



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
August 2, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of August 2, 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/1kPEIS1DjiY>. 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  
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering  
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator  
Dave Vlasin, Watershed Project Coordinator

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District  
Paul Erdmann, Natural Resources Program Manager  
Eric Korte, Water Monitoring Coordinator

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:20)**

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

**3. CONSENT AGENDA (00:40)**

- A. Approval of Minutes from June 28, 2023
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
  - i. 23-22: MCES Lake Elmo West Connection, Oakdale/Woodbury
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
  - i. 23-38 CS: DeArmond, Rain Garden and Habitat Restoration
  - ii. 23-39 CS: Gerding, Rain Garden and Habitat Restoration
  - iii. 23-40: Gourley, Habitat Restoration
  - iv. 23-41 CS: Hines, Habitat Restoration
  - v. 23-42 CS: Radloff, Rain Garden and Habitat Restoration

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

#### **4. VISITOR COMMENTS (1:15)**

No comments.

#### **5. PERMIT PROGRAM (1:23)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During July, 15 notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (5), install/maintain perimeter control (6), stabilize exposed soils (1), contain liquid/solid wastes (1), remove discharged sediment (1), and maintain/protect permanent BMPs (1).

Nicole Maras provided additional details on the process they are following, along with Capital Regions, to respond to the comments received on the proposed rules change.

#### **6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (5:18)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Snowmelt BMP Analysis and Funding Recommendation

Paige Ahlborg commented that this is a unique request from the City of Woodbury. She stated that the city is proposing to install a heated sidewalk for the purpose of salt reduction, noting that it would be a 2024 installation. She stated that she has been working with the city, along with Barr Engineering, and they believe that this is a good use of this technology as this area drains to an area that is chloride impaired.

President Eisele asked for clarification on the calculations that were used. Brad Lindaman provided additional explanation of the calculations that Barr staff used. President Eisele asked for clarification on the capital cost. Paige Ahlborg stated that is the estimate that Woodbury provided for the project and noted that the maximum grant award would be \$100,000.

Manager Skinner asked if there is a heater and pump that constantly pushes water through. Brad Lindaman replied that the sidewalk is not always heated, just when it is needed. Manager Skinner asked if a solar panel could power the system. Brad Lindaman replied that he did not believe that would be sufficient for this system. Manager Skinner commented that she believes this is a good project and fits within the goals of the District.

Manager Karp commented that while he believes this is a good project, his larger concern would be how the District would ensure Woodbury is not salting in addition to the heated sidewalk. Paige Ahlborg replied that they can include that element in their inspections. She noted that additional language could be written into the agreement to that degree.

Manager Gernes commented that this is a fantastic and innovative project, noting that this has been done in other states with similar climates. He believed that these types of projects should be considered as pilots as they will be able to learn from the results. He asked if there would be safety issues with the runoff that is generated from the sidewalk. Brad Lindaman commented that he was unsure if that element has been thought through, acknowledging that it could simply be moving the issue. Paige Ahlborg commented that this is very conceptual, and she would follow up with Woodbury about that question.

Manager Kramer commented that he would be highly skeptical that this would have a benefit. He commented that he is very familiar with an analysis that was presented to him on projects like this, noting that this type of system is expensive to run. He stated that he will support this project, but he wants to see the analysis of the chloride reduction. He commented that this would provide very little benefit as this is adjacent to a parking lot with

vehicles tracking in salt. He noted that this would also generate runoff that could freeze in the parking lot, which would just cause more salt to be used on the parking lot.

President Eisele echoed the comments of Manager Kramer. He stated that return on investment is an important consideration. He commented that \$100,000 is a sizeable investment from this budget for something that they are unsure will provide the desired outcome. He stated that he will support this going forward to help inform what they would do next.

Tina Carstens stated that perhaps there could be future monitoring and analysis embedded in the agreement.

President Eisele stated that he supports trying new technologies and ideas and would be very supportive of a smaller pilot type project.

Manager Karp acknowledged that this is a large investment but commented that this would be a start.

Tina Carstens noted that this would be a city project and the city staff are certified in salt application.

