



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
February 7, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of February 7, 2024, 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/KLjU1bLf2k0>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

**PRESENT:**

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

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tina Carstens, District Administrator  
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator  
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District  
Dave Vlasin, Watershed Project Coordinator  
Mary Fitzgerald, District Inspector  
Larry Swope, Shoreview Resident  
Stan Krawoski, Washington County Commissioner

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Eric Korte, Water Monitoring Coordinator  
Brandon Barnes, Barr Engineering  
Tyler Olsen, Barr Engineering  
Paul Erdmann, Natural Resources Program Manager  
Joe Bester, Lake Owasso Association

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:43)**

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

**3. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBER – DR. PAM SKINNER- (0:56)**

President Eisele and Tina Carstens gave an introduction to a video honoring Dr. Pam Skinner and her 30 years as a board member. Tina explained that this video was originally created for the Watershed Excellence Awards where you she was give the Roger Lake Stewardship Excellence award in 2023.

President Eisele introduced Washington County Commissioner, Stan Krawoski.

Commissioner Krawoski presented Dr. Pam Skinner with an award for her 30 years of service as a Board member of the District, representing Washington County.

Past board member, Larry Swope gave recognition to Dr. Pam Skinner and her work with the District.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA (12:24)**

- A. Approval of Minutes from January 3, 2023
- B. Treasurer’s Report and Bill List

- C. Permit Program
  - i. 24-08 Target Woodbury Stormwater Retrofit, Woodbury
  - ii. 24-09 MnDOT Testing Lab Addition, Maplewood
  - iii. 24-10 St. Paul Samuel H. Morgan Trail Reconstruction, St. Paul
- D. Change Order No. 4 – Arbogast Underground Stormwater Filter
- E. District Liability Insurance Coverage Waiver

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

**4. VISITOR COMMENTS (12:59)**

No comments.

**5. PERMIT PROGRAM (14:11)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During January, 2 notices were sent to address: install/maintain perimeter control (2).

Nicole Maras gave an overview of the enforcement report and a staff approved permit. Nicole explained that the staff approval process is in place to streamline small projects such as this shoreline restoration.

Nicole Maras provided a follow up to the Rooney site that was discussed last month and explained that the developer has been responding and will be the one working on the site. Nicole stated the developer is working on getting a trained inspector on site. Nicole stated that the permanent filtration basin on this site is still under review. Nicole explained that the project will be turned over to the city of White Bear Lake once the filtration basin is complete. Nicole stated that it is currently stabilized.

President Eisele ask for more information on the owner not receiving inspection reports.

Nicole Maras confirmed that the owner created a new email address and other people have been included in those emails to insure the inspection reports are received.

President Eisele stated he believes it is an important to continue to monitor this site.

Nicole Maras continued on to discuss a wetland area that has been disturbed by a homeowner in Woodbury. Nicole provided information on the process of the WCA violation and restoration order. Nicole stated the city of Woodbury is on board with the current process and is working on the restoration process of the disturbed wetland. Nicole stated that once the restoration order is delivered, work on restoring the wetland can begin but the timeline is unknown at this time.

President Eisele questioned the role of the District in this matter.

Nicole stated that the District outlined what needs to happen due to this being a WCA violation and described how the enforcement process works through WCA. Nicole explained the Washington County Conservation district has to write the restoration order and the DNR has to deliver the order. Nicole continued to explain that there are many agencies involved in this process.

Manager Gernes questioned if this location is a public water and if the resident is cooperating.

Nicole Maras stated that it is not a public water. Nicole explained that the City of Woodbury is working directly with the resident, delivering the cease and desist, and that she does not have more information on the resident's cooperation.

Nicole stated the City of Woodbury is planning to bring the restoration order to the City Council meeting next month.

Manager Karp asked if the District will be keeping tabs on this process.

Nicole Maras stated that the District would be following the progress of the restoration and could potentially complete an inspection once the restoration is complete.

Manager Karp questioned if there is data showing the wetland historically so that the wetland can be restored to its original state.

Nicole Maras stated the district and BWSR worked together and that wetland was estimated with historical photos going back at least 5 years. Nicole explained that BWSR is letting the City of Woodbury decide if they would like to restore the wetland to what it was originally. Nicole stated they will be required to remove the fill and berm currently present.

Manager Skinner asked if this could be used as an education opportunity to teach other land owners of the consequences of disturbing wetlands.

Manager Karp asked if there is an opportunity to enhance the wetland with the current project that is happening.

Nicole Maras stated she was not sure what the likelihood the of success of improving the wetland would be due to the location but would look into it. Nicole stated that she would also work with communications on a post to make this into a teachable moment about wetlands. Nicole explained that this is a unique situation due to the heavy equipment the homeowner was using in their back yard.

President Eisele asked if the staff approved permit applicant was given information on potential grants available.

Nicole Maras stated that it would have been completed with the Snail Lake Shoreline Outreach and that neighbors on either side also have restorations.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that the resident would have been given that information.

## **6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (25:45)**

A. Applications - none

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg gave an overview of the budget status.

President Eisele requested more information on the street sweeping program expense noted in the budget status update.

