



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
February 1, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of February 1, 2023, 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/zdQw09N1Dv8>. 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
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Coordinator
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Benjamin Karp, St. Paul Resident
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering
Nick Palatiello, Barr Engineering
Evan Christianson, Barr Engineering
Mary Fitzgerald, Permit Inspector

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:15)

President Swope requested to add the following items to the agenda under Item 10: Inspection/Maintenance Tool Examples and Adoption of Culvert Program, Definition of Native Seed, Wetland Workshop, Ponds of Battle Creek, and Board Closed Session.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve the agenda as amended.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Kramer	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

3. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS – LAWRENCE SWOPE AND DIANNE WARD (1:50)

Tina Carstens presented certificates of recognition to the outgoing Board members and thanked President Swope and Manager Ward for their time and dedication.

4. CONSENT AGENDA (4:43)

- A. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes from January 18, 2023
- B. Treasurer’s Report and Bill List
- C. Stewardship Grant Program
 - i. 23-01 CS Owasso Heights Townhomes
- D. District Liability Insurance Coverage Waiver

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

Further discussion: Manager Eisele asked for more information on a change order. Tina Carstens explained that bill is for work that was done by the attorney relating to a change order.

Manager Ward noted that Owasso Heights Townhome project, where the HOA was the applicant. She stated that perhaps this would be a good model to use going forward, reaching out to HOA’s. Paige Ahlborg replied that the District has done townhome projects, but it can be difficult. She stated that often it is helpful to work with the management company that may manage multiple townhome properties.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Kramer	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

5. VISITOR COMMENTS (7:45)

No comments.

6. PERMIT PROGRAM (7:48)

A. Applications

Permit #23-02: Caretta Assisted Living – Maplewood

Nicole Soderholm noted that these projects all include a variance request which is why they were not on the Consent Agenda. She provided details on the proposed assisted living project and explained the variance request for the project. She stated that they will be abandoning a stormwater pipe and therefore will need to block it off, and then installing a new pipe in another location. She stated that the proposed final condition would be to meet the buffer requirements. She noted that this would be a temporary disturbance of the wetland buffer.

Manager Ward referenced the variance letter from the applicant, specifically the second paragraph, and asked if that should be included in the special provisions. Nicole Soderholm noted that was a past tense, in that they have minimized disturbance to the best of their ability.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve Permit #23-02 with the variance and special provisions.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Kramer aye
Manager Ward aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-03: Ramsey County Hodgson Road Reconstruction – Shoreview

Nicole Soderholm stated that Ramsey County will be reconstructing Hodgson Road, adding curb and gutter, storm sewer, and pedestrian facilities. She noted that infiltration will be exceeded above District requirements and additional floodplain storage will also be created. She stated that this variance request is also for storm sewer pipe, similar to the last request, and will be a temporary disturbance.

Manager Eisele asked if there is an understanding of when a permanent disturbance would be needed or whether a temporary disturbance often transitions to a permanent disturbance. Nicole Soderholm replied that a permanent disturbance would need to come back for additional review.

Manager Eisele noted the trend of requests tonight for temporary disturbance. Manager Skinner noted that the parcels left for development have wetland buffers and therefore development would most likely require some type of temporary disturbance. Nicole Soderholm noted that these requests deal with routing water and it would be difficult to do that without temporarily disturbing the wetland buffer in these cases.

Manager Eisele asked if this trend were to continue quite commonly, would the District need to consider creating a threshold that would not require separate Board approval for the temporary disturbance. Tina Carstens stated that it would still be wrapped into the permit and therefore would still need to be approved by the Board. She stated that the Board could discuss the variance requirement if desired. Nicole Soderholm stated that it does take some applicants by surprise that a variance is required for temporary disturbance but noted that there is also benefit in requiring the applicant to provide the restoration plan.

President Swope asked where the water currently drains to that would be routed to the pond. He stated that this would seem to send more water into wetland A. Nicole Soderholm stated that this project will reduce runoff rates and overall volume, which is a tall task for a project of this scale. Tina Carstens stated that between the infiltration and ponding that will be added, less water will be going to wetland A.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve Permit #23-03 with variance and special provisions.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Kramer aye
Manager Ward aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-04: Dunkin Donuts – North Saint Paul

Nicole Soderholm stated that this is an existing strip mall on a relatively small site. She stated that the floodplain storage requirements will be met, but the existing strip mall does not meet the District’s freeboard requirements from the adjacent pond. She stated that in order to use the building, the applicant would propose a five-foot bump out for the drive-thru. She stated that although the requirements are not met, the situation is not changing as they are reusing the building.

