



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
February 7, 2018**

The Regular Meeting of February 7, 2017, was held at the District Office Board Room, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, Minnesota, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Marj Ebensteiner, President
Cliff Aichinger, Vice President
Dianne Ward, Manager

ABSENT:

Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering
Simba Blood, Natural Resources Specialist
Larry Swope, Resident

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector
Dave Vlasin, Water Quality Technician

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tina Carstens requested to add the following items to the agenda: under the Permit Program, Item iii. Grass Lake Berm Wetland Replacement; under Action Items, Item C. Change Order No. 1 – Grass Lake Berm; Under Project and Program Status Report, Item A. Snail to Sucker Lake Feasibility Study (which will then make the Ongoing Project and Program Updates, Item B); and under Informational Items, Item A. Ramsey Conservation District Article.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes from January 3, 2018
- B. District Liability Insurance Coverage Waiver
- C. Change Order No. 5 – Beltline and Battle Creek Tunnel Repair Project

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND BILL LIST

Manager Aichinger referenced the 2017 year-end budget and noted that the District staff training and education line item was only 61 percent used. He wanted to ensure staff was taking advantage of the training available. Tina Carstens noted that staff did take part in the appropriate training, but the policy only allows for out of state attendance at training and conferences every other year. 2017 was an off year, so less out of state expenses were incurred.

Motion: Dianne Ward moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to approve the February 7, 2018, bill list as submitted. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

5. VISITOR PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

6. PERMIT PROGRAM

A. Applications

Permit #18-03: Suite Living – North St. Paul

Nicole Soderholm noted that both permits #18-03 and #18-04 are being completed by the same developer and designer. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve Permit #18-03. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

Permit #18-04: Suite Living – Little Canada

Motion: Dianne Ward moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to approve Permit #18-04. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

Grass Lake Berm Wetland Replacement

Nicole Soderholm stated that this is not a typical permit, but the Board does review wetland replacement requests. She explained that when the original permit was approved, wetland impacts were not anticipated. She stated that after further investigation, there will be permanent wetland impacts and therefore Barr Engineering has submitted a plan for one-to-one mitigation on-site, to the extent available, and wetland credits will fulfill the remainder of the obligation. Manager Aichinger referenced the proposed replacement and asked for additional clarification on the location. Tina Carstens highlighted the area on figure two. Nicole noted that the necessary notifications were provided, and comments were not received from BWSR or the other agencies.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve the notice of application for the Grass Lake Berm wetland replacement. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During January, zero notices were sent.

7. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

A. Applications

None.

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided an update on the outreach that staff has done to further promote the program.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Board of Managers Annual Meeting

Tina Carstens stated that this is an opportunity for the Board to provide input on the past year and designate the necessary appointment and designations for the future.

Manager Aichinger stated that he felt that staff has done a great job with communication with the Board and has been pleased with the citizen input process for the Grass Lake issues. He stated that this past year has received the most public input and thought that staff did a great job responding to the issue. President Ebensteiner stated that she believes that the staff participation has increased close to 100 percent since she has joined the Board and she thanked the staff for their contributions.

Manager Ward stated that she likes the summary information and the ability to review policy information. She stated that she looks forward to receiving additional educational opportunities this year.

Manager Aichinger stated that, while he enjoys the annual tour, it would also be helpful to have shorter tours related to current issues and/or projects. He stated that it is often helpful to see the area in person and receive background information in that format. President Ebensteiner noted that the short tours would not necessarily need a bus as the Board could meet staff in locations prior to regular Board meetings. Tina agreed that it is nice for staff to be able to show the Board the projects they have been working on and the progress that has been made.

President Ebensteiner stated that she has been pleased that the electronic packets have been made available earlier, which provides additional time for review prior to the Board meeting.

Manager Aichinger asked if there should be a standard rotation of officers. He stated that he is not necessarily a fan of rotating officers as the District has had a history of great leadership, but noted that sometimes the public feels a need for the positions to be rotated. President Ebensteiner stated that in her experience, sometimes people that are members of Boards do not wish to hold certain positions. She recognized that certain Boards have bylaws that require rotation or term limits. Manager Ward stated that she sees the benefit of rotating positions, as a method of sharing the workload, but also recognized that sometimes people do not wish to hold specific positions. President Ebensteiner stated that she is willing to serve as President again. Tina noted that Dr. Pam Skinner has stated that she is willing to be Treasurer or Secretary, whichever Manager Ward does not wish to do.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to elect Marj Ebensteiner as President, Cliff Aichinger as Vice President, Dianne Ward as Treasurer, and Dr. Pam Skinner as Secretary for 2018. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

President Ebensteiner stated that it is often true that once you begin working with a consultant, that consultant develops knowledge about the organization and is loyal to the organization. Tracey Galowitz stated that, while her firm has served the District for years, the firm works hard to not become complacent and to do the best job they can for the District. Manager Aichinger stated that the District is lucky to have the consultants that it has. He noted that all the legal and engineering representatives that attend the Board meetings and contribute to District projects have been helpful, knowledgeable, and great to work with.

