



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
December 2, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of December 2, 2020, 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
Lawrence Swope, Treasurer
Dianne Ward, Secretary
Dr. Pam Skinner, Manager

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Coordinator
Dave Vlasin, Project Manager
Keith Pilgrim, Barr Engineering
Alison Harwood, WSB
Burt Johnson, Twin Lake Association
Bill Dermody, Saint Paul City Staff
George Hoene, Saint Paul Port Authority

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist
Eric Korte, Water Monitoring Coordinator
James Soltis, WSB
Katherine Sarnecki, Saint Paul Port Authority
Monte Hilleman, Saint Paul Port Authority
Ellen Stewart, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Ebensteiner at 6:36 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A Manager requested to remove Item A from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

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

Further discussion: A Manager asked if an update from the CAC could be added to the next meeting. Tina Carstens replied that staff was waiting for the CAC to hold a meeting before providing an update but confirmed that an update should be available sometime in January.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye
Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Ebensteiner	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Approval of Minutes from November 4, 2020

Motion: Manager Swope moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to approve the November 4, 2020 meeting minutes as presented.

Further discussion: A Manager referenced the discussion related to the Minnesota Stormwater Research agenda item. It was noted that the language should be corrected from “the request was not approved” to “there was no immediate reaction”. The Manager clarified that the Board agreed to increase its contribution by \$20,000 without stipulation that others do the same, although they would encourage others to do the same. The Board confirmed consensus with those changes.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye
Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Ebensteiner	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

~~A. Approval of Minutes from November 4, 2020~~

B. Treasurer’s Report and Bill List

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye
Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Ebensteiner	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS

Burt Johnson, President of Twin Lake Association, stated that the organization was formed about one year ago with the intent to reroute West Vadnais to prevent inundation of Twin Lake, restore an outlet for Twin Lake at historic levels, and to improve, preserve and restore water quality. He appreciated the work the Board has done to restore the outlet noting that they are cautiously optimistic as to how the outlet will work. He recognized that the Board has long-term studies and goals for West Vadnais. He stated that the Board packet notes that the ten-year trajectory for Twin Lake is not moving in the right direction. He stated that residents have begun to collect samples and will share those with the District in attempt to provide assistance. He stated that he is interested in hearing the discussion of the Board related to water quality later in tonight’s meeting.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM

A. Applications - None

B. Hillcrest Redevelopment Project Applicant Presentation and Discussion

Nicole Soderholm stated that representatives from the Saint Paul Port Authority, the City of Saint Paul, and their consultants from WSB are present tonight to review development options for the Hillcrest site.

Monte Hilleman, Saint Paul Port Authority, reviewed the mission of the Port Authority to create quality job opportunities, expand the tax base and advance sustainable development. He provided background information on the Port Authority, its river connection, and the Saint Paul Harbor and reviewed the benefits of shipping commodities on the river. He provided details on the Midway Stadium redevelopment project the Port Authority completed and highlighted some of the different elements that they were incorporated in partnership with Capital Region Watershed District and the MPCA. He provided similar details on the Beacon Bluff redevelopment project and the different treatment options that were able to be incorporated into that project. He provided background information on the Hillcrest site as well as the contamination on the site.

James Soltis, WSB, provided additional details on the contamination on the site and noted that as far as they know the contamination is contained within the soils and is not moving from the site. He commented that there have been contaminants found within the soils of the wetlands, but the water has not shown that contamination. He highlighted the clean-up standards that would be required for the site. He stated that the contaminated wetlands would need to be cleaned and therefore would be considered as restoration. He stated that the City of Saint Paul is the LGU for the site and any mitigation would require a 2:1 ratio. He recognized the buffer requirements of the District and noted that they would meet or exceed those standards. He stated that they would also look for a 1:1 replacement of disturbed wetlands on the site in order to meet the District's no net loss preference.

