



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
August 4, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of August 4, 2021, was held at the District Office Board Room, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, Minnesota, at 6:30 p.m. and via web conference via conferencing platform zoom. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/njgCROJcgmA> . Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

Larry Swope, President
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary (remote)
Val Eisele, Manager

ABSENT:

Cliff Aichinger, Vice President
Dianne Ward, Treasurer

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District (remote)
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector (remote)
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator (remote)
Chad Ayers, Sambatek, for 748 Bielenberg permit(remote)

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager (remote)
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering (remote)
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist (remote)
Kyle Kubitzka, Water Quality Technician (remote)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Swope at 6:31 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:22)

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).

The members of the Board and staff attending in person and remotely introduced themselves.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (3:16)

- A. Approval of Minutes from July 7, 2021
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. #21-21 - 3M B227 Ramp Demolition, Maplewood
 - ii. #21-22 – 748 Bielenberg Medical Office Building, Woodbury
 - iii. #21-23 – Cornerstone Village, Oakdale
- D. North Saint Paul Target Store Retrofit – Change Order No. 2

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).

4. VISITOR PRESENTATIONS (4:30)

There were none.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (5:11)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Residential Shoreline Permit Pilot Program

Nicole Soderholm stated that last year the Board approved a pilot program for implementation of residential shoreline permits that differs from the normal grading permit process. She stated that included in the packet was a list of residential shoreline permits that were approved during the past year through this pilot program. She asked for input from the Board on whether the process should continue, whether it should end, or whether the pilot should continue to gather additional information. She stated that there have not been any unforeseen wetland impacts or issues with erosion control. She stated that she also includes trends and observations within her report.

President Swope commented that the program was very well done with positive feedback. He stated that his only suggestion would be to extend this to the next meeting to provide an opportunity for the other two Board members to provide feedback.

Manager Eisele asked how the budget proposal would change if this were included next year. Tina Carstens replied that there would be no impact to the budget as this falls under staff time and engineering.

Manager Eisele stated that he was not a part of the creation of the pilot program and asked if this met the expectations for participation. Nicole Soderholm stated that in the beginning she listed desired outcomes which directed the data she provided in her report. She commented that she did not observe any negative impacts or negative feedback from this program. She noted that with the monthly permit deadlines, it has been a benefit for homeowners to be able to implement these projects sooner than if they had to wait for a Board meeting.

Manager Eisele stated that he loves the idea. He asked if there would be a point where staff would feel the Board should review the permit.

Nicole Soderholm reviewed the instances in which Board review would be required such as a variance request, a project that impacts wetlands, or reduces net floodplain storage. She noted that a separate communications page and application form were developed specifically for residents. She stated that the \$500 application fee can be cost prohibitive for small projects, noting that it does not take much time for Barr Engineering to review a small shoreline project and therefore the suggested change to the permit fee was in an effort to be more reflective of the actual staff time.

President Swope asked if the Board would continue to receive updates on the staff approved permits. Nicole Soderholm confirmed that she would continue to include that within her enforcement report.

Manager Skinner stated that she is fully supportive. She asked if there would be any impacts to the program if the action is delayed for one month. Nicole Soderholm stated that staff could be directed to continue with this process for the next month with the Board to review it again in September.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to direct staff to continue with this program for the next month with Board review to occur at the September meeting.

Further discussion: President Swope asked if the permit fee would remain at \$500 with this motion. Nicole Soderholm stated that they would continue to review shoreline applications with a fee of \$175 as they have been doing for the past year.

Manager Eisele commented that he believes the other members would also be in favor and action could be taken tonight.

President Swope commented that could be done but his thought process was that the other two Managers were involved throughout this process, and they should continue to be involved in this decision.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).

C. Monthly Enforcement Report

During July, 10 notices were sent to address: install/maintain perimeter control (4), install/maintain construction entrance (2), stabilize exposed soils (3), and contain liquid/solid waste (1).