Motion: Dianne Ward moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to designate consulting staff, official bank of deposit, and official newspapers as recommended in the Board packet. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

Erin Anderson Wenz thanked the Board, noting that Barr Engineering enjoys the District projects and working with the District staff and Board.

B. District Office Building Solar Energy Project

Tina highlighted the information provided in the Board packet regarding the solar energy project for the District office building. Manager Ward asked how long it would take to achieve a savings. She asked if the District intends to remain in this building or whether the District would require a larger space in the future. Tina stated that there is sufficient space for the District staff and there are no plans to move to another facility. Manager Aichinger stated that the savings would be achieved prior to the 25-year warranty expiring. President Ebensteiner noted that the District is also completing this project as an act of good stewardship and an example for the public.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to direct staff to move forward on a contract with All Energy Solar to install the 48kW Solar System on the District office building in 2018. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

C. Change Order No. 1 – Grass Lake Berm

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that the District is awaiting an access agreement from the County, which will go before the County Board on March 6. She stated that the extension would allow Fitzgerald to start on the morning of March 7 and for the work to be completed on April 30. She noted that while the District awaits the access agreement, Fitzgerald has begun working on other areas. Dave Vlasin provided an update on the recent maintenance activity that the contractor is completing.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve Change Order No. 1 for the Grass Lake Berm. Motion carried 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Meetings Attended

No additional comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No additional comments.

C. Website Update

No additional comments.

D. MAWD Legislative Reception and Breakfast

Tina Carstens highlighted the legislative breakfast and reception. She stated that the reception and March Board meeting are both scheduled for the same day and confirmed that it would not be a conflict for the Board. President Ebensteiner asked if an email reminder could be sent to the Board prior to the event.

10. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS

A. Snail to Sucker Lake Feasibility Study

Erin Anderson Wenz highlighted the topics of discussion that will occur at the next few Board meetings, noting that tonight's discussion will focus on the Snail to Sucker Lake section of the feasibility study. She stated that a summary of the proposals will occur at the May Board meeting, which will help the Board prepare to decide on the best option. She stated that Barr Engineering has been looking at the 100-year/96-hour storm event for modeling, which has become the new normal for modeling after incorporation of the Atlas 14 figures.

Erin reported that the target elevation for Snail Lake has been determined as 882 feet for this analysis. She stated that there is an existing augmentation system that brings water from Sucker to Snail Lake when Snail Lake is at low levels and explained that this scenario would pump the water from Snail to Sucker in times of high water. She reviewed the pumping options that were considered for this analysis. She stated that first it was determined that the existing pipe could not be used as a portion of the pipe is gravity flow and accepts water from other residential areas along the way. She stated that Sucker is part of a chain of lakes that accepts water from the Mississippi River and eventually flows into the Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) treatment facility. She provided the amount of water in gallons that would need to be pumped to Sucker after a 100-year/96-hour event with the three different pumping rates and the length of time that would be required to reach the optimal 882-foot elevation for Snail Lake. She stated that the SPRWS would then need to adjust the amount of water that would be taken from the Mississippi, as some of their supply would then come from Snail Lake. She reviewed the different permits that would be needed in order for this activity to be allowed and the different jurisdictions/agencies that would be involved. She reviewed the different model scenarios and the estimated costs for each of the pumping scenarios. She stated that two different paths for the pipe were reviewed and presented both options, noting that both options would include sections of force main and gravity flow. She stated that ranges for anticipated costs were included in the Board packet and explained that there are different costs based on alignment and pumping rate. She reviewed the items that would be included in the anticipated cost estimates, noting that land acquisition is not

included. She stated that a similar table will be provided in May, which will compare the different options that will be reviewed over the next few months.

President Ebensteiner asked what the result of this work will be, specifically the cost feasibility. Manager Aichinger stated that the time needed to bring the lake to the desired lake level will be helpful, as well as the amount of disruption to the public. He stated that input from the member cities on the feasibility will also be helpful. Manager Ward stated that it was her recollection that some of the other options would be dependent on the feasibility of lowering the 15-inch pipe under 694. She wanted to ensure that cost is also included in the options. Erin stated that the reason to do any of these actions would be to gain flood control and to gain control of the overflow of the landlocked basin. She stated that any of these options would keep Snail Lake from overflowing during a 100-year/96-hour event, if the storm started at the same elevation of Snail Lake last fall. She stated that landlocked basins have a difficult challenge in management. President Ebensteiner asked what would happen if the lake overflowed. Erin stated that if the lake overflows, it travels down the “backdoor” route to potentially impact the Crestview addition although there are other recommendations that would change the overflow to go into Wetland A instead if need be.