Mr. Hilleman reviewed the priorities for this redevelopment of this site including job creation, residential housing, twenty acres of open space, and a neighborhood node.

Mr. Soltis stated that the Port Authority has owned this site since 2019 and completed a market study to determine the best use of the site noting that job creation and housing were both identified as strong uses. He stated that there has been a lot of input throughout this process and recognized that there are a lot of things to fit into this site. He noted that some items would need to be multi-functional in order to fit all of those things and highlighted some of the overlapping spatial relationship between the uses.

Katherine Sarnecki, Saint Paul Port Authority, provided additional details on different lot size requirements. She noted that they have identified 150 acres of programming for the 112 acres. It was recognized that when using typical lot sizes, they would not be able to fit the desired uses within the space and therefore they are thinking towards more innovative redevelopment. She stated that they would love to talk about innovative ideas that they could partner with the District on such as demonstrative and interpretive ideas that the District would like to try, similar to what they did on the Midway Stadium site. She stated that once the master planning is complete by mid-2021, they will present a WCA replacement plan application that would include the sequencing and analysis but wanted to involve the District early on in order to identify and incorporate ideas from the District.

A Manager stated that this is an extremely rolling site, and a lot of excavation would be needed to remove the contaminated soils, so the entire site would most likely be disturbed in order to fit this intense development. Concern was expressed related to the wetlands and how they would be impacted the change in topography. The

Manager agreed that creative and innovative methods and ideas would be needed in order to keep a 1:1 replacement on the site, noting that they would prefer a higher rate.

A Manager asked for clarification on the mercury contamination and whether it is mobile. Mr. Hilleman replied that the mercury binds to the soil. He provided additional details on the MPCA requirements for removal of that contamination. He noted that, as the site is today, they are required to prevent access by the public to the site.

A Manager expressed concern that the contamination could impact the neighboring properties and asked if the soils in those areas has been tested. Ms. Sarnecki stated that there is mercury around that area because of the atmospheric disposition. She stated that they have found the limits of the contamination of the soil on the site and most of the stormwater is contained on the site so that they can address the contamination where it is.

A Manager commented that residents value access to the outdoors and parks and encouraged the project to attempt to keep wetlands and other outdoor amenities that residents desire. It was stated that the District continues to see wetlands move north, which does not benefit the urban communities. It was suggested that perhaps there are some tradeoffs that could be provided to retain additional wetlands on the site. Another Manager agreed, noting that it would be helpful to keep some of the rolling topography rather than all flat spaces.

Tina Carstens summarized that the Board would be looking for 1:1 mitigation onsite and the District would collaborate on innovative solutions.

Ms. Sarnecki asked if there would be benefit to improving the quality of the wetlands that could be retained onsite and whether there are preferences to the different types of wetlands. A Manager commented that given the location and mix of uses, it would be preferred to have type three open wetlands that could be restored with buffers that could absorb water without damage to the ecosystem. It was encouraged to work with District staff on how to design the improved wetland system.

Mr. Hilleman thanked the Board for its input noting that the intent of the discussion tonight was simply to introduce themselves as a public entity that is looking to collaborate and partner with the District on innovative design solutions for the site.

C. Monthly Enforcement Report

During November, seven notices were sent to address: install/maintain perimeter control (2), install/maintain construction entrance (2), sweep streets (1), and stabilize exposed soils (2).

7. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

A. Applications - None

B. Budget Status Update

No comments.

C. 2020 Program Overview and 2021 Program Review and Approval

Paige Ahlborg reported that there were 52 projects approved this year, noting that 42 of those were residential projects with a focus on rain gardens and habitat restoration. She reviewed the 2020 project allocation, noting that all of the large projects were completed within priority areas. She provided a highlight of project locations throughout the District. She also provided breakdowns of project information per city and projects per subwatershed. She reviewed the 2020 stewardship grant inspections and provided details on the Snail Lake shoreline restoration project, the BMP maintenance program, and CAC assistance. She provided a summary of the equity outreach activity of the past year. She provided details on the projects on the Eastside Boys and Girls Club site and Suburban Avenue Target location in Saint Paul. She highlighted some of the proposed 2021 projects which would utilize the stormwater impact fund and opportunity fund.

