



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
December 8, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of December 8, 2021, was held via Zoom web conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/RXL7dcqox2Q>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

Larry Swope, President
Cliff Aichinger, Vice President
Dianne Ward, Treasurer
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary
Val Eisele, Manager

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Swope at 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:00:09)

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to approve the agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (0:00:40)

- A. Approval of Minutes from November 3, 2021
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 21-31 – RWMWD 2022 CIP Maintenance and Repairs
 - ii. 21-32 – Rooney 2nd Addition – White Bear Lake
 - iii. 21-33 – Owasso Warehouse – Little Canada
- D. 2022 BMP Service Agreement – Washington Conservation District

E. 2022 BMP Service Agreement – Ramsey County

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (0:01:12)

There were none.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (0:01:22)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During November, 20 notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (4), install/maintain perimeter control (3), install/maintain construction entrance (1), sweep streets (4), stabilize exposed soils (2), contain liquid/solid waste materials (1), remove discharged sediment (1), protect/maintain permanent BMPs (2), install up-gradient BMPs (1), and install/maintain energy dissipation (1).

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (0:02:36)

A. Applications - None

B. Budget Status Update

No comments.

C. 2021 Program Overview and 2022 Program Review and Approval

Paige Ahlborg stated that 41 projects were approved, which is slightly lower than the previous year. She commented that there were a lot of smaller residential projects perhaps related to the pandemic as well as the drought conditions. She noted that there are two large projects that were planning to apply this year but will be applying in the next few months. She provided details on the 2021 project allocation as well as statistics for the program since its inception.

Manager Eisele asked if some cities do a better job educating its residents about the program.

Paige Ahlborg noted that many of the cities are great about sharing information about the program. She noted that some cities such as Saint Paul are harder because they are so large and there are transitions in staff.

Paige Ahlborg provided additional overview of the 2021 program including the number of projects per subwatershed.

Manager Aichinger commented that he is impressed with the even spread of projects throughout the District and that there is not a concentration of projects in areas.

Paige Ahlborg identified the locations of the 2021 projects and reviewed details on the grant inspections completed. She noted that the inspections and maintenance grant program has done a good job in ensuring project have good inspection grades. She highlighted different projects including the Snail Lake Shoreline Restoration, Twin Lake Shoreline Restoration, Lake Owasso Shoreline Restoration, BMP Maintenance Program, and CAC Assistance. She provided a sample of praise received from a resident that participated in the program. She also provided details on the following Targeted Retrofit Projects; St. Rose of Lima and North St. Paul Target. She highlighted proposed 2022 projects and stated that no changes are proposed for the priority subwatershed areas. She stated that she has received a number of requests from cities to complete additional street sweeping. She asked if the Board would be supportive of Barr identifying priority areas where street sweeping assistance could be offered.

Tina Carstens stated that there could be a built-in pilot in Woodbury as the South Washington Watershed District is working with them to identify priority areas for street sweeping in Woodbury. She noted that there could be an opportunity to partner with that watershed on the pilot.

Manager Aichinger confirmed that he would be interested in that, noting that the capacity is typically related to equipment and staffing of cities.

Manager Skinner agreed and did not think additional study is needed to support street sweeping assistance. She stated that she would even support the purchase of equipment for the District.

Tina Carstens stated that the other city is considering purchase of street sweeping equipment and provided funding for additional staff, as those seem to be the constraint for Woodbury.

Manager Aichinger stated that there is benefit in sweeping in priority areas. He stated that most cities do not have the personnel to operate the new equipment. He noted that the problem with loaning equipment to cities is that the cities would all want the equipment at the same time, since sweeping is typically done at the same times of the year. He believed that additional analysis should be done to determine if investment of equipment would be used sufficiently to support that purchase. He stated that it would make sense to partner with cities to use the equipment they have more frequently.

Manager Skinner believed that modeling would be able to show the benefit of additional equipment.

President Swope commented that Shoreview does a great job sweeping additional times during the year. He noted that perhaps a grant program be reviewed to ensure that cities doing a good job are not penalized.

Paige Ahlborg stated that there are no proposed changes for the 2022 grant coverage. She advised of Ramsey Soil and Water Division changes in staff.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Ward seconded, to approve 2022 Stewardship Grant Program as presented.