President Swope stated that as long as the applicant is aware, he is fine moving forward.

Manager Skinner asked if the site was previously a gas station and whether there would be an issue with tanks underground. Nicole Soderholm confirmed that it was a gas station but was not aware of any issues with underground tanks as infiltration is not being proposed.

Manager Eisele asked if the site were currently pooling water that would raise concern. Brad Lindaman commented that there is no issue with pooling water in the parking lot that he is aware of. He noted that the site is above floodplain.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve Permit #23-04 with variance and special provisions.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Kramer	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-05: MnDOT I-94 Maintenance and Safety Improvements

Nicole Soderholm described the project which will provide maintenance and safety improvements along I-94. She stated that permanent stormwater treatment will be provided through infiltration. She stated that the Board previously discussed an opportunity to provide funding for a pipe that would run under I-94 and that has been included in the project and is the reason for the variance because of the temporary disturbance. She stated that the pipe would connect Tanners Lake to Battle Creek Lake.

Manager Skinner stated that there is concern with salt in the lakes and asked if there would be an opportunity to collaborate and install a barrier that would prevent salt from entering Battle Creek Lake. Tina Carstens was unsure that type of technology exists but noted that MnDOT has tremendously decreased its use of salt over the last 10 years and is the most highly trained applicators of salt in the state. Nicole Soderholm noted that the filtration would assist in removing the salt as well.

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve Permit #23-05 with variance and special provisions.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Kramer	aye

Manager Ward aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-06: Xcel Energy Roseville 0802 Line Rebuild – Roseville

President Swope asked for more details on the wetland mats. Nicole Soderholm replied that Xcel would like to begin the project soon as access in the wetlands during the winter is less destructive. She provided details on the mats that are used under equipment to minimize disturbance to the wetland, vegetation, and adjacent areas.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Ward seconded, to approve Permit #23-06 with variance and special provisions.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner aye
Manager Eisele aye
Manager Kramer aye
Manager Ward aye
President Swope aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During January, zero notices were sent.

7. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (33:43)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Budget Status Update

President Swope noted the differences in the budget showing in January and February. He asked if the Board authorized the additional funds. Tina Carstens stated that she added the carryover from the previous year, as agreed upon by the Board.

8. ACTION ITEMS - NONE

9. ATTORNEY REPORT (35:39)

Tracey Galowitz thanked President Swope and Manager Ward for their service on the Board, noting that she has enjoyed working with them. She summarized the work that her firm has done in the past month on behalf of the District.

10. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING) (37:21)

A. Board Action Log: Additions, Deletions

No comments.

B. Inspection/Maintenance Tool Examples

President Swope asked for more details on the culverts and how they are ranked. Brad Lindaman stated that weeds on/in a culvert does not always restrict the flow. He stated that the inlet size of the culvert does not always restrict the flow and provided additional details. Dave Vlasin provided additional details on how culverts are rated, noting that some general maintenance can be completed by District staff and therefore is not ranked on the CIP list for a contractor to complete.

Manager Eisele stated that he would like more information on the normalization that is done with the tool. Tina Carstens confirmed that staff can provide more details on that next month.

Manager Ward commented that it would be helpful to have more information on the normalization that is done with the tool, the maintenance that will be completed by staff, and the entity responsible for the asset. She also asked if areas prone to flooding should receive more frequent inspections.

Manager Skinner stated that she sometimes has concerns with safety in a certain area and asked if District staff could evaluate safety on some of those sites and report back to the Board. Tina Carstens noted that it may be difficult to determine what would be deemed dangerous because it would be based upon the type of flood event and would most likely be the local conveyance system. Brad Lindaman commented that they do not go out to evaluate things that are not part of the District system or part of a permit.

