



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
June 7, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of June 7, 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/lyru8HYt1yM>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

**PRESENT:**

Val Eisele, President  
Dr. Pam Skinner, Vice President  
Matt Kramer, Treasurer  
Ben Karp, Secretary  
Mark Gernes, Manager

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tina Carstens, District Administrator  
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator  
Emily Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant  
Joe Tillotson, Natural Resources Technician  
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District  
John Chikkala, Citizen Advisory Committee  
Bob Barth, WSB

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering  
Lyndsey Flaten, Water Monitoring Technician  
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator  
Nicole Peterson, BMP Intern  
Kathryn Sarnecki, St. Paul Port Authority

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:18)**

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Karp seconded, to approve the agenda as presented.

Further discussion: Manager Karp requested to remove Permit #23-13 from the Consent Agenda. Tina Carstens noted that can be considered as Item A under the Permit Program.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Gernes seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA (01:25)**

- A. Approval of Minutes from April 5, 2023
- B. Approval of Minutes from May 3, 2023
- C. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- D. Permit Program
  - i. ~~23-13: Snail Lake Boat Launch, Shoreview~~
  - ii. 23-14: Gladstone Village, Maplewood
  - iii. 23-16: MnDOT Hwy 5 Improvements, St. Paul/Maplewood

- E. Stewardship Grant Program
  - i. 23-20 CS: Escape Climbing, Rain Gardens
  - ii. 23-21 CS: Kosobayashi Phase 3, Native Habitat Restoration
  - iii. 23-22 CS: Snail Lake Aquatic Vegetation Harvesting
  - iv. 23-23 CS: Nelson, Rain Garden

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Further discussion: President Eisele asked for more information on the offsite treatment proposed for Permit #23-16. Nicole Maras provided more details on the alternate compliance sequencing noting that if it can be demonstrated that onsite treatment cannot be provided, offsite treatment or purchase of credits could be considered. She stated that the storage requirements would be exceeded, but that would occur north of the site. She commented that rate control would be provided onsite.

Manager Gernes asked how entities would initiate a request for offsite treatment or use of credits. Nicole Maras explained the process that would be followed and information that would need to be provided. Manager Skinner noted that the applicant would first need to look onsite and then within the subwatershed before looking further out.

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. VISITOR COMMENTS (08:40)**

No comments.

**5. PERMIT PROGRAM (09:31)**

A. Applications

Permit #23-13: Snail Lake Boat Launch - Shoreview

Manager Karp commented that he was in charge of the design and therefore will be abstaining.

Nicole Maras stated that this is a boat launch replacement and partial parking lot replacement on Snail Lake. She commented that the stormwater permit is not triggered for this permit. The County Parks Department has provided cut and fill information to ensure there is not a loss of floodplain storage.

President Eisele referenced the wetland diagram and asked for clarification. Nicole Maras provided additional clarification noting that the applicant does not anticipate going into the fringe near the delineated wetland.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to approve Permit #23-13.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Karp	abstain
Manager Gernes	aye
Manager Kramer	aye
President Eisele	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-15: Maplewood Myrtle-Sterling 2023 SIP – Maplewood

Nicole Maras provided details on the proposed roadway reconstruction project including the proposed water treatment elements. She noted that a pipe would be proposed to outlet the basin to the wetland and therefore

there is a wetland variance request included. She stated that the cut and fill information was provided on this request as well.

Manager Karp commented that Maplewood has stricter requirements for wetland buffers than the District and asked if the applicant would need to provide proof of exemption from the City rules. Nicole Maras stated that she is unsure if the road projects are exempt from the City wetland buffer requirements. She stated that the District cannot hold up its approval as the project meets the District rules and doesn't enforce the city requirements. Manager Karp stated that perhaps the City Council could provide a letter stating that it has approved the exemption for this project. Tina Carstens reiterated that the District could not withhold the permit on that condition, but the applicant would need to meet the City rules. Nicole Maras stated that she can request clarification.

Manager Gernes asked if there has been any discussion about the proposed outfall with the riprap and asked if that is the only option for an outfall. He commented that it does not seem like an area that would be prone to erosion. Nicole Maras stated that the District prefers dissipation of some type at the outlet, as erosion would be more impactful than the riprap. She noted that the basin will outlet during rain events and therefore they would want the outlet and energy dissipation. Manager Gernes asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the basin. Nicole Maras replied that it would be the responsibility of the municipality. Manager Gernes stated that perhaps this would be an opportunity to require the City to clean out the basin. Tina Carstens stated that recommendation could be passed to the City.