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (16:10)

A. Applications

Permit #21-26 CS: Westwood Village I – Habitat Restoration

Paige Ahlborg commented that this is a standard buffer restoration around the pond in Roseville. She stated that the homeowners are requesting slightly more than the standard for habitat restoration because staff worked with them to expand their area and use different and larger plants which raised the cost. She noted that another option would be to phase the project, which would ultimately be a higher cost.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve Permit #21-26 CS.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).

B. Budget Status Update

No comments.

7. PRESENTATIONS AND/OR ACTION ITEMS (17:35)

A. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Modifications – Change Order No. 5

Brad Lindaman noted that in the packet he included a series of conversations between Barr Engineering, the contractor and subcontractor. He provided additional details, noting that the subcontractor identified the need for additional wiring components during construction of the project. He noted that was not something Barr saw as necessary, but the electrical contractor convinced Barr that in order for the work to come together, that connection would be needed. He noted that this was a significant amount of wire needed for the \$3,600 change order. He stated that this would not be considered extra work but would be considered incidental or something that is needed to make the work come together. He noted that the contractor should have looked over the bid thoroughly to ensure all aspects were included. He stated that he feels that the contractor was genuine in identifying that this was not included in the plans and installed it when they came upon it in good faith. He stated that although he did not recommend the change order because this is work that was considered necessary to make the project work and should have been included in the bid, he told the contractor that this could still be presented to the Board.

Manager Skinner stated that the contractor did not catch the item missing from the bid and this seems reasonable as the work has been done.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve change order No. 5.

Further discussion: Manager Eisele asked what the outcome would have been if this work had not been done. Brad Lindaman stated that his understanding is that because of the connection between the two gate systems, they would not be able to talk to each other quite as well. He stated that the contractor made a case that this was necessary and should have been included and that it was not extra work.

Manager Eisele asked if this was above and beyond what was absolutely necessary. Dave Vlasin stated that the original things were ran to spec and things were not working quite as well and the contractor realized that a ground wire was missing that would make it work better. Brad Lindaman stated that the contractor could have gotten it to work without this, but it would not have worked as well.

President Swope asked if staff told the contractor to do the work. Dave Vlasin stated that he and Greg Nelson from Barr told them to go ahead with the work. He stated that he told the contractor that there would not be a guarantee they would be paid for the additional work but that he would recommend approval.

President Swope stated that he would support this payment as the contractor did the right thing to make the project work. Brad Lindaman stated that he does not disagree with that opinion.

Tracey Galowitz agreed that the contract details support the statements from Brad Lindaman, but it also makes sense to pay for the work as it was done to improve the system.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).

B. 2022 Budget Planning Discussion

Tina Carstens stated that typically in August the Board begins to see numbers and noted that a table was provided in the packet comparing the proposed 2022 items to the 2021 budget. She acknowledged that there are still some changes that will occur, especially with targeted retrofit projects.

President Swope asked if there is a limit on the ability to raise the levy. Tina Carstens replied that the District does not have a limit because of the metro status, which is based on tax capacity.

President Swope referenced line 44 – Research Projects, and asked how much was contributed last year. Tina Carstens replied that last year a total of \$50,000 was contributed to the Minnesota Storm Water Research Council. President Swope commented that it is a good program. He noted that the contribution was increased because other entities had reduced their contributions. He stated that the District challenged others to increase donations as well. Tina Carstens stated that it did not spur the desired outcome, but a few other entities that had not donated in the past did contribute in smaller amounts of \$5,000 to \$10,000. Bill Bartodziej agreed that it is money well spent as it pools money to complete research projects that otherwise would not be funded and completed. It was agreed an additional \$25,000 will be added to this line item increasing it to \$50,000.

Manager Eisele asked what was unique last year to increase the donation. President Swope stated that originally the Board approved \$25,000 but there were some cuts from other entities and therefore a request was presented to ask other entities to step up and the District donated an additional \$25,000 to spur that action.

