



RAMSEY-WASHINGTON

METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Minutes of Regular Board Meeting April 7, 2021

The Regular Meeting of April 7, 2021, was held via Zoom web conferencing. A recording of the meeting can be found at https://youtu.be/jb4_ZiOm_Sk. Video time stamps are included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Kyle Kubitza, Water Monitoring Technician
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering
Simba Blood, Natural Resources Specialist
Bruce Copley, Shoreview Resident

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Brian Wessels, Intent Built, Inc.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (1:24)

- A. Approval of Minutes from March 3, 2021
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 21-04 – Chick-Fil-A Woodbury, Woodbury
 - ii. 21-05 – 1880 Old Hudson Road Phase 2, St. Paul
 - iii. 21-06 – Maplewood Fire Station County Road C, Maplewood
 - iv. 21-07 – Ryan Drive/Keller Parkway Conveyance, Little Canada
 - v. 21-08 – White Bear Lake High School Phase 2, White Bear Lake

- vi. 21-09 – 2191 Labore Road, Vadnais Heights
- vii. 21-10 – Xcel Energy Vehicle Storage Building, White Bear Lake
- viii. 21-11 – North High School Addition, North St. Paul

D. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Modifications – Change Order No. 3

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

Further discussion: Manager Ward commented that she did not see the time stamps.

Manager Aichinger commented that the time stamps are listed. Tina Carstens provided additional details on where the time stamps are found.

Manager Eisele asked the strategy, or impact on permit applications with Atlas 14 modeling and future flood predictions. Nicole Soderholm provided additional details on the permit process, noting that the applicant must demonstrate that their project does not increase runoff rates for Atlas 14 2, 10, and 100 year critical storm events.

Tina Carstens stated that she forwarded the response from Barr Engineering to Manager Eisele which had additional information on the modeling and updates that may be made. Erin Anderson Wenz commented that where the requirements are related to rate, the rate is not allowed to increase over existing conditions. She stated that the volume reduction requirements are related to water quality goals and typically do not have a significant impact on flood control.

Manager Eisele commented that it would seem that some of the projects would have an impact on the modeling and perhaps that is something that should be reviewed.

President Swope noted that perhaps that would be an idea that could be discussed in a workshop setting.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (6:30)

Bruce Copley requested that the District spend more time assessing the Snail Lake Wetland A area. He commented that rainfall has been slowly increasing over time and the sudden increase around 2014 significantly impacted the groundwater. He stated that it appears there is more year-round flow going into the water bodies from surrounding bodies of water. He asked that a more detailed analysis of the water levels, the impact of development and expectations for the future be done for both Wetland A and Snail Lake. He stated that he recently reviewed the augmentation study completed for Snail Lake in 1991 and could serve as a good starting point. He stated that the study should be of interest as lake seepage and water runoff has changed significantly in the past 30 years. He recognized that the Board approves projects as they come forward on an individual basis but believed that additional analysis should be done on the cumulative impact of the projects. He believed that the sum of all of the development has had a negative impact on the water bodies and further project approvals should be delayed until this analysis is completed. He stated that Ramsey County is proposing a trail project around Wetland A and believed that the study should be done prior to allowing that project to move forward.

President Swope asked if the District has looked at this area in that manner. Erin Anderson Wenz commented that the models were updated during the Atlas 14 precipitation updates in 2014. At the time, larger projects were included to reflect the watershed conditions.

President Swope asked if the District has looked at all the impacts of the projects within the District to provide more complete data. Tina Carstens replied that the District has completed modeling and studies in this area over the past several years and believed all that data was updated to reflect projects and permits.

Erin Anderson Wenz commented that there was a large update district-wide to update the models with Atlas 14. She stated that staff could review the more recent projects to update the models further.

President Swope asked that an update be provided at the next meeting.

Manager Ward commented that she would like to see a methodology to review projects on a cumulative basis. Tina Carstens explained that is done through the permitting process as applicants cannot increase the rate or volume of runoff. She stated that applicants are reducing the rate and volume from existing conditions.

Manager Eisele asked that a workshop be setup to review this idea further.

Manager Aichinger commented that the modeling is based on the planned land uses the cities have within their Comprehensive Plans. He stated that if a parcel is planned for residential, that is assumed within the modeling, therefore when that development occurs, it is not new to the model. He commented that the district is already 95 percent built out. He commented that the model is not impacted as long as the land use remains the same.

Manager Skinner commented that the District has spent a lot of time over the past few years on this topic and did not feel a workshop is needed on the topic. She stated that perhaps Manager Eisele would benefit from meeting with staff to further discuss the topic and be brought up to speed.

President Swope recognized that Managers Aichinger and Skinner may have that knowledge, but the other members of the Board are newer and would be well served from further discussion.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (18:40)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During March, seven notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (1), install/maintain perimeter control (2), contain liquid/solid waste (2), and stabilize exposed soils (2).

