



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
June 28, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of June 28, 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/xIptR-I9qP0>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

Val Eisele, President
Matt Kramer, Treasurer
Ben Karp, Secretary
Mark Gernes, Manager

ABSENT:

Dr. Pam Skinner, Vice President

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator
Patrick Williamson, Natural Resources Specialist
Anne Sawyer, BWSR

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Brandon Barnes, Barr Engineering
Paul Erdmann, Natural Resource Program Manager
Nick Nelson, Water Monitoring Intern
Kyle Kubitza, Water Monitoring Technician

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:15)

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

3. CONSENT AGENDA (00:28)

- A. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2023
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 23-18: Gramsie Junction, Shoreview
 - ii. 23-19: Battle Creek Middle School Stormwater Retrofit, St. Paul
 - iii. 23-21: MWWTP Lab Services Building, St. Paul
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
 - i. 23-27 CS: Chikkala – Rain Garden
 - ii. 23-28 CS: Lake Phalen Aquatic Vegetation Harvesting
- E. 2023 CIP Maintenance and Repair – Change Order No. 2

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

President Eisele referenced Permit #23-19 and asked if that would include educational signage. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that there would be signage.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (1:40)

New members of staff Patrick Williamson, Paul Erdmann, and Nick Nelson introduced themselves.

Anne Sawyer, Board of Water and Soil Resources, introduced herself to the Board.

5. PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2023 PERMIT RULE REVISIONS (MATERIALS FOUND ON WEBSITE OR JUNE 2023 PACKET) (5:13)

President Eisele opened the public hearing.

No comments from the public.

President Eisele closed the public hearing.

Nicole Maras provided additional details on the timeline moving forward.

6. PERMIT PROGRAM (7:55)

A. Applications

Permit #23-20: Gerdau TMS Area Restoration – St. Paul

Nicole Maras stated that this project will occur at an industrial facility near the Mississippi River that is no longer operational. She stated that this is a wetland restoration project and explained that a variance will be necessary for buffer disturbance.

Manager Gernes asked the interaction between the wetland and Fish Creek. Nicole Maras stated that there are no impacts proposed to Fish Creek but commented that it does appear that the wetland is hydrologically connected to Fish Creek. Manager Gernes commented that this is described as a voluntary action and asked if there have been pressures from other agencies or interests for this project. He asked if banking had been discussed. Nicole Maras replied that banking is not part of the consideration. She was unsure about the origin of this project and/or issue but was not aware of formal enforcement.

President Eisele commented that he supports doing more for wetlands and therefore likes the project. He asked if the slag would be toxic and whether precautions would need to be taken when removing that material. Nicole Maras replied that it is her understanding that it is not hazardous and would be taken out of the wetland and placed further upland. President Eisele asked if there is more that could be done on the site for the future to consider. Nicole Maras replied that the District has not looked at restoration on this site and noted that the applicant is restoring more than what currently exists on the site. She stated that this site would be up for redevelopment in the future, therefore she was unsure that there would be interest in expanding past what is proposed.

Manager Gernes recognized that the applicant is proposing to reseed with the MnDOT seed mix and asked the difference between that mix and the BWSR seed mix. Nicole Maras stated that the MnDOT seed mix is more often used but was unsure why. Paul Erdmann provided additional details on the different seed mixes noting that the MnDOT mixes are generally lower cost than the BWSR mixes. Manager Gernes suggested that staff make a suggestion to use the BWSR seed mix with future applicants. Nicole Maras stated that she can also make that suggestion with this project.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to approve Permit #23-20 with the variance. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During June, seven notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (1), install/maintain perimeter control (4), install/maintain construction entrance (1), and contain liquid/solid wastes (1).

7. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (28:38)

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided a brief update and welcomed any questions.

President Eisele referenced public art and asked if people are aware of that grant opportunity. Paige Ahlborg replied that it is posted on the website and for this year it has been related to sign requests. President Eisele stated that perhaps that would be a method to get more students involved in projects.

8. ACTION ITEMS – NONE (32:40)

9. ATTORNEY REPORT (32:47)

Laurann Kirschner provided an update on the work legal counsel did for the public hearing notice in cooperation with the District during this last month.

10. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (34:53)

President Eisele commented that there have been discussions about the CAC and asked if it would make sense to have additional reporting from the CAC on what they are hearing from residents/neighborhoods.