Further discussion: Manager Ward thanked Paige Ahlborg for the great presentation, noting that she appreciates the visual elements and details on specific projects. She asked if there has been any interest from municipalities to do example projects at City Hall locations.

Paige Ahlborg reviewed the different elements that have been incorporated at City Hall locations and continued discussions with city staff.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Ward aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS (00:41:28)

A. 2022 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project Bid Review and Award

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that only two bids were received for the project but noted that they are competitive bids. She reviewed some of the reasons contractors provided for not submitting bids for the project. She reviewed the bids received noting that Fitzgerald was the low bidder with a bid of \$514,194. She stated that Fitzgerald has been doing good work on District projects but is still completing the 2021 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project. She stated that Fitzgerald received an extension to complete their year's project by December 31, 2021. She stated that it is appropriate to move forward with Fitzgerald as the lowest responsible bidder, but with the clause that if the 2021 work is not completed by the deadline, the project be brought back to the board for discussion.

Tina Carstens confirmed that staff would recommend that the award be contingent upon completion of the 2021 contract. She stated that if that is not done by the end of the year, staff would bring this back to the Board in January for discussion. She acknowledged that there would be a delay in the project if they had to rebid. She stated that the work of Fitzgerald has been excellent, but the District wants the 2021 project wrapped up.

Dave Vlasin provided an update on the work being completed at this time. He stated that two excavators were buried earlier in the year when the ground was soft, therefore Fitzgerald was waiting for the ground to freeze up to complete that work. He anticipated that the work would be done prior to the holidays.

President Swope asked if there are any observations on what the core issue is with Fitzgerald.

Dave Vlasin commented that some of the items are related to manufacturer delays but there are some minor things that could be completed. He confirmed that the larger items are out of the control of the contractor.

Tina Carstens confirmed that the Keller/Ryan Drive delays are not the fault of the contractor.

Erin Anderson Wenz commented that less than half of the bid price is reimbursed to the District as it is work being completed on behalf of the cities. She commented that the engineer's opinion of cost fell between the two bids received.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to accept the bids and award the 2022 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project to Fitzgerald Excavating and direct District staff to prepare and mail the notice of award, prepare the draft agreements and review the required submittals, contingent upon completion of the 2021 contract prior to December 31, 2021.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Ward aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Stormwater Impact Fund Budget Transfer – Resolution 21-02

Tina Carstens stated that the stormwater impact fund is collected through the permitting programs for projects that cannot accomplish the volume reduction requirements on their site. She explained that funds are then used from the stormwater impact fund towards stormwater projects completed in the subwatershed, such as targeted retrofit projects. She noted that the funds have been allocated internally but have not officially been transferred. She stated that she would propose to start a new fund that the funds would be transferred into and would propose three budget transfers: one to the new stormwater impact fund, one to the targeted retrofit fund, and one to the stewardship grant fund in order to account for projects that have been completed using those funds.

President Swope asked how the payments will be allocated in the future.

Tina Carstens commented that the funds would go into fund 536 and when a project is proposed it would show the portion funded from each fund and the funds would be taken in real time rather than after the fact.

Manager Aichinger agreed that this would be a good idea.

President Swope asked what would happen if a project cannot get rid of the water, pays into the fund, but has negative impact on adjacent properties.

Tina Carstens explained that the project would still need to meet the other requirements such as rate control and cannot increase the flow of runoff onto other properties.

Manager Eisele asked if the funds collected within a subwatershed are equally used for projects in that area.

Tina Carstens confirmed that there is a one-to-one replacement within the subwatershed. She noted that if a city contributes for a city project, the funds can be spent anywhere in the city for a project. She explained that cities wanted to ensure that taxpayer funds are used in the same municipality.

Manager Skinner stated that this is a great idea. She stated that perhaps they can continue to think in terms of policy and what the District could do to protect the natural environment. She stated that wetland credits are not available for purchase within the watershed and perhaps some of these funds are used to create wetlands, restore wetlands, or create previous areas that are currently impervious.

Tina Carstens stated that payment into the stormwater impact fund is the last step in a rigorous process. She stated that it is not an easy process for applicants to achieve. She stated that the funds are collected in lieu of water quality improvement and therefore the funds are being spent in the same manner.

Manager Aichinger stated that payment into the stormwater impact fund does not allow an applicant to pave over their site and remove all the trees. He noted that all other requirements would remain in place for the applicant. He stated that if an applicant does qualify for this, the funds are still used in a beneficial manner.

