



Stillwater Conservation District

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September 10th, 2024 - MINUTES

Location: USDA Service Center Conference Room (334 N. 9th Street, Columbus, MT)

Meeting called to order by: **Bob** at **6:05pm**

Supervisors Present: Robert Van Oosten (*Chairman*), Noel Keogh (*Vice Chairman*), Butch Behrent (*Treasurer*), Ben Walker (*Urban Supervisor*), Nathan Jones (*Urban Supervisor*), Darryl Thompson (*Associate Member*)

Supervisors Approved Absent: Steve Story (*Secretary*)

Others Present: Sharon Flemetis (*District Admin*), Celeste Barnett (*310/Volunteer Coordinator*), Garrett Larson (NRCS),

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from August 6th, 2024 Meeting: **Ben Seconded: Nate**

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved

Public Comment

* 3 Minute Limit * The Public will conduct themselves in a professional manner or be asked to leave.*

NONE

REPORTS

Robert "Bob" Van Oosten – Planning Board is now also the Zoning Board and the Board of Adjustment. At a meeting on 9/4 they resolved the Battle Butte Solar Farm which will be 2 – 65 MW Phases

Butch Behrent – The SVWC has started debris removal, the Gala went well

Steve Story – Absent

Darryl Thompson – None

Noel Keogh– SVWC Gala was well attended, they ran out of meat! Weed Pull was successful with 7 boats and 25 people; they pulled about 30 bags of knapweed. It was very evident that the work done before the flood was very helpful or it would be much worse now.

Ben Walker– Still needs contact & meeting info for the Columbus Planning Board

Nate Jones – None

Garrett Larson– NRCS has been working with FSA on grassland CRP; They had 11 operations accepted, 2 dropped out and they have 3 weeks to get the remaining 9 ready and signed off on. Cedar will be starting again on Ventenata. Tree inventories are ongoing.

Sharon Flemetis – Met with EPA & USACE reps about legal issue involving a contractor. EPA has requested information from Sharon on this matter; Board is in favor of Sharon helping.

On 9/19/24 Sharon & Celeste would like to visit the Gallatin CD office in Manhattan to see how they streamline their 310 process and learn about their outreach programs.

Motion to approve and pay for travel: Noel Second: Ben Discussion: Board would like photos of their community garden presented at next meeting Vote: Approved

Ordered name tags for all board members & staff, so they can be worn at the area meeting. Sharon and Celeste would like pullovers with the SCD logo and their names on them, they will pay for them themselves. *Nate Jones offers to pay for them.* Ordering updated business cards for Sharon, and cards for Celeste

Starting to plan a meeting in January for all Ditch Users.

Celeste Barnett – None

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Presented by Sharon Flemetis: **Tabled**

Motion:

Seconded:

Discussion:

Vote:

GRANT UPDATES

EWP- No extension yet, but have asked for it; Stillwater project construction complete

Fromberg – Waiting on the Engineer to complete the design on a change order. Fromberg FFA will volunteer to help with the planting.

Bitterman & Ziegler – Bitterman unhappy with her project. Doesn't think the yard was repaired exactly to what it was before. Unhappy with how the project survived June 2024s 100 year flood. EWP only protects to the 25 year flood. Sharon & Engineer will be visiting tomorrow & get a plan.

We have remaining TA funds available. In April Sharon offered to cut her EWP rate to \$25 an hour to spread out the funds we did have. Now that the funds are available, she would like her rate to go back to the previous amount of \$40 an hour retro-active to April when it changed.

Motion to retro-pay Sharon from April 2024 at \$40 per hour for her EWP time up to the NRCS funds available: Nate Seconded: Noel Discussion: Right to privacy exceeds the public's right to know and discussion was closed. Meeting was re-opened for the Vote: Approved

Motion for clarification of the March 2024 minutes the District Admin's pay rate shall be \$45 for time spent on the current RRG, Forestry, and ARPA grants, future grants will be discussed as needed. EWP time shall be paid at the rate of \$40 per hour. For all regular CD business the rate shall

be \$25 per hour: Nate Seconded: Noel Discussion: Right to privacy exceeds the public's right to know and discussion was closed. Meeting was re-opened for the Vote: Approved

Mendenhall – Still waiting for final as-builts to complete financials

Forestry ERLA – Moving forward, concerned about having enough TA money as funds are almost exhausted and design is only at 60%

ARPA Danford/ARPA Orchard- Danford- will have the notice to proceed on October 1st, contractor will have 45 days to complete the job. Orchard- Landowner is pushing to get it completed but the Engineer still has not finished the design. Asked for an extension for both projects funding until 6/1/2025

NEW BUSINESS

Accountability Assessment – Reviewed & completed the assessment; Page 2 regarding the audit requirements, we have been searching but have yet to find someone willing to do it; Page 3 first bracket regarding the bonds, we do not do these.

Area Meeting – Resolutions – Garrett helped to explain the resolution to give hiring authority back to the state. At the area meeting these will be presented, and questions can be answered. No board action needed, passed out all the information for the board members to go over and consider.

Bridger Plant Materials Tour- Sharon attended one during the NCDEA Flood tour and felt that they have made a lot of positive changes in the last 5 years. Board would like to put together a tour for anyone interested. Dates will be discussed in the future

Bitterman Public Document Request – Board approved to release the requested documents and waive the fee as they would be part of her EWP completion packet.

Haven's Construction Copyright Complaint – Mr. Havens did not attend the meeting, the board has no concerns, no further action will be taken.

Contractors List – Celeste will send out emails to current Contractors on the list and make social media posts to update this list that was started during EWP. Any Contractor that wants to will be included on the list, but we will make a local to Stillwater County section. The list will include a disclaimer that we do not endorse any contractor, and contractors not on the list may also be used, it is purely for the information of those applying for a 310 permit and inquiring about possible Contractors.

OLD BUSINESS

NACD TOUR – They loved our presentation and bus tour; we received a thank you card.

Storage Shed – Noel would like to suggest if we purchase a metal container we offer the local high school art class to paint a conservation themed mural on the side. Ben will look into pricing on

containers. We will explore necessary modifications to prevent rodents and moisture issues to consider in our budget.

Rain Barrel Workshop - Tabled

310 APPLICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

APPL. #	Name	Stream	Project	Rec'd	Decision
23-072	Parker	Stillwater	Extension Request Bank Stabilization	8/19/2024	Motion to extend for 1 year: Noel Seconded: Nate Discussion: None Vote: Approved
23-039	Wilcox	Stillwater	Extension Request Bank Stabilization	8/20/2024	Motion to extend for 1 year: Butch Seconded: Nate Discussion: None Vote: Approved
24-033M	KEM Ditch	Rosebud	Maintenance Request	8/20/2024	Motion to approve for 5 years: Noel Seconded: Nate Discussion: None Vote: Approved
24-034E	Big Ditch	Yellowstone	Emergency Work	8/22/2024	Motion to Approve: Butch Seconded: Noel Discussion: None Vote: Approved
24-035E	Thompson	Stillwater	Emergency Cleanout	8/28/2024	Motion to Approve: Noel Seconded: Nate Discussion: None Vote: Approved
34-036M	Scott Ditch	Stillwater	Maintenance with Blocks	8/28/24	Motion to Approve for 10 years: Noel Seconded: Nate Discussion: None Vote: Approved -Butch Abstained

VIOLATIONS/COMPLAINTS

#23-088 D4 Properties – Noel & Sharon inspected the completed project this afternoon. They feel like the slope matches well and the rock placement is fine. Noel did notice a lot of weeds around and the need to revegetate the disturbed areas.

Motion to approve the project has been completed per the design and suggest that they practice weed control and revegetate the disturbed areas.: Nate Seconded: Butch
Discussion: None Vote: Approved

#23-052V **Judy Krone** – Wanting to get some drone footage now that the water is low; still working with the lawyer on the next steps

#23-064V **Montana Rail Link** & #23-070V **Montana Rail Link** – Letter has been drafted; needs to be finalized and sent.

#24-025C **John Skiles** – NRCS re-inspected and the matter is closed

Save The Dates

September 26, 2024 - Site Inspections

October 1, 2024 - Monthly Board Meeting 6pm

October 4, 2024 – AREA IV MEETING

October 14, 2024 – Columbus Day

October 31, 2024 - Site Inspections

November 5, 2024 - Monthly Board Meeting 6pm

November 11, 2024 – Veterans Day

November 28, 2024 – Thanksgiving




Area IV
Annual Meeting
October 3rd, 2024
Columbus MT

Hosted by:


MEETING ADJOURNED by Chairman at: 9:20pm

Minutes Approved on:

Minutes Approved By  Date: 10/1/24

310 Applications must be received by 12pm seven days prior to the meeting and have been inspected to be reviewed. Agenda items must be submitted to the CD Office by Noon the Monday before the scheduled meeting. Agendas are available at the CD Office upon request and at stillwatercd.org once finalized. All meetings of the CD are open to the public. Meetings may be recorded by the district for note taking purposes and then will be destroyed once minutes are approved. Once approved the minutes will be available at stillwatercd.org and the County Clerk and Records Office.