Manager Gernes commented that as a member of the CAC for some years he could not recall many occasions where residents reached out to that group, outside of WaterFest. He commented that more outreach is obtained through the education program and acknowledged that some CAC members are involved in that programing.

11. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (42:58)

A. 2024 Budget Planning Memo

Tina Carstens stated that this is a high-level memo and more detailed information will be provided at the next meeting for more in-depth discussion. Manager Gernes commented that he appreciated the category information.

President Eisele referenced the street sweeping and possible equipment purchase or assistance with equipment and asked if that would be discussed separately or during the budget process. Tina Carstens commented that the pilot is not yet complete and therefore she would not anticipate equipment purchases in 2024. President Eisele asked if there are plans on which grants the District would apply for next year. Tina Carstens replied that the District fully budgets for projects in most cases and then if the grant funds are received, that reduces the cost. President Eisele commented that it seems more work needs to be done before refining costs for the wetland restoration item. Tina Carstens replied that the wetland restoration assessment has been completed and will be presented to the Board at the next meeting. She confirmed that funds have already been levied for that purpose.

Manager Gernes asked for more details on the CIP category. Tina Carstens provided more explanation on programs within that category including the stewardship grant program and targeted retrofit program. Manager Gernes asked if staff ever guides a stewardship grant applicant towards the targeted retrofit program. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that those discussions do happen and provided an example of when a project switched programs.

Manager Kramer asked for details on the five percent benchmark under salaries. Tina Carstens replied that typically that is three to five percent but given the workforce challenges and information obtained from the salary survey she has budgeted five percent. President Eisele asked and received confirmation that the five percent is an average.

President Eisele asked if property acquisition would fall under one of these categories. Tina Carstens replied that would fall under flood risk reduction. Brandon Barnes provided additional details on the discussions with NorthStar Estates.

Tina Carstens provided a summary of the budget timeline moving forward.

B. Woodbury Target Store Targeted Retrofit Scope Summary Update

Brandon Barnes provided a summary of the work completed in phase one which is wrapping up. He noted that the scope summary includes the phase one tasks as well as the phase two tasks. He reviewed the anticipated timeline with construction to tentatively occur next spring.

Paige Ahlborg commented that this is the last Target store within the District boundaries. She noted that Target has appreciated working with the District and is working to implement similar measures at other stores in other watershed areas.

C. Kohlman Lake Aquatic Plant Management Effect Study

Brandon Barnes commented that the water quality has noticeably declined in Kohlman Lake over the past few years. He stated that during this research project they are monitoring Kohlman and Beaver lakes in order to make recommendations on aquatic plant management. He reviewed the timeline.

President Eisele asked why Beaver Lake was selected as a control. Brandon Barnes commented that it is a similar size and character water body that has not seen the same decline in water quality. Tina Carstens commented that the District has long-term data on both water bodies as well.

President Eisele asked if there is similar concern for Kohlman Creek. Tina Carstens replied that they do not have that concern with Kohlman Creek. She confirmed that there is a monitoring station at the end of Kohlman Creek as it enters the lake.

12. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:12:33)

A. Meetings Attended

Tina Carstens noted the meetings attended.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens highlighted the upcoming meetings and dates.

C. Board Action Log and Updates

Tina Carstens stated that she has had some IT issues and once that is resolved she will work on this document.

The Board suggested having more discussion about the different seed mixes in the future.

D. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

Tina Carstens commented that she and Manager Karp attended the summer tour last week. Manager Karp commented that it was a good event and provided an update on the meetings he attended. He commented that he found benefit in seeing the rural projects compared to the urban projects completed by the District.

E. Staffing Updates

Tina Carstens commented that while it has been a lot of work over the past few months, it is exciting to have three new members of the natural resources team.

13. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:27:41)

Project Feasibility Studies

- A. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- B. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Planning 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

Capital Improvements

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

CIP Project Repair and Maintenance

- N. 2023 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project
- O. New Technology Mini Case Study – Blue Roofs

Program Updates

- P. Natural Resources Program
- Q. Public Involvement and Education Program
- R. Communications and Outreach Program
- S. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

President Eisele asked for details on when certain items would come back to the Board and staff provided the timelines. He commented that he found the blue roof technology report to be interesting.

14. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:37:59)

No additional comments.

15. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.