President Eisele asked if there are rules related to building in this wetland area. Nicole Maras stated that the applicant had to receive a Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Permit and boundary approved. She stated that the WCA allows for small impacts of this type.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve Permit #23-15 with variance. Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #23-17: The Heights Phase I – St. Paul

Nicole Maras presented a request for Phase I of the Heights development, which is a mixed-use development. She stated that there has been a lot of soil investigation on the site and discovered widespread mercury contamination throughout and soil remediation will be required and monitored by the MPCA and Department of Agriculture. She explained that Phase I proposes the demolition of the existing golf course building, parking lot and impervious trails and will then begin soil remediation and grading. She noted that a number of wetlands are proposed to be impacted during the soil remediation and the applicant proposes one to one replacement of wetlands onsite with the remaining replacement required done through the purchase of credits, as a replacement rate of two to one is required. She stated that there is a variance request for the contamination removal and final proposed buffers. She stated that the city of Saint Paul is the LGU for wetland permitting and approved the wetland replacement plan in May.

President Eisele asked for clarification on the wetlands that would be impacted and constructed. Nicole Maras noted that there are currently 10 wetlands and five would exist after, through a combination of those that will remain and those that will be constructed.

Manager Skinner asked if the applicant is requesting the reduced buffers at this time. Nicole Maras confirmed that the wetland buffer variance is a part of this request. She noted that the existing wetlands that will remain will have buffers that exceed the requirements while the buffer requirements would not be met with mitigation wetlands D and H. She confirmed that the additional buffer that will be provided on that natural wetlands will exceed the buffer shortage on the constructed wetlands. She also confirmed that the constructed wetlands would be designated as manage A after construction.

President Eisele asked if it is more important to meet the minimum buffer or average buffer and what would prevent them from meeting the minimum buffer. Nicole Maras stated that would be the decision of the Board tonight and noted that the applicant has provided their narrative. President Eisele recognized the reasoning provided which was job creation and asked the impact four additional feet would have on that. Nicole Maras noted that additional details are provided about the design plans.

Manager Karp noted that H would meet the minimums with the exception of the area near the road.

Manager Skinner stated that she would be interested in knowing the size of the different wetlands. She commented that if the wetlands that will have larger buffers are larger, and the wetlands with smaller buffers are smaller, it would seem to equal out and make sense but would not want to see that in reverse. President Eisele noted that there are drawings showing the different sizes and where buffers would be smaller. He asked if the constructed wetlands could be slightly shifted to meet the minimums. Bob Barth commented that they could move it around but would be trading one buffer for another. He commented that along the boulevard there is a 25-foot landscaped buffer in addition to the District buffer.

President Eisele stated that he is concerned with the statement that additional variances could be requested for pathways, etc. Manager Skinner also expressed concern with that. Nicole Maras stated that the desire is for the public to interact with the wetland areas, but they are not to that point in design and therefore if those amenities are requested in the future, it would need to follow the variance process as well.

Manager Gernes commented that as he understands it, this variance is requested for the brownfield work and grading, and future design and requests will come forward once this phase is completed. Bob Barth replied that these are final grading and wetland plans. He stated that the only additional requests related to the wetlands would be amenity related, such as boardwalks.

Manager Karp stated that a future variance request would seem to be more amenity related and educational, therefore he is not as concerned with that.

Manager Kramer stated that he is very comfortable with this, and a future request would be an environmental amenity.

President Eisele stated that he struggles with the buffer that would simply need four feet to meet the minimum. Kathryn Sarnecki stated that between the existing wetland and mitigated wetland there is a small space between the buffers, and they wanted to leave space for people to go through that area. She stated that if the Board would prefer that to be shifted, with knowledge that they may come back to request those amenities, they could agree to that. It was noted that there is a slope as well that may not qualify as a buffer under WCA.

President Eisele stated that it sounds like the applicant has accounted for walkway space which is why the buffer has shrunk in some areas.

Bob Barth stated that they are planning for linear BMPs throughout the site that would come forward with each parcel of development.

Manager Gernes asked the likelihood that a stormwater BMP would be in the buffer. Nicole Maras stated that a BMP would not be allowed in the buffer. Bob Barth confirmed that they would not have BMPs within the buffers.

Manager Skinner asked what would happen if the variance for buffers was not approved. Bob Barth replied that they would need to know why. He commented that they were trying to create a central area where people could experience the wetlands. He stated that they could pinch that in, but the buffer would remain the same.