Manager Skinner commented that she is concerned about paying attention to the total percent increase in the proposed levy and to be cautious of people, especially during this time of COVID, which may be struggling financially. She asked that the packet include a document that shows the levy impact to different valued properties. She stated that helps her to determine the impact to residents. She recognized that five percent would not have much of an impact but wanted the Board to consider whether the action of the District could negatively impact people trying to stay in their homes. Tina Carstens noted that she does include that information in the September packet, along with additional information related to the levy and how funds are allocated towards goals.

President Swope asked if Washington County breaks out the District portion on the tax bill. Manager Skinner believed that it falls under the category of “other”. President Swope confirmed that Ramsey County places the District in the “other” category as well. He recognized the previous discussion that the goal should be a zero percent increase, but they also have to be cognizant of their goals.

Manager Eisele asked if the intent would be that this will move forward or that a percentage is set that staff should aim to meet. Tina Carstens noted that she would make any changes discussed today and review the existing budget to determine potential carryovers. She stated that once the preliminary budget and levy are adopted, further refinement can occur until the time the final budget and levy are adopted in December.

President Swope asked if \$50,000 would be sufficient to accomplish the communication goals. Tina Carstens confirmed that should be sufficient for 2022.

Manager Eisele asked if the outreach items would be its own separate line item or whether it would be included in the general fund. He asked if there is discretionary funding for community outreach. Tina Carstens noted that it is primarily staff time and therefore additional funding is not required. She stated that education does have a contingency of \$15,000.

President Swope commented that there are a lot of funds left in the stewardship grant program this year. Paige Ahlborg commented that there were a lot of projects approved this year, but they were smaller projects. She stated that in the past there were large city projects but that did not occur this year. She stated that next year they will focus on Lake Owasso restoration.

Tina Carstens stated that the cities have focused on the essentials for the last 18 months. She was unsure whether that would be different next year but noted that staff will work with the cities to identify potential projects for the

next year. She stated that currently the program is shown at \$1,000,000 and could be adjusted back down to \$800,000.

Manager Eisele referenced the 2022 budget and asked if there are any planned feasibility studies outside of the two mentioned. Tina Carstens stated that project feasibility studies are typically planned ahead for the next year, but items can always arise that need more urgency.

Brad Lindaman stated that they have reached out to the city of Little Canada in order to continue discussions regarding Owasso Basin and North Star Estates. He stated that they are currently focused on what would be protected within North Star Estates. He stated that FEMA does have guidance for manufactured homes, but cities may be more stringent, which is why staff wants to work with the city in order to balance what is done in that community to what would be comparable to a home outside of North Star Estates.

Manager Eisele stated that he wanted to ensure that there was enough budgeted to keep working and progress with a project if desired. Brad Lindaman noted that some work will continue to be done this year and there is also flexibility to move things around if one project needs to move faster than another.

President Swope referenced the water quality project prioritization, noting that most ended up in a tie using the tool. He asked if there are criteria used to break a tie to determine priority. Tina Carstens commented that staff does not begin at number one and then work down. She explained that they begin communication with the top ten or so to determine which projects would have higher potential. She noted that some of those projects are dependent upon the willingness of another entity to move forward with their project.

President Swope asked what the prioritization tool is currently being used for. Tina Carstens stated that the list of projects has over 100 projects in total. She noted that the tool is used to determine the projects that rise towards the top and then additional work is done to determine which projects could move forward in terms of timing and partnership. She noted that the other projects still remain on the list as there are different elements that could cause it to move higher on the list.

Manager Eisele referenced the Beaver Lake living streets project and asked for additional explanation. Paige Ahlberg stated that staff reached out to the city to determine when the road reconstruction is on their schedule, and it is not anytime soon. She stated that the city is aware that it is a priority area for the District, and they will come back to the District to alert when the road project comes on its radar.

Manager Eisele asked for additional input on whether a criteria related to timing should be added to the spreadsheet. Paige Ahlberg stated that she would factor that in with willing partner but agreed that a change could be made if desired. Tina Carstens noted that she views that as a second step after but noted that could be worded differently.

