



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 1, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of September 1, 2021, was held via Zoom web conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/cAXSK4pKe3w>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

**PRESENT:**

Larry Swope, President  
Dianne Ward, Treasurer  
Val Eisele, Manager

**ABSENT:**

Cliff Aichinger, Vice President  
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Brad Lindaman, 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 (0:43)**

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Managers Aichinger and Skinner absent).

**3. CONSENT AGENDA (1:08)**

- A. Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2021
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
  - i. #21-26 – 3M Building 207 Demolition, Maplewood
  - ii. #21-27 – Level Up Academy Addition, White Bear Lake
  - iii. #21-28 – Luella Pond Outlet, St. Paul
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
  - i. #21-28 CS – Bauer, Rain Garden
  - ii. #21-29 CS – HB Fuller, Habitat Restoration

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Managers Aichinger and Skinner absent).

**4. VISITOR'S COMMENTS (2:45)**

No comments.

**5. PERMIT PROGRAM (2:46)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Residential Shoreline Permit Pilot Program

President Swope commented that this item was tabled from last meeting in order to have more manager feedback.

Manager Ward commented that she appreciated the detail and would be in support of going forward with the program. She commented that this seems to be a good program that benefits citizens and staff and believes it should be a permanent program. She commented that she would like to see a yearly report.

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to make the residential shoreline permit program permanent following the successful pilot.

Further discussion: Manager Eisele commented that staff had said the approved permits have been listed in the monthly report. Nicole Soderholm confirmed that she includes that information within her monthly enforcement report. She stated that if additional details are desired by the Board, she could include more.

Manager Eisele asked what would drive the District to revisit the program to determine if adjustments are needed. Nicole Soderholm stated down the road it would be appropriate to increase the application fee. She stated that if there were rule changes that would impact this process, those adjustments would be made. She noted that this is simply a more streamlined version to review this type of permit request. Tina Carstens noted that if there are adjustments needed, staff could bring that to the Board.

President Swope commented that if there are other requests that could be streamlined, those concepts should come before the Board for discussion as well in order to make things as streamlined and user friendly as possible.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Managers Aichinger and Skinner absent). Manager Ward noted that at the last meeting Manager Skinner indicated her approval of this process.

C. Monthly Enforcement Report

During August, 12 notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (2), install/maintain perimeter control (4), sweep streets (1), and contain liquid/solid waste materials (5).

**6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (8:38)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Budget Status Update

President Swope asked if staff anticipates many more applications this year.

Paige Ahlborg stated that she spoke with Michael Schumann who does the design work for Ramsey County, and he stated that he has had a record number of residential visits this year. She stated that there have been a lot of smaller residential projects this year, which is why there is more left in the budget. She noted that she does have three larger projects that will be around the \$100,000 range in the works. She noted that those projects intend to apply later this year with work to begin in the spring.

President Swope noted the Lake Owasso project for next year may increase participation.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that she has continued to work on outreach for that project, noting that she sent 40 letters as has heard interest from nine property owners thus far. She noted that she will continue another round of outreach and the outreach area could be expanded as well.

Manager Ward asked how many cities the District has done projects with at their city hall campuses, and whether the District should speak proactively with cities.

Paige Ahlborg stated that the District has done projects at three City Hall locations and staff could reach out to others. She stated that a project was done outside of a Ramsey County building and the County has interest in doing projects at their other buildings as well.

Manager Ward stated that those locations have good visibility to residents.

**7. PRESENTATIONS AND/OR ACTION ITEMS (12:15)**

A. 2022 Preliminary Budget and Levy Public Hearing

- i. Approval of 2022 Preliminary Budget and Levy Certification to Ramsey and Washington Counties – Resolution 21-01

Tina Carstens presented an overview of the 2022 preliminary budget and levy, also comparing that to the budget and levy from 2021. She provided information on the budget broken down by percentage to program areas and also broken down into goals. She reviewed the capital improvement project budget items and displayed a graph showing the historical levy and budget amounts. She noted that while there has been an increase in the capital improvement projects, the levy and budget have remained somewhat stable. She provided information on the impact of the proposed levy on residential homestead taxes.