Nicole Soderholm provided an update on recent meetings that she has attended.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (22:54)

A. Applications - None

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg stated that the update was included in the packet. She stated that staff is working on project intake and plan development. She anticipated that this would be another busy year if this pace stays on track.

7. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (23:35)

A. Annual Meeting

President Swope commented that at the annual meeting there was discussion about moving the annual meeting to occur in March, rather than January, which would allow for the appointment of members to occur prior to

elections. Tina Carstens noted that as mentioned previously that would require a bylaw change. She stated that she has put that on her list of things to work on with legal counsel. She anticipated that this could come back in the fall.

B. Communicating Between Board Meetings

President Swope stated that he sent out an email to the Board with the potential list of topics prior to the meeting for the Board to review. He asked the most effective way for members to handle things between Board meetings in order to make the meetings more efficient. Tracey Galowitz stated that communication between members can be a slippery slope. She stated that something can be sent out with no response, such as administrative items, but there cannot be back and forth discussion or comments. She stated that discussion outside of open meetings can breed suspicion, even if the discussion is not malicious.

Manager Aichinger stated that this topic arises related to City Council meetings and workshops. He noted that many times a Council may have much of their discussion in work session prior to a regular meeting, but those work sessions are open to the public and therefore allowed.

Tracey Galowitz commented that any discussion between members of the Board outside of a Board meeting should be limited to administrative matters and not substantive.

C. RWMWD Website Needs

Tina Carstens noted that a written update was provided within the Board packet describing how the process will move forward to gather input for the website update. She stated that information will be gathered from many different groups of stakeholders and the website analytics in order to develop the best plan.

D. Maintenance Needs

President Swope stated that he would want more information on the maintenance standards and thresholds.

Manager Aichinger stated that it could be useful to have someone provide an update on the process, noting that there are routine checks on projects to identify any issues and maintenance needs. Tina Carstens agreed that could be setup.

Manager Eisele stated that he would be interested in the presentation. He stated that a lot of the modeling depends on the predictability of how things will work and therefore having an understanding of continual maintenance would be a benefit.

E. Workshops

President Swope asked if the Board would be interested in developing a schedule of workshop topics.

Manager Skinner suggested that a list of topics be developed, and the list then be prioritized as she would not want to schedule too many meetings as that could become burdensome.

President Swope suggested that the Board provide their list of topics to staff to be compiled and discussed at the last meeting. Tina Carstens stated that she would also like good definition of what the desired outcome would be to ensure the right information is provided by staff.

8. PRESENTATIONS AND/OR ACTION ITEMS (42:07)

A. Twin Lake Shoreline Restoration Accept Plans and Solicit Bids

Paige Ahlborg provided details on the upcoming Twin Lake shoreline restoration project. She noted that Manager Eisele will be participating in the project and therefore should abstain from voting. Tracey Galowitz commented that Manager Eisele can discuss the item but should abstain from voting as his property will benefit from the project.

Paige Ahlborg commented that the plans were included in the packet and if approved staff will solicit bids later this week.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Skinner 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.

Further discussion: Manager Ward commented that it would be nice to go back and visit the sites to see some of the restoration work that was completed.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	abstain
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Tina Carstens commented that the District restoration project was Snail Lake last year and is planning for Twin Lake restoration this year. She stated that Ramsey County is talking about doing restoration around Owasso next year and suggested staff to look into the option to expand restoration to residents on Owasso as well.

President Swope asked what would happen if additional homeowners want to participate after the project is completed. Paige Ahlborg commented that there are some Snail Lake residents interested this year and they will just follow the typical stewardship grant process.

B. 2021-22 BMP Maintenance Program Selection of Contractor(s)

Paige Ahlborg provided an overview of the sites included in these projects, noting that the sites would be divided up between three contractors. She stated that staff typically likes to have the same contractor that completes the project continue with the maintenance.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Ward seconded, to award the 2021-2022 BMP Maintenance contract to Minnesota Native Landscapes, Outdoor Lab, and Sandstrom Land Management for the projects specified in the staff report and direct staff to prepare the necessary documents and work with the selected contractors.

Further discussion: Manager Aichinger asked for an update on the Maplewood living streets project. Paige Ahlborg commented that the maintenance was turned over the City to manage.

Simba Blood provided an update on the inspections that staff continues to do. She noted that the gardens look good, and a letter is sent to those that need maintenance. She commented that staff does speak with those property owners to provide input and/or assistance.

Manager Ward asked how the list is divided between contractors. Paige Ahlborg replied that some contractors have experience on certain projects and therefore staff keeps those projects with those contractors. She commented that the remainder are divided in order to make the division of projects somewhat equal.