Manager Eisele stated that perhaps the third step should be added to factor in the willingness. He asked the process of approval for the tool and how the Board played a role. Tina Carstens provided background information on how the tool was developed and how the Board provided input. She confirmed that this is a living document.

Manager Eisele referenced the section related to flooding and asked if that section is meant to rank feasibility outputs. Tina Carstens stated that water quality and flood control were separated within the tool as there are different levels of need and support. She noted that the elements also play together as flood control projects can provide water quality and water quality projects can have an element of flood control.

Manager Eisele asked if there are a relationship between approved flood control projects and those contained on the list. Tina Carstens stated that if there were a project that would have strong qualities for water quality and flood control, it would tend to rank higher.

Brad Lindaman noted that there are some projects that combine water quality and flood control and provided an example. He stated that if a project has water quality and flood control, it would rank very well in this tool.

Tina Carstens stated that she would make the updates to the budget as discussed and a notice would be published for the public hearing at the September meeting.

8. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (1:09:10)

A. Maintenance Standards

President Swope stated that maintenance and maintenance standards continue to be discussed. He stated that he included this item as a method to continue that discussion, specifically how the Board may want to more formalize the maintenance process.

Manager Eisele stated that it seems like there is a missing link to our cities and counties in why the maintenance of their systems is important. He suggested a central guideline to outline the practices, such as lake monitoring and BMP maintenance. He stated that if there was guidance and impact measurement to how the element impacts the system it could be helpful.

Tina Carstens agreed that is good feedback. She stated that there are processes in place internally and she liked the comment that it could be helpful to share how those elements are impacting the District system and how that could be communicated in a formal manner to our cities and counties, for example by creating a guidebook.

Manager Eisele used the example of blockage and how that could be communicated. Brad Lindaman referenced a system where there could be a partial plugging of an inlet, but it could be communicated that it not a critical point in the system and therefore could be half filled with debris. He explained that different areas would have different maintenance requirements based on topography. He stated that the first step could be for staff to present some ideas to Tina Carstens to receive input and then have something presented to the Board.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:20:54)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens highlighted upcoming meeting dates.

C. Ongoing Project/Program Updates

No comments.

D. Staff Changes Due to Retirement

Tina Carstens acknowledged that Debbie is retiring.

She stated that she is reviewing the changes to masking guidelines and will continue to review what other government entities are doing to ensure the District is consistent. She stated that it was planned to open the District offices to the public on September 7th. Manager Skinner urged caution against opening to the public in September and would absolutely recommend masks.

10. ATTORNEY'S REPORT (1:24:16)

Tracey Galowitz stated that she is working with staff to ensure all the open meeting laws are being met as they continue to change and be interpreted differently. She stated that there was an ongoing claim with the vehicle damage that occurred in the Target parking lot but that continues to be handled by the insurance carrier. She expressed appreciation for the professional relationships they continue to have.

11. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:25:34)

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- ii. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iii. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iv. Grass Lake Berm Wetland Mitigation
President Swope referenced the Grass Lake Berm and asked for an update. Brad Lindaman commented that there are some small monitoring wells required to monitor the hydrology of the area to ensure there is water to maintain the wetland area. He stated that must be done for a series of years to confirm that the mitigation planned is fully established.
- v. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- vi. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- vii. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- viii. 2021 Tanners Lake Alum Facility Monitoring
- ix. Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- x. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- xi. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- xii. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- xiii. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel Five-Year Inspection
- xiv. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021
- xv. New Technology Review: Education Programs Across the Country
- xvi. Natural Resources Program Update
- xvii. Education Program Update
- xviii. Communications Program Update

President Swope asked for an update on monitors for lake level stations. Tina Carstens noted that the monitoring data is found on the individual lake pages. She stated that there were some issues because water levels were low, and the sensors were not reaching those levels. She stated that the full page of monitoring data should be coming this fall in the website update. Dave Vlasin provided additional details on the lake monitoring equipment.

12. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH’S MEETING (1:38:10)

For the next meeting the 2022 Budget and District Maintenance Standards will be on the agenda.

13. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Aichinger and Ward absent).