

Board of Managers

**JJ Hamre.-Beltrami Stuart Christian-Erskine Roger Hanson-Beltrami Scott Balstad-Fosston Phillip Swenson-Fertile
Daniel Wilkens-Administrator April Swenby-Administrative Assistant**

SAND HILL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 15, 2017

Attendance: Chairman Todahl called the November 15, 2017 meeting of the Sand Hill Advisory Committee (SHAC) to order at 8:00 a.m. at Erickson's Smokehouse in Fertile, MN. Other advisory members present were Clayton Bartz, Aaron Iverson, Nicole Berndt, Kenny Pederson Wayne Goeken, Scott Tollefson, and Steve Taylor. Others in attendance were Jerry Jacobson – Polk County Commissioner, Phillip Swenson -Sand Hill River Watershed District, Daniel Wilkens - Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant.

Annual Reorganization: The Annual Organization of the SHAC was conducted. Chairman Todahl turned the meeting over to Tollefson who asked for nominations for Chairman of the SHAC. Kenny Pederson nominated Jim Todahl for Chairman. Nominations were called for three times by Tollefson. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Jim Todahl for Chairman by Kenny Pederson, **Seconded** by Jerry Jacobson, **Carried**. Tollefson returned the chair to Jim Todahl.

Minutes: A **Motion** to approve the minutes from November 23, 2016 was made by committee member Tollefson, **Seconded** by committee member Pederson, **Carried**.

Board Reappointments: Chairman Todahl informed the committee that two seats are up for reappointment in January and four names have been presented as people interested in serving on the Sand Hill River Watershed District Board and they include Clayton Bartz, Dan Vesledahl, Gerald Paulson, and Phillip Swenson. Chairman Todahl stated that the term of Scott Balstad is up for reappointment on January 1, 2018. Discussion for filling his position was held. Of the four names presented, Clayton Bartz, a member of the Advisory Committee for several years is the only candidate who represents the area that Balstad represents. Bartz has been a member of the committee for the past couple of years in preparation to replace Balstad. A **Motion** was made by committee member Tollefson to recommend Clayton Bartz to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Goeken, **Carried**.

The term of Phillip Swenson was also up for reappointment on January 1, 2018. The committee discussed the strengths of each of the remaining candidates and discussed the future projects and direction of the district. Swenson has been a good standing manager for six years (two terms) and has proven he is available and willing to serve and attends multiple meetings and events each month.

Gerald Paulson informed the county commissioners of his interest in serving on the board. Paulson was unknown to the Advisory Committee and did not express his interest to the advisory committee. Wilkens informed the committee that over the past six months Paulson has attended every watershed meeting and has an interest in the area of the district near the Bear Park Structure. Like Swenson, Paulson has also shown willingness and has proven he is available to serve as he diligently already attends the watershed meetings.

Dan Vesledahl was presented as a key landowner in the Vesledahl Wetland Mitigation Project. A brief history of the project was given informing the committee of the obstacles the district faces towards making a legal ditch system in the area, given the time constraints between now and the land sale by MnDOT. Vesledahl diligently attends watershed meetings pertaining to that project and has proven he is outspoken and has a vast knowledge of ag related subjects. The time sensitive nature relating to the fund balance of Vesledahl project and the authorization given to use the balance toward the preliminary work for making it a legal ditch system was discussed. The opportunity to have a direct liaison between the board and the landowners would be of substantial benefit towards the future drainage needs of the area, especially when communicating with area landowners.

Vesledahl is also businessman and owns Minkota Technologies. It was recognized that a businessman would be an asset to the district. His technology background was an added bonus and would provide extra guidance and advice for the technology needs of the district in the future, especially as expansion and collaboration with the RRWMB is currently being discussed.

Swenson was noted for six years of service and was recognized with experience; however, the committee felt that going forward, Vesledahl would serve as an asset to the district relating to the prospective projects and upcoming building expansion of the district. A **Motion** was made Goeken to recommend Dan Vesledahl for appointment to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Kenny Pederson, **Carried**.

SHRWD Manager Evaluations: Swenby and Wilkens answered questions regarding the existing managers that serve the district.

SHAC Member List: The committee welcomed new members, Aaron Iverson, Kenny Pederson and Nicole Berndt to the committee.

Riverwatch: Goeken has since retired from the International Water Institute and was unable to report on the Riverwatch program. Goeken is instrumental in the recreation on the Sand Hill River and has volunteered to help keep the river free of debris. The district has earmarked \$4,000 towards river clean up in 2017. In addition, the Sand Hill was selected by the Conservation Corp as a pilot project and in June, a portion of the river was cleared beginning Allen Erickson's home on the NE end of Fertile.

District Activities: Administrator Wilkens distributed a November treasurer's report and the 2016 Annual report. The riffles project was discussed at length and the shared effort between the district and the Soil and Water districts was commended. The committee reviewed the annual report, discussed highlights and multitude of grant monies received in 2016.

District Expansion: The committee was briefed on the proposed expansion of the watershed district building and the possibility of sharing space in the future due the RRWMB reorganization.

Chairman Todahl recalled the last time the district invested money into the district building and noted it was over 20 years ago. If broken down, the money invested is very little on an annual basis and felt the district has taken a proactive role in conserving tax payer dollars. The committee agreed that expansion of the building is a project that would be of minimal cost when over the long term and would provide growth and room for opportunity for the Sand Hill River Watershed District. The committee agreed the timing to expand comes with great opportunities and it was unanimous that sharing space with the RRWMB would be of great benefit to both parties.

The committee encouraged the Sand Hill board to plan for expansion and opportunities when designing the new addition, keeping in mind handicapped accessibility and bathrooms, offices, storage, kitchen space and expanded meeting space.

Phillip Swenson informed the committee that he suggested to the board at the last meeting a review of the next door building just to the south of the Sand Hill office in lieu of adding onto the current space. Swenson indicated that the empty building is accessible and is adjacent to the current office, needing only an opening between the two building to connect as another option.

Adjournment: The next meeting of the SHAC will be at the call of the chair as needed. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 AM.

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant