

Pomme de Terre River Association
Joint Powers Board
MEETING MINUTES
March 8, 2024 9 a.m.
Morris Fire Hall

Chair Mahoney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Larry Mahoney, Lee Rogness, Dan Morrill, Alan Golden, Paul Barsness, Keith Englund, Rod Wenstrom, Ken Johnson, Paul Groneberg, Jeff Klages. Others present: Jared House, Interim Watershed Coordinator; Aaron Larsen, TAC Chair; Pete Waller, BWSR; Chris Staebler, Stevens SWCD.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved as amended on a motion by Alan Golden and second by Paul Barsness. Passed unanimously.

Agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Paul Barsness and second by Dan Morrill.

Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved on a motion by Paul Groneberg and second by Alan Golden.

Bills to pay of \$34.94 were unanimously approved on a motion by Paul Barsness and second by Lee Rogness.

PDTRA Business

The 2021 WBIF grant is close to being spent. All project funding is encumbered and all staff time will be paid out after Quarter 1 2024. Jared and Chris hope to have grant activity completed and final grant reporting submitted by the time Jared's watershed coordination contract expires at the end of April.

Jared also gave a summary of activity within the 2023 WBIF grant, including how the supplemental funding requested will be spent. Jeff Klages moved to approve the supplemental funding amendment to the 2023 WBIF grant when it is received by BWSR. Passed unanimously.

Perkins Lakes Dam Modification Contract between the MN DNR and PDTRA has been executed (\$1M reimbursable). We need to choose a contractor, and Jared has been talking with HEI regarding project management. He presented a copy of the proposed contract with HEI, which includes \$163,000 for project management from permitting to construction. The DNR requested we hire a project manager for this work. HEI will periodically invoice and are prepared to wait for our reimbursement from the DNR before being paid. Paul Groneberg moved and Keith Englund seconded to contract with HEI for project management of this dam modification. Passed unanimously.

Crissy Dam Modification Contract has been given a letter of recommendation by the City of Morris. Stevens SWCD has been working with Jared, the City of Morris, and the DNR regarding a plan for removal of this dam. Jared showed some illustrations of the project details. The grant would include \$2M of reimbursable funding, including survey work. Within the next few months, we should know whether or not we are awarded this grant and it will be brought to the board for approval.

Watershed Coordinator Contract for Services

Jared, Chris and Matt have been working on a Contract for Services between Stevens SWCD and the PDTRA for the hire of a watershed coordinator. The draft has been sent to LGUs for review. Jared reviewed contract language and the need for a contract in place prior to hiring, but also the need for a cancellation clause if an acceptable hire is not made prior to Jared's watershed coordinator contract expiration. The PDTRA could also terminate the contract early if grant funding is not available. If a hire is made, the contract would expire 12-31-27, which is when the next round of funding would expire. Stevens will invoice the PDTRA for hours worked on watershed coordination and the work will be funded by WBIF grants. Jared gave a summary of the estimated billing rate/annual cost for a full time coordinator and reviewed current funding available for this position. There is approximately \$92,000 which could be used over the next 6 months or so, prior to receipt of the next grant, so the expectation is that we would have enough to fund/hire the position. Paul Barsness moved to approve the Contract for Services with Stevens SWCD, contingent on approval/review by the Stevens County Attorney. Second by Keith Englund. Passed unanimously.

TAC Report

Some new impairments were found in the last MPCA stressor ID. The TAC is working on a pilot grant offering \$100 per acre incentives for enrolling in Continuous CRP. There is a batching period open now, until approximately June.

Agency Reports

Pete Waller, BWSR, mentioned the next round of WBIF funding which will be available for request as of July 1, 2024. The PDTRA TAC's hope is to submit the request in June and have funding available in July or August. Soil Health staff time funding was not requested by the PDTRA but some of the 6 districts did separately. \$17M was requested and in March, successful applicants will be notified. Phase 2 (project funding) will begin shortly after that.

Closing

The next meeting will be held April 12 at 8:30 a.m.

The PDT soil health team will have a meeting March 21 at 9:00 a.m. at Old #1 in Morris featuring a presentation and discussions on strip till, cover crops, etc. Jared will distribute the flyer.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Ennen, Secretary/Treasurer