C. Adopt a Culvert Program

President Swope commented on the concept of an adopt a culvert program, where citizens could alert staff if there is an issue with a blocked culvert. He commented that he would not suggest that people clean out the culverts, but simply alert issues. Tina Carstens stated that information can be reported on the “contact us” page of the website and it can be noted more specifically that information can be reported. She stated that the District would not be the entity to respond to the issues in most cases, as it would be the city or county that would be responsible to clean the culvert out.

D. Definition of Native Seed

President Swope stated that it would be helpful to have additional information on native seeds and what is considered as such. Tina Carstens stated that there are seed mixes considered native by MnDOT and may not match what exists on the site but is native.

President Swope stated that it could be helpful to have some of the best practices available on the website for others to find the information.

E. Wetland Workshop

Tina Carstens stated that a date has not yet been finalized as consensus could not be reached on the dates proposed.

F. Ponds of Battle Creek

President Swope recognized that the District is working to develop a policy related to land acquisition. He asked for more details on the potential of property purchase for the specific parcel. Tina Carstens stated that she did not believe that there would be an interest in purchasing the property by the District, but the District would work with the property owner to ensure there is protection of the wetlands and buffers.

G. Board Closed Session

Manager Ward commented that the Board met at 5 p.m. in closed session to complete a performance review of the Administrator as well as a salary adjustment.

11. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (1:01:20)

A. Considerations for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in the Watershed District Presentation

Brad Lindaman commented that there has been a growing interest from the Board related to PFAS and the potential role of the District.

Nick Palatiello provided background information on PFAS and the work that Barr Engineering has done on the topic over the past 20 years. He provided more information on PFAS, its properties and uses, information on human

health and the environment, and the evolving reach on the health effects of PFAS. He reviewed information on the EPA PFAS Strategic Roadmap and Minnesota PFAS Blueprint, both released in 2021. He stated that part of the Blueprint included the MPCA PFAS monitoring plan and provided more details on that plan. He provided more details on PFAS sources and transport. He identified the related PFAS sites and potential contributors within the District as well as those that may contribute to the watershed but are outside the boundary of the District.

Manager Skinner used the Oakdale example and noted the method that was used to pump it into the air, which would not seem beneficial. Nick Palatiello commented that as science has evolved, this is being addressed in a different manner. It was noted that process was being done prior to the knowledge. He acknowledged that a lot of focus has been on drinking water and groundwater and noted that they are just beginning to address surface water. He reviewed considerations for PFAS in surface and groundwater and explained that testing is complex and expensive. He also provided information on remediation and treatment technologies as well as emerging surface water solutions. He also provided details on who would be responsible to address PFAS. He provided more information on the priority 2 workgroups and grants related to the 3M settlement.

Manager Skinner asked if removal of fish would be a form of contaminate removal. Nick Palatiello commented that the research has not yet been completed on that concept.

President Swope asked if the funds identified is for the operation of the group or for grants. Nick Palatiello replied that is the amount for the grants that will be issued. He noted that the larger pool of funding will be for implementation of drinking water treatment. Evan Christianson provide more details on the priority one and two funding via the settlement.

Nick Palatiello reviewed other potential funding sources and summarized key takeaways.

Manager Eisele stated that it is difficult to gauge how large the problem is because of the lack of ability to measure. Nick Palatiello commented that would be a question for the MPCA but noted that the focus seems to be on the sources and control at those locations. Tina Carstens noted that this would seem to follow a similar path of chloride and mercury, and perhaps there would be opportunities to partner with the MPCA on monitoring and treatment in the future.

President Swope asked if there would be a role for the District at this time. Nick Palatiello commented that the priority two group meetings could provide an opportunity for engagement.

Manager Skinner asked if the District could do work to identify the PFAS levels of fish in the lakes. Nick Palatiello replied that Barr has been advising industrial clients, noting that the goal posts continue to move as more information is learned. He stated that the goals for surface water have not yet been created. He stated that without treatment options, that would simply be collection of data without any answers and that could just create more questions. Tina Carstens noted that it may be too soon to complete that type of exercise. Manager Skinner suggested that the PowerPoint presentation be shared on the District website. Tina Carstens confirmed that she would be putting the information on the website.

Evan Christianson stated that there are waters that have been listed as contaminated with PFAS and perhaps reaching out to those local government agencies may be helpful to determine what they have done with that knowledge.

