



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
April 6, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of April 6, 2022, was held at the District Office Board Room, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, Minnesota, and via Zoom web conferencing, at 6:30 p.m. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/6wtwqlm-TYo>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator	Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District	Matt Doneux, Natural Resources Technician
Lyndsey Provos, Water Monitoring Technician	Brandon Barnes, Barr Engineering
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector	Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist	Edward Roberts, Lake Owasso resident
Angie Malone, Twin Lake Association Board Member	Joe Bester, Lake Owasso resident

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

President Swope introduced newly appointed member Matt Kramer. Matt Kramer introduced himself and stated that he is excited to be a part of the Board. He commented that he was just appointed the day before and did not have an opportunity to review the packet, so he will excuse himself from tonight's meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (6:33)

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

3. CONSENT AGENDA (7:28)

- A. Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2022
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 22-08 – SPRWS Soil Staging Site, St. Paul
 - ii. 22-09 – Xcel Energy Lexington to County Road C, Roseville
 - iii. 22-10 – Reuter Walton Apartments, Little Canada
 - iv. 22-11 – St. Pal Wheelock Parkway Improvements, St. Paul
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
 - i. 22-09 CS – Lakewood Hills, White Bear Lake

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

Further discussion: President Swope mentioned an item in the bills and asked for more information.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (9:00)

There were none.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (9:05)

A. Applications

Permit #22-12: Victoria Shores – Roseville

Nicole Soderholm provided an overview of the activities of the past year related to this request, noting that the final plat was approved by Roseville the previous month. She stated that a variance is being requested for temporary wetland buffer disturbance of the upland buffer in order to install a pipe.

Manager Eisele commented that it sounds like some of the water frontage will be managed by the HOA and asked the type of influence or review the District may have for wetland disturbance. Nicole Soderholm commented that the developer would be doing the buffer disturbance when installing the stormwater facilities and would also install signage near the wetland buffer. She stated that the plat was changed during the EAW process so that the private parcels would not have riparian rights and instead the HOA would own the lakeshore outlot and stormwater facility outlot. She did not believe the developer is installing docks, noting that would be a responsibility of a future HOA. She stated that the agreements related to the buffers and stormwater would go with the land and therefore would be transferred from the developer to the future landowners.

President Swope commented that it is his understanding that three docks could be installed, which equates to one dock per two houses and an HOA dock along with a boardwalk. He received confirmation that there is an average buffer of 75 feet. He asked if the variance would be for the developer to work in the buffer zone and not within the wetlands. Tina Carstens confirmed that work would be within the buffer zone.

Nicole Soderholm stated that the District does not regulate design or criteria for docks, noting that would fall under the DNR, as would the boardwalk. She commented that the District would be regulating the stormwater management and buffer.

President Swope asked if there is a thought related to frequency of inspections. Nicole Soderholm replied that the District has never had a wetland buffer agreement prior to this but could inspect that zone when completing the stormwater maintenance inspection. She stated that the agreement allows for staff to access that area and enforce the agreement and restoration if the agreement is breached.

Laurann Kirschner stated that the stormwater maintenance agreement and wetland buffer agreement would be recorded against each property in the development. She cautioned against including an inspection timeline within the agreement and believed it a better idea to state the District has a right to access and inspect at reasonable times and frequency.

President Swope agreed. He referenced the special provisions recommended which include multiple mentions of the City of Roseville and asked if the District would be working with the City. Nicole Soderholm stated that the stormwater management agreement is signed by the permit applicant, District, and City and that was mimicked in the wetland buffer agreement. She stated that it is helpful to have the participation of the City for enforcement purposes and cooperative efforts.

President Swope stated that the plat was changed and approved by the Roseville City Council and just wanted to ensure that the concerns of residents had been addressed. He asked if the District would be involved in the signage. Nicole Soderholm noted that the District would provide sample language, but the developer would be responsible to submit sign language for review and would be responsible for installation of the signs.

Nicole Soderholm stated that the developer has agreed to all the special provisions as proposed.

Manager Eisele asked if the wetland buffer agreement would be something the District would consider more for future applications. Nicole Soderholm stated that the District rules specify no disturbance in the wetland buffers. Tina Carstens stated that the rules only apply up to construction for buffers, but some cities have stricter requirements. Nicole Soderholm stated that the wetland buffer agreement was driven by this application because it is a unique situation in which people will traverse through the buffer and therefore the District wanted to be clear about what would be allowed or not allowed. She stated that the agreement also made it clear to resident about what would be allowed and not allowed in that area.