Manager Ward appreciated all of the information and commented that she likes to see it in the various forms. She stated that she believes the residents will support the flood risk reduction projects. She stated that she would like to see a zero percent increase, perhaps using carryover or reserves.

Manager Eisele stated that he sent comments to staff prior to the meeting noting that he is comfortable with the budget as proposed. He noted that there are feasibility studies in the works that can help to identify additional flood risk reduction projects.

President Swope stated that there are a number of surveys that have been completed that will help to guide the work of the District.

Manager Eisele stated that he feels similarly as there are three flood risk feasibility studies and the funding will help to accomplish projects that will be identified.

President Swope opened the public hearing.

No comments made.

President Swope closed the public hearing.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Ward seconded, to approve the draft budget for purposes of the preliminary levy and adopt resolution 21-01.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Further discussion: Manager Eisele referenced the comment in the staff report that mentioned additional changes could be made to the budget prior to final adoption. He asked if the desire from Manager Ward could be in reach, to have a zero percent increase to the levy.

Tina Carstens confirmed that is a possibility. She stated that the preliminary levy would be an increase of 2.76 percent but that can be reduced due to carryover of unspent funds from this year. She noted that more concrete information will be known later in the year when the Board considers final adoption.

Motion carried 3-0 (Managers Aichinger and Skinner absent).

**B. District Inspection Standardization and Mobile Data Collection Project Work Plan Discussion**

Brad Lindaman stated that the Board previously discussed the maintenance program and ways that consistency and efficiency could be added in order to standardize that process and explain why maintenance is or is not being done at a certain time. He stated that staff involved in maintenance and inspections have met a few times in order to come up with a draft process. He noted that this process will need to be tested in order to ensure the desired outcomes are being provided. He stated that the intent would be to put that program into an application on a tablet that can be used to score and upload photos when staff is out in the field. He asked the Board for input on this draft.

Manager Eisele stated that he likes the summary. He stated that collating the data helps to show and demonstrate how maintenance of different properties impact the District system as well. He stated that this would be step one and he likes it.

President Swope agreed that this would be a good start and stated that he is impressed with the work of staff. He stated that he likes that this information can be integrated into the District map. He referenced lake level monitors and asked if those would be included in this process.

Brad Lindaman noted that is a good question. He stated that is part of the maintenance activities but noted that he would have to put more thought into that and how it could be evaluated.

Tina Carstens stated that those would be different and more similar to water quality monitoring stations.

President Swope stated that this is a terrific start and will be a good method to communicate to the public as to how maintenance decisions are made.

Manager Ward agreed that this looks good. She stated that she likes that this shows how integrated pieces owned by other entities are with the overall system. She stated that perhaps a review could be provided summarizing comments and requests from the public from the past few years. She stated that she likes the timeline and noted that this is another layer of improving communication. She looked forward to seeing what will come forward.

Brad Lindaman stated that each month he will include information in the project status report and noted that a presentation could be provided at a later date to update on the process.

Manager Ward stated that perhaps the counties and cities could be advised of this process and perhaps a mention of increased expectations of coordinated maintenance throughout the system.

Manager Eisele stated that having this data will help to set expectations. He asked if there would be any anticipated changes to the maintenance program.

Brad Lindaman stated that in the long-term there will be gains in efficiency and in the short-term this will build a database that can be reviewed year after year to identify issues that may need work beyond maintenance. He believed that this will be a good communication tool as it will take the information and put it into the GIS.

Manager Eisele asked how this could safely be communicated to the public and landowners and whether there would be any risks to communicating this information.

Brad Lindaman stated that some of the larger conveyance systems generate attention, and the District should be mindful of how that is communicated.

Tina Carstens provided additional information on other contacts she can check with to ensure that the communication plan is well thought out.