Manager Karp stated that he likes that the future access was included as this is a multi-modal, mixed-use development and it is great to think ahead with this wetland area. He stated that he supports the request.

Manager Gernes commented that he is also comfortable with the request as more buffer will be provided in some areas and less in others. He believed that the smaller buffers would still address water quality.

President Eisele stated that he is also comfortable after the discussion tonight.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Karp seconded, to approve Permit #23-17 with variance. Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Monthly Enforcement Report**

During May, four notices were sent to address: install/repair inlet protection (1), remove discharged sediment (1), implement proper dewatering (1), and contain liquid/solid waste (1).

**C. Rule Changes – Authorize Distribution for Formal Review and Comment**

Nicole Maras stated that the District has been working on this since last year in conjunction with Capitol Region Watershed District. She noted that they did an informal review with the cities, counties, state agencies, and private engineering industrial to gain that feedback. She stated that the action tonight would be for the Board to authorize the formal review period. She stated that during that comment period, the Board can also provide comments and grammatical edits.

President Eisele stated that it would seem prudent to authorize this for formal review period and the Board can provide its comments at the next meeting. Tina Carstens stated that minor items could be addressed by calling or emailing Nicole Maras.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Gernes seconded, to authorize the distribution of the revised rules for a formal 45-day public review and comment period.

Further discussion: Laurann Kirschner stated that public notice will need to be provided prior to the public hearing and asked if that would occur at the next meeting or after the review period. Nicole Soderholm stated that they were planning to do that at the next meeting, but that could be pushed. She stated that she does have a draft notice ready to send to legal counsel for review and they could further discuss it at that time to ensure there would be sufficient time.

Motion carried unanimously.

**6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (1:10:25)**

**A. Applications**

**Permit #23-19 CS: Ramsey County Beaver Lake, Shoreline Restoration**

Paige Ahlborg stated that this was not included on the Consent Agenda because it is a Ramsey County project. She was unsure if Manager Karp worked on this project and would need to abstain. She commented that this project would be led by the Parks and Recreation Department and provided a brief overview of the shoreline restoration project. She noted that the County did receive grant funds that will be used in addition to the requested District funds.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve Permit #23-19 CS.

Further discussion: Manager Karp asked for a legal opinion on whether he could vote on this item as he has not been involved in the design. Laurann Kirschner replied that Manager Karp could vote on this item.

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Budget Status Update**

Paige Ahlborg provided an overview of the report.

**7. ACTION ITEMS (1:13:30)**

**A. 2023 Enhanced Street Sweeping Grant Funding**

Paige Ahlborg stated that after reviewing the study and presenting that to the Board, the Board approved allocation of \$128,000 of carryover funds from the Stewardship Grant Program for enhanced street sweeping grants for use this fall. She stated that staff had individual meetings with each of the cities to confirm survey data and receive requests. She noted that each city was provided the opportunity to request funding but not all chose to submit a request. She stated that many cities expressed interest in funding for equipment purchases, but funding does not allow for that at this time. She stated that Woodbury submitted the most significant request, following their own study. She noted that pending approval tonight, Woodbury would begin monthly sweepings later this month or in July. She stated that Landfall, Little Canada, and Oakdale would hire a contractor to do one or two additional sweepings in the fall. She noted that White Bear Lake felt it did not have the capacity to take this on this year but ranked high as an area of recovery and therefore the District looked at two priority areas within White Bear Lake. She noted that the District would look to hire a contractor for that service and White Bear Lake was open to that process.

President Eisele referenced the contract option that includes White Bear Lake and asked if that would include the mentioned targeted areas. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that only those targeted areas would be addressed in White Bear Lake whereas the other cities would be complete. Tina Carstens stated that the District would hire the contractor for the White Bear Lake areas, which would also provide the District with that experience of direct contracting.

President Eisele stated that he was surprised at the amount proposed for Woodbury, as the city already received \$30,000. Paige Ahlborg replied that the Board approved \$50,000 last year but only about \$17,000 was used. She recognized that it is a significant cost but would be six sweepings. President Eisele stated that he believes this is a cost-effective BMP and therefore does not have an issue with the request as proposed.

Manager Gernes asked if there was a sense of how many of the cities have their own equipment or work with contractors, or whether there is equipment sharing between cities. He asked if the best method moving forward would be funding, or equipment related. Paige Ahlborg stated that most cities, with the exception of Landfall, have their own equipment but some cities also contract out some of the sweeping. She stated that she can provide that detailed information to the Board including equipment replacement schedules. She stated that there was discussion about equipment sharing but because the equipment is needed at the same time, that is not a realistic option. Tina Carstens stated that it seems that many of the cities would contract for the additional sweeping and therefore funding would be preferred. She stated that if additional funds were needed, a request could come back to the Board to use funds from the Stewardship Grant Program.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve the 2023 enhanced street sweeping grant requests and direct staff to coordinate a street sweeping contract for services in White Bear Lake.