Edward Roberts, Lake Owasso resident, applauded the efforts of the District in its unique wetland buffer agreement. He hoped that the District would put in place parameters to ensure inspections occur more frequently until things comfortably settle.

President Swope noted that staff does complete regular inspections during construction of a project. Nicole Soderholm reviewed the inspection process during construction, noting that District staff completes weekly or biweekly inspections along with the City completing inspections. She agreed that it would remain a priority to continue inspections after the permit closes and as the properties change ownership.

Tina Carstens noted that staff completes an inspection form which is shared with the City. She stated that a resident representative could be added to the list to receive those inspection reports as well.

Manager Eisele stated that he is concerned that a homeowner will forget about inspections and asked if the inspection could be conducted from the body of water. Nicole Soderholm stated that she does not inspect by boat, noting that the agreement provides access rights. Tina Carstens commented that the outlot near the water is owned by the HOA and not a private party. She stated that staff is clearly identified with a District vehicle and has the agreement with them when completing inspections.

Manager Skinner commented that perhaps inspection reminders could be mailed to property owners prior to inspections that occur following the closing of the permit. Tina Carstens noted that the notice could be provided to the HOA. Nicole Soderholm stated that people may move in while construction is still underway on other parts of the site which would allow for communication with those new residents.

Mr. Roberts thanked the Board and District staff for their vigilant efforts throughout the past year related to this project and the engagement and communication with the residents on Lake Owasso.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Ward seconded, to approve Permit #22-12 with the special provisions and variance request.

Further discussion: Manager Skinner stated that she is sad to see some of the last pristine woods developed but recognized that there is nothing that could be done to prevent that outside of purchasing the land. President Swope commented that he believes the District had an impact on making the development better than originally proposed.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During March, four notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (2), install/maintain construction entrance (1), and contain/dispose of liquid and solid waste (1).

President Swope asked for details on the Wetland A trail feasibility study by Ramsey County. Nicole Soderholm stated that they are just bringing partners together to look into options. Tina Carstens commented that there is a design team that has been brought in to look at trail options with the partners. It was noted that there is not a timeline for the project, but it was believed that resident engagement would begin this summer.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (41:12)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided an update on the available budget.

7. ACTION ITEMS (43:22)

A. Lake Owasso Shoreline Restoration Project

Paige Ahlborg stated that this project is similar to the other shoreline restoration projects the District has completed on Snail and Twin lakes. She stated that ten residents are participating in the project and provided some general project details. She noted that other residents can apply for assistance through the stewardship grant program as well.

Manager Eisele asked if there are plans to complete shoreline restoration in the park and beach areas. Bill Bartodziej replied that is a major restoration project this year, noting that the shoreline will be addressed from the beach to the boat ramp, a total of 730 feet of shoreline with an average width of 15 feet. He noted that it will create a nice amenity for the park and will also act as a demonstration project to hopefully draw in interest from additional residents for the next phase of the project that will occur in 2023.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve the preliminary design, estimated costs, and proposed project schedule and direct staff to finalize the design and bidding documents and advertise the project for bid. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2022 Targeted Retrofit Projects

Paige Ahlborg provided details on the two proposed projects, which were identified through the annual field visits. She noted that both partners have been great to work with.

President Swope stated that he appreciated the details as to how the projects were rated and that factors that increased the scores. He asked the timing of the projects. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that the school project would occur during the summer while the church would have more leeway in their schedule.

President Swope asked if it would be possible to incorporate students in the construction. Paige Ahlborg noted that students will be involved in the planting and perhaps maintenance activities. She noted that the District staff also works with the school on curriculum.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Ward seconded, to approve the preliminary design, estimated costs, and proposed project schedule and direct staff to finalize the design and bidding documents and solicit bid proposals. Motion carried unanimously.

C. West Vadnais Lake Next Steps

Tina Carstens stated that staff followed the direction of the Board following the meeting with representatives from VLAWMO last month. She stated that she wanted to review this information with the Board prior to distribution to

VLAWMO. She stated that the District is at the point where it should make the decision whether or not to pursue a boundary change.

Manager Ward commented that it seemed that much of the discussion at the last meeting was new to some of the members from VLAWMO. She believed that perhaps the requested information should be provided to VLAWMO, with time for them to review and respond before making that decision.

Manager Eisele stated that it would be wonderful to have more information to provide VLAWMO on the related actions should a boundary change be requested or not requested. He stated that he would propose to change the boundaries and see what the response is.