## **8. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (46:26)**

### **A. Wetlands Workshop – September 15<sup>th</sup>**

President Swope advised of the upcoming workshop scheduled for September 15<sup>th</sup>. He noted that Manager Aichinger cannot attend and asked if the workshop should be postponed. He stated that he would feel uncomfortable having this workshop without Manager Aichinger and would favor postponement.

Manager Ward agreed with postponement as this is a small Board and this issue will drive policy projects and issues, therefore it is important to have everyone present.

Manager Eisele stated that he would also agree. He noted that perhaps materials have been prepared for the workshop that could still be distributed to the Board for review. He stated that he would find that information helpful for making other decisions that come forward.

Tina Carstens stated that staff can send the information ahead of the workshop. She stated that she is unsure when Manager Aichinger will attend but would most likely be back for the October meeting.

It was the Board consensus that the workshop be re-scheduled for October.

## **9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (50:44)**

### **A. Meetings Attended**

No comments.

### **B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates**

Tina Carstens advised of the Water Resources Conference in October, which will be held virtually. She noted that interested Managers should advise staff to ensure they are registered.

C. Ongoing Project/Program Updates

Tina Carstens provided a brief summary of the updates she included within her report.

Brad Lindaman noted that Barr has collected information on alum and is speaking with a contact at the PCA about alum use in water quality projects.

Manager Eisele stated that there is a reduction in PH at the alum plant and asked if that is an isolated event or related to alum.

Brad Lindaman noted that it was an isolated event and the system reacted as it should, alerting staff.

Tina Carstens stated that the EAW process is still moving along for the Victoria Shores proposal and noted that she will continue to update the Board.

D. Staffing Changes due to Retirement

Tina Carstens noted that Emily Simmons has transitioned into a full-time employee and has begun to takeover some administrative duties as Debbie Barnes' last day is the following week. She stated that staff is planning a retirement celebration at the end of September.

Manager Ward stated that because former interns fill most permanent staff positions, the best way to bring diversity into the District is through interns and reminded staff that should remain a focus.

President Swope asked for an update on the status of in person meetings and mask wearing.

Tina Carstens stated that the District instituted mask wearing in the office once again and provided additional details. She stated that the opening of the office will be delayed based on new information and recommendations from the CDC. She asked for input from the Board on how it would like to conduct its October meeting.

President Swope commented that he would prefer to hold the meetings virtually for the time being as things continue to change.

Manager Eisele stated that the Board talked about holding workshops in person and asked if the workshops would be held remotely as well.

President Swope commented on the benefit of having workshops in person to facilitate better discussion but would prefer to hold it remotely if masks continue to be required.

Tina Carstens stated that a determination can be held on whether a meeting would be held remotely prior to the required ten-day notice period.

Manager Eisele advised of technology options that are available for workshops to increase engagement and participation.

Manager Ward commented that she does not mind wearing a mask for a workshop and noted that perhaps on those necessary to be in person could attend the workshop in person (staff, Board, and consultants).

Laurann Kirschner confirmed that could be done, allowing members of the public attend remotely, as long as it is noticed in that manner and the notice provides participation instructions for the public.

**10. ATTORNEY REPORT (1:04:06)**

Laurann Kirschner stated that her office has been busy trying to keep up with the changes to the open meeting laws. She stated that at this time, the President would be the decision maker on whether the Board should meet in person or virtually. She stated that the proper notice would still need to be provided. She stated that the publication was made for the budget public hearing, and she spoke with Nicole Soderholm related to a permitting compliance issue that they will continue to work on.

President Swope asked if there is input on what other entities are doing.

Laurann Kirschner stated that her office represents about six others. She noted that most are meeting in person with a hybrid option for the public to attend. She noted that those meeting rooms are much larger, which allows more space for social distancing than the District meeting room.