Tina Carstens commented that there are provisions for reuse within the stormwater impact fund and stated that staff is working with Barr to determine the credit and funding that could be used for the Cemstone project.

Paige Ahlborg provided a high-level summary of the potential Cemstone project that would involve reuse. A Manager asked the cost range for the project. Paige Ahlborg estimated about \$350,000 for the project. The Board expressed support for the potential project. A Manager commented that it would be helpful to have before and after pictures of the projects that could be used on the website to share with the public. A Manager suggested sharing the information with the member cities.

Paige Ahlborg reviewed the proposed 2021 stewardship grant program details, noting no changes to the priority subwatersheds or coverage.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Swope seconded, to approve the 2021 grant stewardship program as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye
Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Ebensteiner	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

7. PRESENTATIONS AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

A. Capital Improvement Budget Fund Transfer – Resolution 20-02

Tina Carstens noted that this proposed budget fund transfer would move funds from the opportunity fund to the targeted retrofit fund.

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Swope seconded, to adopt Resolution #20-02.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye
Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
President Ebensteiner	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2021 Budget and Levy Final Approval – Resolution 20-03

Tina Carstens stated that as requested in September there is a levy increase of zero shown and provided additional input on how that was done using carryover amounts from different line items.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Swope seconded, to approve the proposed FY 2021 General Fund and CIP budgets and adopt Resolution #20-03.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward aye
Manager Swope aye
Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Ebensteiner aye

Motion carried unanimously.

C. 2020 RWMWD Water Monitoring Report

Eric Korte presented the water monitoring annual report including some of the conclusions and recommendations that they use when monitoring.

Keith Pilgrim provided more information on chloride monitoring. He stated that perhaps a rotating schedule of BMPs be developed for monitoring different sites. A Manager asked the purpose of monitoring chloride as it was their understanding that nothing can be done to remove that substance. Keith Pilgrim commented that although it cannot be removed there are efforts to mitigate and therefore that information is still helpful.

A Manager commented asked if there are specific programs that could be done in collaboration with cities to address chloride hot spots. The Manager noted that MnDOT has done a lot over the years to reduce its salt application, but it is still an issue. Tina Carstens commented that in discussions with the cities, it has been stated that if there are targeted areas, they could try to address those areas and review alternatives to salting in those locations. She confirmed that District staff would work with the member cities on those targeted chloride areas. Keith Pilgrim recognized that there are limits and challenges but noted that there are some alternatives that could be explored in those areas. A Manager commented that they would support looking into innovative ideas. Tina Carstens noted that the District continues to work with other partners related to salt application.

A Manager commented that they would like the information to be shared on the website and with member cities. The Manager also identified other areas they would like to see included in the report, including items related to West Vadnais, recognizing that body of water is not within the District but that water flows into the District waters. Another Manager commented that perhaps there could be another issues section of the report that includes subjective discussion on those topics.

Tina Carstens noted that this is the first time the formal report will be published on the website and will continue to be shared on the website moving forward.

Eric Korte presented details on the lake water quality, streams, PFAS, chlorides, and BMPs. A Manager asked if the information related to iron enhanced sand is being shared with St. Anthony Falls research lab. Eric Korte confirmed that staff can share its findings with that group. Dave Vlasin asked if the iron carbonate is extending out. Eric Korte stated that they have found that the top four or five inches gets very hard and confirmed that they would look into that further next year.

Keith Pilgrim commented that the main goal of the report was to present the data rather than to analyze that. He stated that there are trends and reviewed some of that data for Twin Lake, noting that it follows the trend of other deep lakes in the District. He noted that Twin Lake had similar patterns to Owasso and Tanners.