President Swope commented that when you look through what has been done and the issues that exist now that Grass Lake has been added to the District, it would make sense to add West Vadnais to the District boundaries. He commented that the District is spending money on West Vadnais one way or the other, so it should simply be within the boundaries.

Manager Ward stated that she would be fine with that direction and suggested that the letter include the signature of President Swope.

President Swope commented that he is not as concerned with the investment, but that it is a critical part of the District watershed and should be within the boundary. He noted that the money needed for the projects is more than the annual VLAWMO WVL budget.

The Board and staff discussed potential costs related to West Vadnais and whether they should be included in the communication to VLAWMO.

President Swope stated that part of the issue is related to timing as the District Board meets monthly, whereas VLAWMO meets every other month. He noted that if the information is sent to VLAWMO now, it could be reviewed by their Board at their April meeting.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to direct staff to notify VLAWMO staff that RWMWD would like to pursue an official boundary change of the West Vadnais Lake subwatershed into the RWMWD boundary. Motion carried unanimously.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (1:08:27)

Laurann Kirschner stated that the changes made to open meeting law in the last year mostly only apply to a pandemic setting. She stated that if a Manager is going to attend virtually, they must be in a public place and their location must be posted in advance of a regular meeting. She stated that if that notice were not posted in proper time, the Manager could participate in the meeting but could not be part of the quorum.

Tina Carstens asked if a Manager could post their home location if they were willing to open that to the public. Laurann Kirschner commented that she was unsure but noted that the home address would need to be on the notice. She stated that if all the requirements are met (public place, and proper notice) there is no limit on the number of meetings a member can attend virtually. She stated that there are two exceptions that allow a private setting for virtual attendance that would allow up to three times per year (pandemic, and active-duty military).

Manager Eisele asked if a member could still participate in discussion if they were attending virtually but did not meet the requirements to vote. Laurann Kirschner confirmed that the member could participate in discussion but could not vote and would not be counted towards quorum.

Manager Skinner suggested that this topic be brought to MAWD for consideration at the annual meeting. Tina Carstens stated that has already been included in the legislative priorities for MAWD.

9. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING) (1:16:58)

A. Meeting Attendance

No additional comments.

B. Action Log

Manager Eisele stated that many suggestions are made during meetings and asked if those proposed actions could be tracked in order to follow up on progress. He stated that if there are obstacles to achieving the action, it would be wonderful for the Board to hear about that as well. He stated that he does like the enhancements to the project and program statuses. He asked if additional ways could be added to share the next milestone and projected end date with the Board.

Manager Ward commented that she likes that idea, noting that perhaps a list could be drafted and included at the end of the minutes or separate document. She noted that if there is a lighter agenda, one of those items could be pulled from the list and added to the agenda.

Tina Carstens stated that she would be open to either option to track those items. She noted that they have started recapping the items to be included on the next agenda at the end of each meeting, which is helpful to ensure nothing is missed.

Manager Skinner commented that she likes the idea of creating a list which would allow the Board to set priorities. Manager Eisele agreed that it is a method of accountability and does not place that burden entirely on staff either.

Tina Carstens stated that she has spoken with Barr Engineering about adding the additional details related to next steps of the program and project status report. She noted that although the information is included in the summary scope, that can be difficult to find, therefore it has been proposed to place that information into a chart which makes it much easier to follow.

Tina Carstens will put together a proposal for an action log for the Board to consider.

C. Administrator Review Process

Manager Ward stated that she was able to connect with Cliff Aichinger to receive input on Tina Carstens' performance and the typical review process. She reviewed a draft process she proposes. She stated that she will meet with Tina Carstens on Monday and then a Zoom meeting could be held with the Board members to review performance, compensation, goals, and the future review process. She believed that this process could be completed within the next few weeks.

Laurann Kirschner confirmed that the Board could close a meeting for the purpose of evaluating the performance of an employee, but the meeting would still need to be noticed. She was unsure if the meeting could be held virtually.

D. Audit and Fraud

President Swope stated that Redpath is currently completing the audit and contacted both him and Manager Ward asking if there were any fraud concerns. Tina Carstens noted that it is part of the audit process and board members are contacted every year.

President Swope asked if Redpath could provide a presentation to the Board following the audit. Tina Carstens confirmed that could be done but it should be specified as to whether the Board would like the presentation to focus on the audit or another topic.

President Swope stated that he would like more information or training on the responsibilities of the Board.