Manager Gernes asked who is doing the maintenance on the parking lot and sidewalk and whether that would be the same person. He recognized that the city has requested \$100,000 and asked if the city would move forward with a lesser contribution from the District. Paige Ahlborg stated that the city did not request a level of funding and simply proposed the project and asked if the District would be willing to contribute. She stated that if the Board is more comfortable with a lower amount, she could bring that back to the city for their planning. She noted that if a formal application is submitted and the Board felt the project was eligible for a higher contribution, that change could be made.

President Eisele used the example of street sweeping, noting that there is clear evidence that provides benefit whereas this is not as clear. He commented that he would find it helpful to have more information showing the benefit.

Manager Kramer stated that perhaps it is expressed to Woodbury that the District is interested and wants to know the mechanisms that Woodbury would use to demonstrate that the chloride downstream has been reduced and assurance that there would be long-term analysis and monitoring. He stated that if someone falls, the city would most likely use salt. He commented that it is very innovative, and he is interested but does not think there is a lot of value unless the city is willing to do the value analysis.

Manager Skinner stated that the District does that type of analysis all the time and perhaps that could be part of the contribution from the District.

President Eisele stated that if this does come forward, he would want to see more of the information they have been talking about.

Tina Carstens stated that they could leave the level of funding more open-ended and just let the city know the District is interested but has these concerns. She noted that additional information could come back in the formal application.

President Eisele asked if there would be a way to see a summary of the data collected by WMWMO, as they have implemented similar projects years ago.

Paige Ahlborg commented that she was unsure if the city would move forward without any contribution, and that level of contribution may need to be known before moving forward in the design process. She stated that in that case, she could return to the Board with the additional details and response.

Manager Skinner commented that this type of project could lead towards requests from homeowners for driveways and sidewalks.

President Eisele commented that would be where a policy would come into play.

C. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided a summary of the report.

Manager Gernes asked if it would be typical to continue to receive requests this time of year. Paige Ahlborg stated that they are tracking about the same as the previous years but noted that she can look at some of the past data about requests during the remainder of the year.

**7. ACTION ITEMS – None (29:11)**

**8. ATTORNEY REPORT (29:30)**

Laurann Kirschner stated that she reviewed some contract issues, and they will work with staff to publish the notices for the budget prior to the September meeting.

**9. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING) (30:06)**

President Eisele commented that it would be great to continue to receive a summary from the CAC meetings and perhaps a presentation from a CAC member in the future.

**10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (30:50)**

A. 2024 Budget Discussion

Tina Carstens stated that overall, there is a three percent increase in the general fund budget proposed and provided background information on how the proposed budget is created.

President Eisele asked the baseline of the levy from the previous year. Tina Carstens provided the details of the levy from the previous year. She commented that over the next several months she will be able to make adjustments based off carry over amounts from this year. She stated that she would like input from the Board tonight on the comfort level with levy increases. She noted that the budget for this year and next year will be very project heavy. She stated that if the Board desired a zero percent increase, some projects will be delayed. She provided an overview of staffing, District vehicles, and capital improvements as stated in her memorandum.

President Eisele used the scenario that the Board wanted a zero percent increase and asked when the discussion would occur about prioritization about projects. Tina Carstens replied that if that were the direction tonight, she would go through to propose priorities for the Board to review at the next meeting.

Manager Skinner commented that she would like to see the impacts to a household that have been shown in the past. Tina Carstens confirmed that she would have that in her presentation the next month. Manager Skinner acknowledged that the District applies for grants for projects and noted that she would find it helpful to have data on the level of grants applied for and received. Tina Carstens stated that the District is applying for watershed based funding (WBF) funds and provided details on additional grants the District is in the process of applying for. She noted that she does not yet have solid figures on grants. She commented that it has been frustrating to apply for competitive grants because funding is shifting towards WBF, therefore there are less funds available and more competition.

President Eisele commented that this information helped him to have some baseline details and cost estimates on the capital projects. He asked and received confirmation that levying funds now and in 2024 for flood risk reduction will help to ease the burden in 2025.

Manager Gernes commented that it seems there has been some carryover in the past mainly because there have not been projects, but there will be projects in the future. He commented that continued carryover would help to smooth things out.

