The annual meeting of the Richland County Soils Committee was held in the basement of the Richland County Law Enforcement Center, Wahpeton on Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

Attendance:

In attendance were the following Soils Committee Members: David Fixen, District 1; Terry Spelhaug, District 2; Selmer Jordheim, District 3; Paul Hendrickson, District 4; Craig Pausch, District 6; Ken Dozak, District 7; Doug Biewer, District 8; Dan Herding, District 9. No member present from District 5. Alternates present were Jim Moffet, District 4; Randy Mauch, District 6; Doug Novotny, District 8; Gordie Luick, District 9.

Attendees present were Sandy Fossum, Richland County Tax & Property Supervisor. Rick Score, Tax & Property Office. Chris DeVeries, Tax & Property Office. Richland County Commissioner, Dan Thompson; Richland County Commissioner, Sid Berg. Keith Anderson, NRCS- Fargo; Dwayne Sanders, NRCS- Fargo; Andrew Braaten, Barney, Allan Weber, Lidgerwood.

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by President Ken Dozak. Roll call was taken by District. Alternates from districts where the member was not present were appointed as voting members for the meeting.

Election of officers was held. Motion by Terry Spelhaug, 2nd by Doug Biewer to cast a unanimous ballot for Ken Dozak as Chairman. MC. Motion by Dave Fixen 2nd Doug Biewer to cast a unanimous for Dan Herding as Vice Chairman. MC

Motion by Craig Pausch seconded by Dan Herding to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2014 meeting MC

Sandy stressed the need for a policy from the soils committee as how to handle tiled ground. After much discussion the soils committee agreed to do a gradual decrease of wet modifiers on tiled ground by 10% a year until the modifier is depleted. This will take a maximum of three years. It was also stressed that the tax director would need to rely on local assessors and township boards to help us identify tiled ground.
Motion by Craig Pausch, 2nd by Doug Biewer, to remove modifiers in 10% increments until modifier is gone which may take 3 years. MC

The board reviewed the soil type complaint filed by Ione Eckre. The soils board decided no action was needed do to the fact the soil type in question was reverted back to the old soils system after the complaint was filed.

Mike Forster- Doug Biewer discussed the handouts that Mike Forster had presented for the soils committee to review. Doug discussed the differences in soil PI’s in the south western part of the County, along the western side, and along the shore-line of Lake Agassi, with the same PI’s in other parts of the County. Selmer & Doug are to get soil types that are affected in this area to Sandy and she will forward to Keith Anderson for review. This is to be addressed at next year’s meeting.

Sandy reviewed the crop land pricing and the PI’s for the coming year. Sandy handed out fact sheets showing Richland ag-land value was to be at for the coming year. Sandy mentioned that there could be a possible 5% increase across the board if there wasn’t much soil modification done for the year 2015.

After Sandy’s review a motion by Dan Herding 2nd by Doug Biewer to stay with the old soil PI system now in place and go with the tentative 5% across the board increase. MC

Andrew Braaten asked Sandy how the current PI system works and how it was arrived at. She explained how the current system and the PI’s are used. Andrew then read a statement which is attached to this report.

Discussion was held on meeting twice a year. Motion by Dave Fixen 2nd by Doug Biewer to leave it up to the Tax Director along the Soil Committee Chairman to decide if a 2nd meeting should be held during the year. MC

No further business. Motion by Selmer Jordheim, 2nd by Terry Spelhaug to adjourn the meeting. MC meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM

Submitted by,

Sandy Fossum, Secretary Soils Committee

Dated January 14, 2015
Topic: Richland County Commission reverses decision to use the statewide Productivity Index Numbers

The Richland County Assessor’s office for the past few years has been warning the Richland County Soils Committee, and the Richland County Board of Commissioners, that the Productivity Index Numbers that Richland County uses cannot be backed up by any science, or how they were formulated.

The Richland County Board of Commissioners did accept the Richland County Assessor’s and the Richland County Soils Committee’s recommendation to use the NRCS Productivity Index numbers that are used statewide. Shortly after this action was taken, the Richland County Board of Commissioners brought this issue forward yet again, and reversed their decision. Was this on the board agenda for action at the meeting?

Richland County is either the only county, or one of very few, that is using their own PI numbers. So, this puts Richland County in a strange position statewide. How does the North Dakota State Board of Equalization compare the PI’s from Richland County, the numbers that cannot be substantiated, with the other 52 counties who use NRCS PI’s?

The Richland County Board of Commissioners, knowing that the numbers they are using are at risk of challenges, continue to disregard the input from the Richland County Assessor and the Richland County Soils Committee.