Manager Ward commented that she is not interested in a full presentation of the audit but would be interested in more information or training related to fraud prevention.

Tina Carstens clarified that Redpath was not concerned about a specific fraud incident but ask about fraud concerns from a few random Board and staff members as a part of the process. She confirmed that the audit report would be included in the Board packet for the next meeting, and she would also request Redpath to provide additional information on the topic of fraud at the May meeting.

E. Wetlands Policy

President Swope stated that more information will be included on this topic in May.

F. CAC Representation

Tina Carstens noted the previous liaison to the CAC is no longer members of the Board and asked if there was interest from any current Board members to fill that position.

Manager Ward noted that in reviewing the calendar she would only be able to attend two of the four meetings. She suggested that perhaps the members rotate in attending those meetings.

Manager Eisele stated that he could perhaps attend the meetings that Manager Ward is unable to attend.

G. West Vadnais Lake Follow-Up

No additional comments.

10. PRESENTATIONS (1:14:55)

None.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:14:57)

A. Meetings Attended

Tina Carstens commented that meeting season has ramped up and highlighted some of the discussions that have occurred at recent meetings she attended. She referenced a project Oakdale is interested in completing in conjunction with the road project but may request that the District provide the funding and Oakdale pays the District back for that work.

Brandon Barnes commented that when the preliminary cost estimate was presented to the Board a few months ago for upsizing the pipe, the MnDOT cost estimate included upsizing the pipe. He noted that the cost mentioned by Tina Carstens would be for replacing the pipe in kind under Hudson Avenue.

Manager Eisele asked if the funds would be expended this calendar year. Tina Carstens commented that a portion of the project will occur in 2023 and the remainder in 2024 and 2025. She noted that the funding would come from the District's flood risk fund.

Brandon Barnes provided an estimate of \$100,000 for the funds that would be fronted by Oakdale for that project.

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to direct staff to continue discussions with Oakdale for providing funds for that portion of the project. Motion carried unanimously.

Manager Eisele asked for an update on the flood risk meetings with the cities. Tina Carstens commented that the information was well received and provided an update. Brandon Barnes agreed that Maplewood was very productive as the City is on the same page in working together with the District.

Tina Carstens provided additional updates on recent meetings attended.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. Ongoing Project Update

No comments.

D. Office COVID Update

Tina Carstens commented that this is the first week and noted that it is nice to have people back in the office working together.

E. Board Appointment Process

No comments.

F. MAWD Updates

No comments.

12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:03:04)

- A. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- B. Kohlman Creek/Wakefield Lake Diversion Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- C. County Ditch 17 Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- D. Phalen Village Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- E. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Planning Study
- F. Owasso Basin/North Star Estates Flood Risk Improvements
- G. Annual Water Quality Report Assistance
- H. Special Project BPM Monitoring
- I. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- J. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- K. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- L. Woodbury Target Stormwater Retrofits
- M. South Lake Emily Filtration BMP
- N. Beltline Five Year Inspection
- O. District Inspection Standardization
- P. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2022
- Q. Natural Resources Program Update
- R. Education Program Update
- S. Communications Program, Website Redesign, and WaterFest Update

Manager Eisele referenced Item F, noting that at the last meeting there was discussion related to definition of flood risk for manufactured homes and asked for an update. Brandon Barnes commented that they are still working on that item, digesting the FEMA guidance and reaching out to manufactured housing builders to determine their specifications, and reviewing City ordinances related to manufactured homes. He stated that the next step would be to engage Little Canada and then engage the Board on how flood risk will be defined within North Star Estates and more broadly in the manufactured home community.

President Swope referenced Item Q, noting that he received a letter about a controlled burn near wetland A and asked why RWMWD is sending the letter rather than Ramsey County. Bill Bartodziej stated that the District is partnering with Ramsey County on the controlled burns. He stated that the District agreed to send out the letters as a partner because of its in experience in doing so.

Manager Eisele asked for details on the total funding request for the Keller regional park restoration. He asked if the Board needs to approve that request. Tina Carstens noted that item was already included in the approved budget.

Manager Skinner also referenced the Keller restoration. She understood that the area is going to be redeveloped into housing and wanted to ensure that the District is not investing money that would be wasted by future development. Tina Carstens clarified that Hillcrest is going to be developed, not Keller.

Manager Eisele referenced Item S, noting that he was part of the website testing. He stated that there seems to be focus on improving the search functionality which would be a benefit. He stated that the direction of the Board has helped to guide the improvements.

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

No comments.

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.