President Eisele commented that he would encourage looking at a lower levy but also acknowledges that the District has been acting purposefully to plan for the future. He stated that he would feel comfortable building in the increase over multiple years as opposed to a large increase to support the 2025 project. Manager Skinner agreed that she would rather split the increase over multiple years. Tina Carstens stated that the project repair and maintenance budget was also increased significantly because of the repairs needed on the Beltline, which will be a one-time payment.

Manager Gernes asked for additional input on certain line items such as building maintenance and utilities. Tina Carstens provided additional explanation on the increases/decreases proposed.

President Eisele asked if remote work is still prevalent for the District. Tina Carstens replied that there are still opportunities for employees to work from home a few days per week. President Eisele referenced the educational line item and asked for input. Tina Carstens explained that budget was increased in the past for the water steward program, and they have seen a decline in that participation, therefore the budget can also be decreased. She also provided clarification on the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council allocation.

Manager Skinner asked if the anticipated carryover could help to lower the levy impact to a five percent increase. President Eisele agreed that five percent seems more manageable for an increase. Tina Carstens confirmed that she could work towards getting the increase around five percent.

Manager Kramer stated that he was aiming for about 5.5 percent as they are building towards the future anticipated expenditures.

Manager Gernes commented that his range would perhaps be between three and five percent for the increase.

Manager Karp commented that perhaps it would be helpful to see different budget scenarios and what items would need to be cut in order to meet certain percentages.

President Eisele suggested three percent, five percent, and seven percent increase for scenarios.

#### B. Wetland Workshop Follow-Up: Wetland Restoration Planning

Tina Carstens provided a recap of previous information that was discussed at the wetland workshop. She provided the document that staff previously composed related to potential wetland restoration opportunities.

Manager Gernes commented that he would be curious to hear more about prioritization nine, as those appear to be small projects and of course would not be as attractive as the larger potential for Cottage Place. Tina Carstens commented that any time there is a willing partner for a project, that makes it much easier to bring to fruition.

President Eisele commented that he is excited about the proposal and agrees that it is helpful to work with a willing partner.

Tina Carstens stated that Barr Engineering could provide a presentation at the next meeting about wetland restoration potentials related to Cottage Place.

Manager Gernes asked if there has been any thought towards pursuing credits for shoreline restoration projects that have been completed. Tina Carstens replied that they have not gone down that road related to potential

banking credits for shoreline restoration. Manager Gernes recognized that a typical banker would be interested in financial benefits whereas the District would have interest in having credits available for use by projects within the District.

President Eisele commented that he would be happy just to see the area return to wetlands.

Manager Karp recognized that this is a prioritization tool based on different factors. He commented that there are existing wetland complexes that could be expanded but do not appear on the list. Tina Carstens commented that they could look into those opportunities further.

**11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:10:58)**

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens reviewed the upcoming meetings and dates.

C. Board Action Log and Updates

Tina Carstens commented that she is still working on updating the governance manual and West Vadnais.

D. Minnesota Watersheds Update

Tina Carstens asked managers to send their answers to her later this week noting that she would tabulate all the answers and submit one response.

E. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Plan

No comments.

**12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:18:05)**

*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 Start Estates Improvements
- E. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas

*Research Projects*

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

*Capital Improvements*

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

*CIP Project Repair and Maintenance*

- N. 2023 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project
- O. Beltline 5-Year Inspection

*Program Updates*

- P. Natural Resources Program
- Q. Public Involvement and Education Program
- R. Communications and Outreach Program

President Eisele referenced the Beltline repairs, which sound important and asked if there is urgency. Brad Lindaman commented that he believes that it is stabilized for the time being and they are pursuing different design alternatives. He stated that they are planning to have those prepared for the Board to review this fall in order to proceed. President Eisele asked if there would be concern with heavy waters in the spring following snow melt. Brad Lindaman commented that while they would prefer to do the repair in the winter, that would not be plausible and therefore they will monitor the water levels. He again confirmed that the segment is stable at this time.

Dave Vlasin provided additional details on the process, noting that the repair was completed within the day.

**13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:32:39)**

No additional comments.

**14. ADJOURN**

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Kramer seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Karp, Secretary