Laurann Kirschner stated that this does not act as a cap on liability and is a way for the applicant to make right by the District as the last step in a thorough process. She stated that the District is not forfeiting any remedy or recovery by having this in place.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to adopt Resolution #21-02.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Ward aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Capital Improvements Budget Fund Transfers – Resolution 21-03

Tina Carstens stated that prior to the end of the year it is helpful to review funds that are no longer used and transfer the funds to appropriate funds. She provided details on the two proposed fund transfers.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Ward seconded, to adopt Resolution #21-03.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Ward aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

D. 2022 Budget and Levy Final Approval – Resolution 21-04

Tina Carstens presented the final proposed 2022 budget. She noted that no significant changes were made with the exception of the carryover amounts.

Manager Aichinger commented that this is an enviable levy.

President Swope commented that he would like to see staff communicate that to the public as the District has good management in holding the levy without increase.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Ward seconded, to adopt Resolution #21-04.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Ward aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (01:06:15)

Laurann Kirschner stated that this past month they have been working on access agreements for the County Road D project. She stated that she is working on an access agreement with private residents.

President Swope asked what would happen such as the internet were not working or if Zoom were not working and it prevented Board members from being able to virtually attend a meeting.

Laurann Kirschner replied that if a quorum is not present, no formal action can occur. She noted that it would be the same situation if a quorum of members could not be present in person. She stated that as things continue with the pandemic, they should perhaps explore the District's virtual meeting protocol.

9. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING (01:11:10))

A. West Vadnais Lake Update

President Swope stated that this will be discussed in January.

B. Wetland Workshop

President Swope stated that this item will also be continued.

C. MAWD Annual Meeting/Business Meeting

President Swope noted that there was a presentation from Barr on wetland restoration. He commented that he also found the presentation on using spent lime in place of alum interesting.

Tina Carstens stated that the District is partnering with Barr Engineering on that project.

President Swope stated that Manager Aichinger stepped up during the MAWD annual business meeting and expressed thanks.

Manager Aichinger commented that he believes the needed changes through resolution were made.

Tina Carstens provided additional details on the business meeting session portion of that meeting and how the adopted resolutions are used by MAWD. She confirmed that once the information is available on the MAWD website she could send links to the Board.

10. PRESENTATIONS (01:18:40)

A. Kohlman Creek & Ames Lake Flood Risk Reduction Study Updates

Erin Anderson Wenz acknowledged that this is a complicated process but explained that it is also meaningful work to know where homes are at risk and work through what the District may be able to do in partnership with cities. She explained what the different colors mean within the story map and related reports. She stated that the purpose of the discussion tonight is to discuss the potential system modifications that could remove additional structures from the floodplain. She provided additional explanation on the different features of the story map.

Erin Anderson Wenz focused on areas throughout the Kohlman Creek subwatershed (Phase 3) and the Phalen Chain of Lakes Subwatershed (Phase 4). She identified the potential projects are marked moving from upstream to downstream, as upstream actions impact downstream areas and she provided details on the potential projects and the properties that would be positively impacted.

Manager Eisele asked for details on the return on investment ratios for the projects and properties.

Erin Anderson Wenz replied that at the next meeting there will be a review of the planning level cost estimates along with property value estimates in order to discuss costs and benefits of different system modifications.

Manager Skinner stated that she would like to see bonus points awarded for improvements that can be done above ground compared to underground or piped projects.

Erin Anderson Wenz confirmed that would be part of the discussion at the next meeting. She continued to provide details on potential projects and their impacts.

Manager Eisele asked if once projects are completed, would there also be conversations with the cities to highlight the benefits of ongoing maintenance or other projects they could complete.

Erin Anderson Wenz commented that the cities have seen these maps showing the impacted properties. She confirmed that staff would continue conversations with cities to discuss what they could do as well.

Tina Carstens confirmed that the cities are aware of the issues and the District can help to be a catalyst. She agreed that the cities would be partners in some of these projects as they move ahead.

Manager Aichinger asked what the cities are saying about the local flooding issues they are aware of.

Tina Carstens commented that funding is the biggest issue or concern. She acknowledged that the projects have large costs.