Manager Ward commented that in the future it would be helpful to see the dollar amounts for each of the contractors.

President Swope commented that the BMP supplier list has been published on the website and challenged staff to develop a new title, as Best Management Practice can be misleading.

Manager Aichinger commented that BMP is the term used and therefore using another term would cause more confusion. He stated that perhaps a subtitle could be added. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that all watershed districts and the County use the term.

Manager Skinner commented that when she began all the acronyms drove her crazy, but agreed that Best Management Practices would be the best term in this case.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Upgrades Accept Bids and Order Project

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that the bid opening summary was included in the Board packet. She stated that Fitzgerald Excavating was the lowest bidder, and the District has had positive experience with that contractor on past projects. She stated that the range of bids bracketed the engineer's estimate, which is good to see.

President Swope asked if the engineer's estimate was released in this project. Tina Carstens commented that the estimate was not provided in the bid packet but would be public knowledge if the minutes of the previous Board meeting were reviewed by the contractor.

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to accept the bids and award the Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Upgrades project to Fitzgerald Excavating and direct staff to prepare and mail the notice of award, prepare the agreements, and review the required submittals.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:06:21)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. WaterFest Update

Tina Carstens provided a brief update on the planning for WaterFest.

The Board provided different ideas on events that could incorporate carp.

D. Ramsey County Permitting Follow-Up

Tina Carstens stated that she met with the Director of Parks and Rec and they are working to develop General Permit language which would be reviewed by both attorneys. She noted that new projects or considerable changes would still have to go through the County Board for approval. She commented that the new process should help to streamline things a bit more.

Manager Ward requested monthly updates continue to be provided until the General Permit process is completed.

E. Intern Hiring

Tina Carstens commented that information was included in the packet on this item.

Manager Ward asked if there was diversity outreach completed. Tina Carstens replied that there were new job fairs for the positions. She stated that there was a wider variety of applicants because of the process, as it was more accessible and completely online.

F. Office Building Updates – In-Person Meeting Technologies

Tina Carstens noted that pictures were included in the packet for the Board to review. She stated that there were changes to the Board room and staff offices. She stated that all of the equipment is available, and staff just needs to ensure that everything is hooked up correctly. She explained that when in person meetings return, the technology will allow the Board meetings to continue to be video recorded and broadcast online. She stated that the Board would then discuss whether they would simply like the meetings recorded for playback or available for people to watch and/or participate in live.

10. ATTORNEY REPORT (1:21:10)

Tracey Galowitz provided an update on the review and updates that she assisted staff with related to the responsible bidder contracts.

11. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:22:38)

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- ii. FEMA Flood Mapping Updates
- iii. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iv. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- v. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- vi. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- vii. Phalen Chain of Lakes Changes in Water Quality
- viii. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- ix. Tanner Lake Alum Facility Monitoring
- x. Automated Lake Monitoring Systems
- xi. Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- xii. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- xiii. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- xiv. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- xv. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel Five-Year Inspection
- xvi. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021

- xvii. New Technology Report – AquaShield Water Treatment Solutions
- xviii. Natural Resources Program Update
- xix. Education Program Update
- xx. Communications Program Update

Manager Ward asked for an update related to carp and West Vadnais. Simba Blood commented that the electric carp barrier in West Vadnais has been installed and should be operational later this week. She commented that a fish survey will also be completed in 2022 by VLAWMO.

12. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:24:35)

Manager Aichinger asked if there has been thought to the criteria as to when an in-person meeting would be held. He commented that perhaps several members have received their vaccine, or would within the next month, and asked if that could be the trigger. Tina Carstens replied that personally she believed that some decisions would need to be made as the space does not allow for social distancing of residents to attend in person. She stated that perhaps there could be a hybrid where the Board is in person and residents participate virtually.

Manager Skinner commented that she attends so many meetings all day that she has saved time in attending via Zoom. She stated that she would be interested in hybrid participation, as she would like to continue to attend virtually if that is an option. Tracey Galowitz commented that the Minnesota League of Cities would be a good resource to follow up for a recommendation.

Tina Carstens confirmed that she has used that agency as a resource this past year. She stated that she recently polled other administrators to determine when they will be returning to in person meetings and would have those responses back for the next meeting.

President Swope agreed that this item should appear on the next Board agenda.

Manager Aichinger commented that he was registered for the environmental forum and asked if a link for the Zoom meeting would be emailed. Simba Blood confirmed that there should be an email from Eventbrite.

Manager Ward commented that she would also support a hybrid format as that would allow some Board and staff members to attend remotely.

President Swope stated that he has a list of topics to send to staff for the next meeting and provided a brief review. He stated that if any members of the Board would like to add items, they could send that request to himself or Tina Carstens. He asked if a consolidation page has been created for the lake levels. Tina Carstens commented that staff is still working to develop that.

13. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.