**11. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:07:57)**

**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
- v. Lake Water Quality Monitoring
- vi. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- vii. Tanners Flood Response Tool Model Update
- viii. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- ix. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- x. 2021 Tanners Lake Alum Facility Monitoring
- xi. Phalen Outlet and Keller Channel Operations Plan
- xii. Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- xiii. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- xiv. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- xv. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- xvi. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel Five-Year Inspection
- xvii. County Road D Ravine
- xviii. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021
- xix. Natural Resources Program Update
- xx. Education Program Update
- xxi. Communications Program Update
- xxii. CAC Update – Watershed Excellence Awards

Manager Eisele stated that he is excited about the interim emergency response and asked if it would be worthwhile to provide highlights of critical situations or bring those to the Board.

Brad Lindaman stated that the data has been processed and as they see how that information has changed, they will be able to determine if impact would be to single-family homes or other structures. He stated that a presentation would be provided to the Board by the November meeting. He stated that the expectation would be that those are wrapped up by the end of the year, but he would like to provide that update at the November Board meeting. He stated that if there are additional questions or more detail, a workshop could be a good option if additional information is desired.

President Swope referenced the Beltline Study and stated that similar to that process, he would like to see what has been determined, the new information gained, and how that impacts the thought process.

Brad Lindman noted that the feasibility study works in tandem with the interim emergency response plans.

Manager Eisele stated that perhaps some of the priorities will be changed with that new information. He referenced the blue green algae concern and noted that it seems like quite a beast. He asked about the District's role in the maintenance or addressing those concerns.

Brad Lindaman stated that historically if blue green algae is encountered in lake sampling, the process would be to sample and have the biologist at Barr complete the testing. He stated that if that toxin is identified, they would identify whoever is responsible for that beach area or other locations where the public may come in contact with it. He noted that there was a previous Board discussion on this topic and whether a more proactive approach should be taken, but the Board did not want to take that path. He stated that once the water is moving, the algae is broken up and the toxicity is reduced. He stated that because there is human health risk that issue would tend to fall to the Department of Health. He noted that in the past the Department of Health has stated they are aware of the issue but does not have the resources to deal with that.

Tina Carstens stated that blue green algae pops up in a few locations on occasion and staff has contact with the Department of Health and PCA. She stated that blue green algae is unpredictable as it sometimes appears in lakes with good water quality. She stated that the PCA says "when in doubt, stay out".

Manager Eisele asked if the District communicates about that on its website.

Tina Carstens noted that would fall to the city or county as those are city or county beaches. She noted that sometimes the District will share information on its social media.

President Swope asked for an update on the Willow Pond spent lime filter as it seems it is having a tough time getting going.

Brad Lindaman stated that they are yet to get the system up and running and the project has been delayed from a variety of pieces in the monitoring device that they have been unable to obtain.

Dave Vlasin commented that they have had a hard time getting parts because of the problems with shipping.

President Swope asked for that an overview be provided of the operating plans for the weirs once completed. He referenced the aeration study and asked what the Roseville aerator would do and any impact that would have.

Bill Bartodziej replied that would impact the baseline data. He noted that the District hoped to collect one year of data without the aerator. He noted that they will continue the monitoring with the aerator in place and make a determination after that.

President Swope referenced the Grass Lake berm wetland mitigation and asked if a brief presentation could be provided at the next meeting.

Brad Lindaman confirmed that could be done.

Nicole Soderholm stated that there were initial delays with the monitoring because of the flooding. She stated that staff went to the site last month with BWSR and determined some findings. She provided background information on the mitigation process which includes five years of maintenance and monitoring. She stated that they are hoping to establish that the wetlands are receiving sufficient hydrology to sustain along with the vegetation.

Brad Lindaman commented that he believed there was a recommendation to overseed some of the areas where vegetation did not appear to be emerging.

Dave Vlasin confirmed that would be done within the next five to six weeks. He noted that it was delayed due to the drought conditions.

President Swope referenced the lake level monitors and received confirmation that there are eight stations and additional details were provided on their status.

**12. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:32:10)**

President Swope highlighted some of the items that will appear on the next agenda including a public art policy, maintenance standards, an update on the Grass Lake berm, and the weir operating plans.

**13. ADJOURN**

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried 3-0 (Managers Aichinger and Skinner absent).