newsletter.
- The need to hire more Technical Service Area (TSA) staff.
- A sincere thank you to Grant Nelson for his eight years of leadership and service on the Pennington SWCD Board. Grant will be missed.
- Welcoming ADawn Nelson, newly elected supervisor, to the Pennington SWCD Board of Supervisors.
- Notification that the first buffer appeal received in the state was from Pennington County.

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Bryan reported on two policy changes that were recommended during the budget training course he recently attended:

1. Keeping the same Treasurer - once a supervisor has been appointed Treasurer, they should remain Treasurer throughout their years of service. This helps maintain stability with the financials.
2. Minimum amount to capitalize an asset – it was recommended to choose either a \$2,500 or a \$5,000 capitalization threshold for fixed asset expenditures.

The Board decided to table this discussion until the January meeting.

The virtual MASWCD Convention was held on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Supervisors attended the meeting via Zoom allowing them to make motions and vote while staff attended via YouTube. Ricky, Greg, and all members of the staff attended virtually. David Horsager was the keynote speaker with a presentation about trust. Of the three resolutions submitted by Pennington SWCD, only the State Cost-share for Farmstead Windbreaks passed. Increased cost-share for well sealing and state cost-share for septic system replacement failed. Paul Krabbenhoft from Clay County was elected the new MASWCD President.

Discussion took place about holding the Planning Meeting virtually this year and moving the date to March. Agenda items discussed were:

- Reorganization of staff and job descriptions
- Introduction of the SWCD history, mission, and staff to the two new County Commissioners
- Review Supervisor responsibilities since we have a new board member
- NRCS structure and programs with new president

The Board decided to table this discussion until the January meeting.

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to change the date and time of the Pennington SWCD Board of Supervisors Meeting to the third Thursday of each month at 10 a.m., starting January of 2021. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Linda made a motion, seconded by Grant to use the following pricing guide for tree sales this year:**

- **Conifer trees - \$55.00 for a bundle of 25.**
- **All other trees and shrubs - \$45.00 for a bundle of 25.**
- **Black Hills Spruce pots will stay the same at \$12.00 per pot.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

Employee reports were reviewed.

NRCS report was reviewed.

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The NW MN Virtual Water Festival article printed in the BWSR December newsletter was reviewed.

The Board thanked Bryan Malone for all his work and leadership managing the Pennington SWCD the last twenty-two years.

The Board thanked Grant Nelson for his service, leadership, and guidance on the Pennington SWCD Board of Supervisors the past eight years.

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, at 10 a.m., via Zoom.

Ricky adjourned the meeting at 12:49 p.m.

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Linda Hanson, Secretary