Further discussion: Manager Karp referenced the cities that did not express interest and asked if that is explained in the data/report or could be provided in more detail in the future. He asked if a traffic study was done within the cities that are not interested to determine priority areas because of increased sedimentation from traffic flows. Paige Ahlborg replied that the notes from the individual city meetings were not included in the study as they occurred after the study was completed. She noted that she could provide those details and provided a brief summary of why some of the cities chose not to participate. She confirmed that there is data that could be used to

determine priority areas for sweeping in the future. Erin Anderson Wenz stated that while traffic counts were not included, tree cover was considered.

Motion carried unanimously.

**8. ATTORNEY REPORT (1:27:40)**

Laurann Kirschner had nothing to report.

**9. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING) (1:28:02)**

Manager Gernes asked if there are any planned tours. Tina Carstens stated that typically during the growing season they would do a tour prior to the Board meeting if there are applicable sites.

President Eisele asked if there would be an opportunity to hold a tour prior to the next meeting. Tina Carstens noted that there could be a potential. She stated that the Board could reach out to her if they have any requests.

President Eisele stated that he likes that the CAC is being incorporated more and would like to think about more ways to involve that group.

**10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (1:31:40)**

A. Review of Equity Area Definition

Erin Anderson Wenz provided an overview of the equity dataset evaluation. She reviewed the three equity datasets that were evaluated and provided a brief summary of the data included in each.

Manager Gernes asked if the Ramsey County information has been used by the County. Erin Anderson Wenz noted that the information was published but has not been updated. Tina Carstens noted another Ramsey County study that utilized this information. Manager Gernes referenced the Met Council dataset, noting that much of that data is susceptible to change in a short period of time. Erin Anderson Wenz was unsure how often that data would be updated.

President Eisele asked if there would be anything that would prevent using more than one index. Erin Anderson Wenz replied that could be done but there is a lot of overlap. Tina Carstens stated that this data is used for the Stewardship Grant Program as homes within the equity area would qualify for 100 percent funding. She noted that the data is also used for prioritization ranking and in other program areas.

Manager Karp noted that the District can use pieces from each of these datasets. He noted that there are other factors to consider in terms of equity.

Manager Gernes commented that there are social elements as well as physical elements to be considered. Erin Anderson Wenz commented that staff could dig into the data further to determine why an area was identified in one set versus another. Manager Karp commented that he would like to know how social aspects are ranked versus climate aspects. She noted that when they bring this back again, they can further explain the prioritization tool as well.

**11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:59:00)**

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens noted that the next meeting will be held on June 28<sup>th</sup> to avoid the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

C. Board Action Log and Updates

President Eisele asked for an update on the West Vadnais boundary change process. Tina Carstens stated that part of the delay is due to staffing constraints and changes from the District, Vadnais Heights, and BWSR. President Eisele commented that it would be nice to have that completed prior to the budgeting discussions.

D. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

No comments.

E. WaterFest

President Eisele commended staff for a phenomenal job on WaterFest noting that his kids enjoyed all the activities. Tina Carstens commented that it was a great event and staff will provide more input going forward.

F. District Budget Process

Tina Carstens stated that information was included on the District budget process and timeline which will begin the following month.

G. Staffing Updates

Tina Carstens provided an update on recent staffing hires.

**12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:05:37)**

*Project Feasibility Studies*

- A. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- B. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- C. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study
- D. Owasso Basin/North Star Estates Improvements
- E. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas
- F. Street Sweeping Study

*Research Projects*

- G. Kohlman Lake Aquatic Plants and Nutrients Study
- H. Shallow Lake Aeration Study

*Project Operations*

- I. 2023 Automated Lake-Level Stations

*Capital Improvements*

- J. Woodbury Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- K. Roosevelt Homes Targeted Retrofit Project
- L. Stewardship Grant Program Support
- M. Arbogast Stormwater Filtration BMP
- N. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse
- O. Double Driveway Pond and Fish Creek Tributary Improvements

*CIP Project Repair and Maintenance*

- P. 2023 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project

*Program Updates*

- Q. Natural Resources Program
- R. Public Involvement and Education Program

**13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:06:33)**

No comments.

**14. ADJOURN**

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Karp seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.