Tina Carstens stated that staff will follow up with the Twin Lake Association to organize a meeting to review the information in more detail, as that desire had been previously expressed.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Meetings Attended

A Manager asked for an update on the Phalen Creek daylighting project. Tina Carstens provided background information and provided an update from the discussion at that meeting related to the two segments within the District.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. COVID-19 Update

Tina Carstens commented that things continue as they have been under COVID.

A Manager asked if there is a person that answers calls live during the day. Tina Carstens replied that a staff member is checking the voicemail multiple times per day to answer messages left at the general District number.

9. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Owasso Basin Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- ii. Willow Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iii. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iv. FEMA Flood Mapping Updates
- v. Hillcrest Golf Course
- vi. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- vii. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- viii. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications

A Manager asked for an update related to the higher cost for controlling water. Brad Lindaman stated that there was a meeting with the contractor to discuss the control of water item. He noted that after that discussion he believes that the pricing would be right, noting that the contractor believes that method of controlling the water would be much more efficient and successful for controlling the water throughout the duration of the project. He stated that they spoke with the contractor about items smaller in cost to review as well, which could provide a small reduction in cost.

- ix. Twin Lake Outlet Construction
- x. CIP Maintenance and Repair 2021 Project

Brad Lindaman stated that the Board issued approval on the project at its last meeting. He referenced certain aspects of the project which were quite expensive and noted that as staff looked into permitting for the Ryan Drive improvement, they looked into additional modeling downstream. He stated that part of that project included increasing the size of the culvert, which would slightly increase the flood levels along a section of the creek. He stated that staff believes that the Keller Parkway culvert project would need to come first in order to not raise the flood level. He stated that it is the recommendation of staff to pull together both the Keller Parkway and Ryan Drive projects and bid them as separate projects rather than including the Ryan Drive improvements with the CIP Maintenance and Repair project. Tina Carstens confirmed that the District has funds to complete those projects separately.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Swope seconded, to authorize staff to prepare the cost estimates and preliminary plans to include the Keller Parkway improvements with the Ryan Drive improvements and complete those together as a separate capital improvement project.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Ward	aye
Manager Swope	aye

Manager Aichinger aye
Manager Skinner aye
President Ebensteiner aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Brad Lindaman noted that staff will continue discussions with Little Canada about potential funding partnership for the project.

- xi. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel Inspection
- xii. Internal Load Management Discussions
- xiii. Project Scored Ranking Study

A Manager asked when the tool would be available on the website. Tina Carstens commented that should be available in the next few weeks.

A Manager asked if the Board would be alerted when the tool is available and the length of time that would be available for Managers to provide comments. Tina Carstens stated that the report would be shared on the website, which the Board has already reviewed. She confirmed that the comments already received from the Board have been incorporated. The Manager asked if staff has tested the tool with old projects as previously suggested. Tina Carstens replied that staff completed that with old projects and proposed projects and confirmed that could be shared with the Board. The Manager asked if that tool would be used in reviewing new projects. Tina Carstens confirmed that proposed project reports would include that ranking when staff makes the presentation. The Board expressed support for that approach.

Another Manager commented that this is a tool to identify top priority but there are other factors that will need to be considered as well when making decisions on projects.

- xiv. Natural Resources Program Update
- xv. Education Program Update
- xvi. Communications and Outreach Program Update

A Manager challenged staff to think about how the Water Stewards information can be more visibly shared on the website. Tina Carstens commented that staff will continue to review opportunities to share information like that on the website.

10. REPORTS OF MANAGERS

A Manager hoped that the MAWD presentations that occurred earlier today could be summarized at the January meeting. The Manager also requested an update from LVAWMO.

A Manager commented on earlier discussion that occurred at the MAWD virtual meeting earlier today and the proposed resolutions that will go before the group on Friday.

11. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Ward, Secretary