

Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts

March 30, 2016

Embassy Suites, St. Paul

Attending: Larry Kuseske, Darrel Ellefson, Ruth Schaefer, Perry Forster, Craig Leiser, Leland Coe, Jerome Deal, Linda Vavra, Gene Tiedemann, Kevin Bigalke, Madeleine Bohn, Ray Bohn, Peg Bohn

President Lee Coe called the meeting to order.

The agenda was amended to allow time for Pheasants Forever under new business. Move to approve as amended by Perry Forster. Second by Larry Kuseske. Approved.

The minutes of the December 2 meeting were approved. Perry Forster voiced his abstention because he was not present at this board meeting. Move to approve by Craig Leiser. Second by Darrel Ellefson. Approved.

The minutes of the December 5 meeting were approved noting the Forster abstention. Motion by Jerome Deal. Second by Craig Leiser. Approved.

The minutes of the January 26 meeting were amended to include a statement about a CD. Motion by Craig Leiser. Second by Linda Vavra. Approved. It should be noted that the proposed summer tour dates were changed because of hotel space limitations.

Treasurer's Report – Craig Leiser reported on account balances. There were no complaints over the dues increase to a maximum of \$4,000.

Ruth Schaefer proposed contributing \$1,000 to the AIS Symposium in October. Motion to contribute by Perry Forster. Second by Jerome Deal. Approved.

President's Report: President Lee Coe noted he has attended two Local Government Round Table meetings. His activities have been somewhat limited by knee replacement surgery.

Coordinator's Report: Ray Bohn discussed the online registration research efforts. It was determined that GoDaddy best serves MAWD's registration process and is the most cost effective.

Fifty percent of dues have been paid to date.

The Summer Tour dates proposed at the January meeting were changed because of Steamboat Days in Winona. There were no hotel rooms available in the area. Dates have been set for June 22-24. Hotel rooms have been reserved at the Plaza Hotel and the Holiday Inn Express. The two share a parking lot. Conference rooms and breakfast will be served at the Plaza and the adjoining Green Mill.

Bohn introduced Maddy Bohn who has been hired to update MAWD on social media. She has developed a Facebook page and has 59 Twitter followers. Updates on legislative events will be tweeted and Facebook messages will update friends on watershed happenings across the state.

Bohn gave a legislative update. The buffer issue will dominate the legislative agenda for MAWD.

Kevin Bigalke reported on the ADA group. The administrators completed a survey and found that training is the greatest need. Training would help administrators to become more effective. They found it would be helpful if managers were more aware of the reporting required by administrators.

Kevin has been talking with Maddy and have created social media updates on what the administrators are doing. The password protected area of the website is found not to be useful to administrators. ADA recommends regional training for mangers, especially new managers.

CraigLeiser reported on the strategic planning committee. He started with three-page document for the strategic plan after the first of January: He is now on its fifth version. He will polish it up and will send it out this afternoon. He wants to assign people to different tasks. There were eight people at his strategic planning meeting last night. Eight/ten more pages were added. The committee gathered good info and good ideas. We are moving in the right direction. He wants to add an event at the end of October to discuss with it over with the board and if we agree we can circulate to everyone so we can vote on it in December at our annual meeting.

Also, copy with colors on it. There will be accompanying review and revising of the bylaws. One example, the bylaws have missed three watershed districts. Kevin and Craig went over it yesterday. Put all of these things together.

Bohn noted the need to be careful with planning and implementation. Need to review with Bylaws that only state the goal; implementation comes later. Ray is concerned and watching out for what the board does. Could be encroaching on duties of the Bylaws committee. He stated, "We have a committee structure and we need the structure to be adhered to".

Craig found areas we had conflict and identified them. Bylaws has to bring its recommendations before the board and to the membership. Areas may be in conflict. I.e. missing three WDs. Craig will pass on needed clarifications/changes/updates to the chair of the bylaws committee.

Perry Forster and Mary Texer conducted a survey for the committee. Just over 100 surveys have been returned out of 240 possible to submit.

A chart of survey results was submitted.

Perry Forster and Matt Moore will be working on the annual meeting. The call for the proposals for workshops/seminars to be submitted earlier and suggested the conference have a theme. The theme idea appears to be very controversial.

Old Business:

Local Government Roundtable –The buffer law and drainage laws between watershed districts and counties is the greatest concern this legislative session.

Governor's Water Summit. Kevin Bigalke noted the public was invited. Metro WD districts were there and lots of county commissioners. It was disturbing about protesters crashing the meeting with no security and no staff. Dayton handled it well: He turned around and said he could handle the protesters and that he would talk to them later – they just needed to go to another room and he would talk to them. The split-out groups were too confusing; too close together; talking too loudly and made the whole room so uncomfortable.

Linda Vavra said it was hard to gain the attention of others not in the ag group. The Red River is very good at dealing with water issues and in the metro area not many understand problems unique to

agricultural areas. Buffer strips can take too much land out of production and doing it will kill their income.

Jerome Deal said it was not a surprise to the farmers about the buffer requirements: It was the private ditches that could require buffers that really threw them.

New Business:

The board agreed to pay the membership fee to the Viewer's Association. Darrel and Larry first/seconded motion to pay this. Motion passed.

Ray – Discussed the letter to support proposed CREP program by the governor. Submitted with some signatures and added more signatures. Watershed Districts already involved in it. Discussed – why nail down \$30 million to give to CREP? We should support it and let the funding shake things out. Enough WD on it so maybe we don't need to add our name – we support RIM and CREP. Linda – won't support Pheasants because in her area a lot of land taken out of production. Darryl said he opposed it, too. No support forwarded to Pheasants Forever.

Thirty Lakes Watershed District in the Nisswa area is going out of business. There will be a public hearing to go out of the business.

The district is in one county and the county has taken over what they do so they don't have anything to do. Thomas said he thinks they will do even more by letting the county take it over.

Thirty Lakes did a lot when Tom Ebnet was on the board but now they are rather dormant. BWSR will likely approve dissolving the district when the request is received.

Board members reported on their local activities.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25. Motion by Jerome Deal. Second by Darrel Ellefson. Approved.