President Ebensteiner asked how those homes could be protected without completing these actions. Erin replied that a lesser freeboard could be agreed upon for the lower elevation homes or the District could develop an emergency response plan. She provided an example of an emergency response plan that was developed by the District and provided to the member city. She stated that the City then chooses whether or not to adopt that plan and how to implement it.

Manager Aichinger stated that if the cost cannot be justified to complete these actions and the potential highest level of the lake has to be accepted, the District could then determine if it is feasible to protect the home(s) at risk. If it is determined that it is not feasible to protect that lowest elevation home(s), the District could offer to purchase the home(s). He provided an example in which the District offered to purchase the lowest elevation homes, noting that the homeowners denied the offer and the District completed an emergency response plan for the member city.

President Ebensteiner stated that it is important to consider the most practical solution. She noted that the options presented tonight are expensive and would require a lot of work and permitting. She stated that if the District has the practice in place of offering to purchase the most at risk home(s), she would want to consider that option as well. She stated that the minimum option should be a focus as well, in addition to the costlier options. Manager Aichinger stated that the District should ensure to document the benefits that would be provided through the options being reviewed in the feasibility study.

Manager Aichinger stated that the relation to groundwater would also be helpful, as they would want to ensure that they are not just continuing to pump groundwater. He recognized that this is a strange situation that was not anticipated. He stated that in the last few years, White Bear Lake was at a record low because of the low groundwater and now that the groundwater level has increased, White Bear Lake has rebounded. President Ebensteiner stated that this information was helpful. She stated that the job of the watershed is to protect the homes and, while it would be nice to do some of the other elements, the purpose of the District should remain in focus. Manager Aichinger stated that it would also be helpful to have a process for the other member cities and agencies to provide input. Tina Carstens confirmed that staff is planning to receive input from those entities prior to the May Board meeting.

- B. Ongoing Project and Program Updates
 - i. Owasso Boulevard/Park Retrofit
 - ii. Snail Lake/Grass Lake Study
 - iii. Tanner’s Lake Alum Facility
 - iv. Targeted Retrofit Projects

- v. BMP Design Assistance
- vi. Owasso Basin Improvements
- vii. Shoreview Lake Feasibility Study
- viii. Frost/Kennard Project
- ix. Willow Pond CMAC Project
- x. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel
- xi. CIP Maintenance/Repair 2018
- xii. New Technology Reviews

President Ebensteiner asked if there could be a review at some time of the new technology items. Tina Carstens agreed that she had considered doing an “audit” of new technologies.

- xiii. Natural Resources Program
- xiv. Education Program

Manager Ward stated that she would find it helpful to have additional information on groundwater, as that continues to be an item of discussion.

11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Ramsey Conservation District Article

Tina Carstens stated that she wanted to provide an opportunity for the Board to discuss this item as she had sent an email to the Board and some were comments received. Tracey Galowitz stated that she was hired by the Ramsey Conservation District to attend the meeting. She believed the newspaper article to be accurate. She provided an update and stated that, while she does not view a conflict of interest at this time, she would disclose that should a conflict arise.

12. REPORTS OF MANAGERS

A. Summary of Closed Meeting held January 31, 2018

Manager Aichinger stated that a closed meeting was held on January 31, 2018, for the purpose of reviewing the Administrator’s performance and all Managers were in attendance. He noted that the job description, performance, and salary were discussed.

Manager Aichinger stated that he recently attended a meeting of the Metro MAWD, noting that a nice presentation was given by the new MAWD Administrator which provided information on her background and her vision and plan for the future of the organization.

He stated that BWSR is now considering how to disperse Clean Water Funds through a One Watershed, One Plan framework, which will reduce the amount of funds available through the competitive grant program and instead distributing the funds to agencies with approved Water Plans. Tina confirmed that it is watershed-based funding. She stated that this will be a pilot program and provided details on how the funds would be distributed for different counties. She stated that, if a county cannot come to an agreement on how the funds would be distributed, the funds would then be available through the competitive grant program. She confirmed that the District would still have to have a project identified for the funding and a report would need to be made.

13. ADJOURN

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion 3-0. (Dr. Pam Skinner absent)

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary