

Joint Counties Natural Resources Board
January 27, 2020
Beltrami County Conference Room
10:00 AM

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioners:

Wayne Skoe - Koochiching	Mark Larson - Clearwater
Gary Kiesow – Marshall	Russell Walker Roseau
Scott McCollum - Mahnomen	Reed Olson - Beltrami

Absent: Buck Nordlof – Lake of the Woods Rich Courtemanche - Aitkin

DNR: None

BSWR: Chad Severts – BSWR Board Conservationist

Guest: Pete Aube – Greater Bemidji Economic Development & Forest Resource Council

Other: Kallie Briggs; Coordinator

Call to Order: Chairman Commissioner Skoe called the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board to order at 10:00 AM on Monday, February 27, 2020 in the Beltrami County Conference Room.

Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda: Motion by Kiesow, second by Walker to approve the agenda with ambulance shortage under New Business. Motion carried unanimously.

Guest: Pete was invited to the meeting to talk about fiber and residual markets. He is the on the Bemidji Economic Development Board and the Forest Resource Council. He retired from Potlach 3 years ago and helped to build the largest sawmill in Minnesota.

Pete told the Board that the residual market is in crisis. In the last 7 years MN has lost 1.5 million in fiber consumption capacity. One half of the core ends up as chips, sawdust, lumber, etc. The Forestry Industry and Council would like to see the whole forest (trees) used, not just half of it. This has a dramatic effect on the wood product industries. Since 2007 Minnesota has lost 150 wood product businesses and almost all of those are sawmills who have employed people. Most pulp and paper mills compete globally and with larger mills.

Bemidji is looking to Highland Pellets from International Falls for guidance as they are trying to build a pellet plant. If they can build a plant in Minnesota, the pellets could be shipped globally. There are 45 pellet plants in the United States and over half of the pellets are being shipped overseas. They have some obstacles to overcome such as: being a long way from a port and a need for the Senate to allocate a production incentive. There is a Bill in place in the Senate (6F1585) that would provide 2.5 million dollars per year which could make all the difference in this project coming to fruition. The economic impact would be \$56 million per year. Twenty-five million as a direct effect and \$20.5 million as an indirect effect. If the Bill is signed the project could be started in 2021.

Minutes: Motion by Walker, second by Larson to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Note: There was not a quorum for the November 25, 2019 meeting.

Election of Officers:

- **Chair:** Wayne Skoe was nominated with no other names submitted. After 3 calls for additional nominations, a motion was made by Kiesow, second by Larson to close nominations and elect Wayne Skoe as Chair. A unanimous ballot was cast.
- **Vice-Chair:** Roger Falk was nominated as Vice-Chair. After 3 calls for other nominations, a motion was made by Larson, second by Olson to cast a white ballot and declare Roger Falk as Vice-Chair. A unanimous ballot was cast.

Financial Discussions:

- Administration/Office Expenses: Motion by Walker, second by Kiesow to approve the *October/November* administration/office and meeting expenses. Motion carried unanimously.
- Administration/office Expenses: Motion by Olson, second by McCollum to approve the *December/January* administration/office and meeting expenses. Motion carried unanimously.
- Account Activity Report: Motion was made by Kiesow, second by Walker to approve the January Account Activity Report that was compiled by Marshall County and distributed by Coordinator Briggs. Motion carried unanimously.
- Membership Billing: The billing for the 2020 membership dues has been sent out to the membership counties. Each Commissioner should have received a copy of the invoice.

Old Business:

- Administrative Contract: Kallie presented the administrative contract between herself and the JCNR Board. She said there has not been a change in the contract since 2015 and respectfully requested the Board consider raising her per hour salary and offered to leave the room. After some Board discussion and questions from the Board, a motion was made. **Motion by Larson, second by Walker to approve the 2020 administrative contract with \$5 an hour increase.** Note: That brings the per hour rate to \$40.
- 2020 Meeting Dates: The Board agreed on the meeting dates for 2020. All meetings will be the 4th Monday of the month except for May which will be the 3rd Monday due to the Memorial s

BSWR Update: Chad Severts from BSWR Soil and Water was at the meeting to represent BSWR. In January the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BSWR) approved \$13.9 million in Clean Water Fund grants to improve water quality in streams, lakes and groundwater across the state.

Chad shared with the Board maps regarding the 2020-21 Clean Water Fund Watershed-based Implementation Funding Program. This is a comprehensive watershed management plan for areas who must approve a workplan by June 30, 2021. A copy of the maps detailing the projects, practices and recommended funding is on file.

New Business:

- 1st Responders: Skoe asked the other board members if their counties were having problems with finding and keeping ambulance help and 1st responders. They said there is a state problem with counties struggling to provide services and run the risk of certain services going away as some already are running with only EMT's and no paramedics. Other board members have not had this problem yet.

DNR Update: There was no DNR update.

Next Meeting Date: The next scheduled meeting will be on Monday, March 23, 2020. Kallie will try to get a someone to speak on noxious weeds.

Adjourn: Chair Skoe declared the meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Minutes submitted by Kallie Briggs-Administrative Coordinator