Manager Skinner asked if there are bacteria that could degrade PFAS. Evan Christianson replied that there is some evidence that could happen, but it is very slow, emerging research that is not well understood as of yet.

Manager Skinner commented that while PFAS has been deemed unsafe, companies create new chemicals to use and asked the process that is used to determine of those materials are safe. She asked if the PFAS levels of fish,

wildlife or the water is known in the watershed. Evan Christianson commented that would be a question for the MPCA as testing has been done in pool two of the Mississippi River.

Manager Skinner asked how the drinking water would be impacted by the changes to the allowable PFAS levels. Evan Christianson commented that would also be addressed by the MPCA.

Manager Skinner asked how PFAS in groundwater has changed in the last decade. Nick Palatiello commented that there is no evidence that it has significantly changed in the last 10 years, although the understanding has changed a lot.

Manager Skinner commented that she is concerned that her drinking water is supplied by the most contaminated well in Oakdale. Evan Christianson provided details on the process followed by the City of Oakdale in its drinking water treatment facility.

Manager Skinner commented that she would love to see some creative grant opportunities to further explore the impacts of PFAS.

B. South RWMWD Evaluation of Flood Control Options/Resiliency Study for Battle Creek and Fish Creek Drainage Areas

Brad Lindaman provided a brief overview of the information found in the report.

Manager Eisele asked where Snake Creek is located. Brad Lindaman provided more information noting that it is essentially an outflow of Bailey Nursery.

Manager Ward asked if the proposed CIP projects would be proposed for 2024. Brad Lindaman stated that these would not immediately follow into design. He described the process that would be followed. Tina Carstens stated that this information will be added in to reprioritize. Brad Lindaman noted that an appropriate time to come back would perhaps be June when some of the concepts evolve in modeling and they could discuss related budgeting.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Ward seconded, to support the project work plan as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
Manager Kramer	aye
Manager Ward	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

12. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:57:48)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates.

Manager Eisele asked if they should begin to plan for the Board tours that are done before Board meetings. Tina Carstens confirmed that she would work with staff to develop a potential plan and sites that could be visited.

C. Ongoing Project Updates

Tina Carstens provided an update on items staff is currently working on.

D. Annual Meeting Reminder

Tina Carstens reminded the Board of the annual meeting, noting that election of officers will be conducted.

E. Minnesota Watershed Updates

Tina Carstens noted the upcoming meetings and noted that if a Manager is interested in attending, the Board could designate them as a delegate.

13. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:05:25)

Project Feasibility Studies

- A. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- B. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- C. Kohlman Creek/Wakefield Lake Diversion Feasibility Study
- D. County Ditch 17 Improvements Feasibility Study
- E. Phalen Village Feasibility Study
- F. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study
- G. Owasso Basin/North Star Estates Improvements
- H. Double Driveway Pond Optimization Study
- I. Carver Ponds Improvement Study
- J. South Metro Mississippi River TSS TMDL

Research Projects

- K. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- L. Shallow Lake Aeration Study

Capital Improvements

- M. Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- N. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- O. Stewardship Grant Program Support
- P. Lake Emily Subwatershed Regional BMP
- Q. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse

CIP Project Repair and Maintenance

- R. Beltline and Battle Creek Inspection
- S. 2023 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project
- T. 2023-2025 BMP Maintenance Program

New Technology Review

- U. Edible Plants in Native Plant Community Restoration

Program Updates

- V. Natural Resources Program
- W. Public Involvement and Education Program
- X. Communications Program and Website

Manager Eisele referenced Item B and asked for clarification. Brad Lindaman noted that work had previously been started and was paused to determine if flow could be diverted. He commented that in the near future a summary memo would be provided on the direction of the diversion project. Manager Eisele referenced Item C and received confirmation that the memorandum was provided to staff.

Manager Eisele referenced Item H and asked what the Bailey team is. Tina Carstens replied that is the Bailey Nursery.

Manager Eisele referenced Item U noting that it was a nice summary of the plants used. He stated that it appears there are options for edibles, but it would be proposed they would be non-native and perhaps foraging would not be the top priority.

President Swope commented a recent article he read related to carp management and noted that perhaps that could be a future agenda topic to receive an update on the District carp activity.

14. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:15:17)

A. Board Action Log

No comments.

15. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.