Erin Anderson Wenz commented that the District is ahead of many other watersheds in terms of its modeling, studies, and reporting. She stated that it is exciting to think about forging ahead with the cities and getting the information out. She stated that other watershed management organizations are asking about the work that RWMWD is doing.

Manager Ward stated that it is one thing to have this information available to the public and it is another thing to perhaps work with the cities to send letters to specific property owners alerting them of the options. She stated that people in this area are not aware of flood insurance and therefore education in these areas could be beneficial.

Tina Carstens stated that Ramsey County emergency management would like to be included in discussions as well.

Erin Anderson Wenz continued to review potential project details and information on the benefits that would be provided to impacted properties. She also provided information on how different projects could work together to provide additional benefit. She explained the large scale of some of the projects and the different entities that would need to be involved. She moved to the Ames Lake area and highlighted the potential projects, providing details, and identifying properties that would receive benefit. She noted that they have also started to look at the frequency of which the low elevation homes are being flooded during different flood events to better determine what would be needed to protect those properties.

Manager Eisele asked if staff has considered putting interactive maps on the website to gain input from residents.

Erin Anderson Wenz noted that the next step would be to have discussions with the cities, as they should have input on the communication to residents as well. She stated that the intent of this phase was to look for regional solution options. She noted that they will engage with the cities to gain their input and will also delve further into more localized solutions.

Manager Ward commented that it is nice to see how the projects work together and the benefits that will be provided, in addition to information related to cost.

Manager Skinner acknowledged that improvements upstream have an impact downstream. She stated that she would also be interested to know that holding water upstream will not impact areas further upstream.

Erin Anderson Wenz confirmed that they would not want to transfer a problem from one area to another. She highlighted the next portion of the discussion which will take place at the next meeting.

President Swope noted that the next phase of the discussion may take multiple meetings.

Manager Ward stated that it would also be helpful to see some of the lower hanging fruit standalone projects.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (02:29:37)

A. Meetings Attended

Tina Carstens provided an update on the joint meeting between MAWA and SWCD.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens highlighted upcoming meetings and activities. She noted that a date has not yet been selected for the holiday party. She also highlighted upcoming meeting dates and it was confirmed that the January meeting would most likely be held on Zoom again.

C. Ongoing Project/Program Updates

Tina Carstens stated that the Roseville City Council accepted the EAW for the Victoria Shores project and accepted that process as complete as they did not recommend an EIS.

Manager Ward asked what the barrier to getting the park permit completed was.

Tina Carstens commented that there is draft language which is being modeled after the right-of-way permit language.

Manager Ward asked if legal counsel has been involved.

Laurann Kirschner commented that she has not been involved but could be if desired.

Tina Carstens commented that there is nothing planned on parks property for this next year. She stated that she was planning to have legal counsel review the draft once received.

D. Final Public Art Policy

No comments.

12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (02:40:18)

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- A. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- B. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- C. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- D. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- E. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- F. Keller Channel and Phalen Outlet Operations Plans
- G. North St. Paul Target Store Retrofit Project
- H. East St. Paul Target Store Retrofit Project
- I. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- J. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- K. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- L. Twin Lake Outlet
- M. District Inspection Standardization
- N. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021
- O. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2022
- P. Natural Resource Program Update
- Q. Education Program Update

R. Communications Program and Website Update

Manager Ward asked for an update on the District inspection standardization and whether the ranking has been approved and whether the method is being tested with current projects.

President Swope stated that when the Board approved moving forward with the development of the inspection process in September, there were a series of tables that provided milestones and dates. He stated that he would like to see those tables filled in so the Board can follow the progress.

Tina Carstens commented that staff does receive those scope summary updates and could provide that information to the Board as well.

Erin Anderson Wenz commented that there is a lot of compiling for the tool being done. She stated that the tool is still in development.

Tina Carstens stated that District staff will meet with Barr in December to test the tool with the information inserted thus far.

Manager Ward asked for an update on the Wetland A video that was discussed in previous meeting minutes.

Bill Bartodziej commented that some voiceover work was completed this week and believed that perhaps the video would be done the next week.

Manager Ward commented that she would also like to see an update on the website priorities that were discussed at a previous meeting.

President Swope commented that the Owasso shoreline project looks great. He asked if there has been thought of storyboards or public art.

Bill Bartodziej confirmed that staff could look into those ideas.

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

No comments.

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.