Paige Ahlborg explained that the City of Roseville approached the District about the street sweeping program and whether we would help support the hiring of a city intern who will help the city refine their process.

Tina Carstens stated the intern is supposed to develop a monitoring program for street sweeping looking into how the cities collected material is weighed, determine phosphorus reduction based on that weight as well as the efficiency of the sweeping.

President Eisele questioned if the District would be able to use the data collected.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that there would be meetings with this intern to discuss their work and findings.

Manager Gernes stated that this internship sounds like a great opportunity. Manager Gernes questioned the length and timing of the internship.

Paige Ahlborg provided more information on the details of the internship.

The Board is looking forward to see what data will be found through this internship.

## **7. ACTION ITEMS (28:59)**

### **A. Roosevelt Homes Phase 2 Advertise for Bid**

Paige Ahlborg provided an overview of the Roosevelt Homes project. Paige detailed what Phase 2 will entail and what work contractors will be doing during phase 2.

Brandon Barnes noted that this is phase 2 of a 3-phase project. Brandon provided information on what work will be completed in phase 3.

President Eisele questioned if there would be overlap between the project sites in phases 2 and 3.

Brandon Barnes confirmed that the work is being done in an order so that work done during one phase will not affect work done in a previous phase.

Manager Gernes questioned if there would be an opportunity for residents to assist with the planting. Manager Gernes stated that he recognized this may be challenging due to the work being completed by contractors.

Paige Ahlborg explained that Roosevelt Homes received a grant for Ash tree removal and are organizing tree planting efforts with the residents as a part of that grant process. Paige explained that due to the tree planting effort happening with the Federal grant it was decided to have the planting in phase 2 completed by the contractor. Paige stated that the plants are warranted when planted by contractors. Paige explained that the District is working to be a part of the Roosevelt Homes tree planting efforts.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Karp seconded to approve the preliminary design, estimated cost and proposed project schedule and direct staff to finalize the design and building documents and solicit bid proposals. Motion carried unanimously.

### **B. Woodbury Target Advertise for Bid**

Paige Ahlborg provided an overview of the Woodbury Target project.

Tina Carstens explained that there are funds within the Stormwater Impact Fund for this subwatershed to cover this project.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Kramer seconded to approve the design, estimated cost, and proposed project schedule and direct staff to finalize design and bidding documents and solicit bid proposals.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **8. ATTORNEY REPORT (35:48)**

Tracy Galowitz reviewed items being worked on including the publication for soliciting vendor bids to bring to next month's board meeting, and reviewing the Phalen agreement.

**9. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (36:36)**

President Eisele asked the other Board Members to confirm scheduling for the upcoming closed meeting.

Tracy Galowitz provided information on what a closed meeting entails and explained that in this case they are only used for the purpose of performance review of the administrator.

**10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (40:51)**

**A. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study Presentation**

Tyler Olsen provided background on the study as a follow up to the Beltline Resiliency Study. Tyler goes on to explain the flood risk reduction and design goals that were set and the alternative and conceptual designs that were developed to address issues identified throughout the corridor discussed in the study, including impacts to both commercial and residential properties. Tyler gave an overview of past project that were completed in this location. Tyler explained the 100-year floodplain and how the corridor would be affected as well as the solutions that were found to mitigate damage from such an event. Tyler also explained how the importance of mitigating negative impacts on downstream areas.

President Eisele asked for clarification on the meaning of reducing freeboard and if that meant freeboard would be increasing above the 100-year flood plain.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that it does mean that the freeboard would be increasing above the 100-year flood plain.

President Eisele requested clarification on where the ATLAS-14 information comes from and asked if it is pulled from FEMA.

Tyler Olsen explained that 100-year flood plain is being used as defined by the watershed district stormwater model. Tyler went on to further explain that the modeling information is shared with FEMA for their model and that it is more detailed in identifying inundation areas.

Manager Gernes questioned if the freeboard has any buffer concepts or if it is an exact elevation.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that it is an exact elevation with room for error in the modeling and provided more information on what is required by District rules.

Manager Gernes asked for clarification that there is no horizontal consideration and that it is all strictly elevation.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that it is based strictly on elevation. Tyler continued to explain the methodology used to update the model, such as collecting information from the cities that the study area covered, performing surveys, and other data collection methods. Tyler highlighted how the timing of city projects has fast tracked certain projects, such as the County Rd. C culvert, to maximize efficiency. Tyler continues on to provide more information on the findings of the study.

President Eisele asked if the locations being discussed would have the two feet of freeboard.

Tyler Olsen explained that the objective of flood-risk reduction projects is to reduce the 100-year floodplain elevation below the lowest ground elevation adjacent to existing habitable structures, not to achieve 2-feet of freeboard during the 100-year event. Flood-risk reduction projects proposed will also provide improvements for more frequent events.

President Eisele questioned if there would be any reason for land owners and public entities to not want the recommended project 1 to occur.

Brandon Barnes explained that conversations have been happening with the cities for quite some time. Brandon detailed some of the work that has been done with the cities and the feedback that was received. Brandon also confirmed that the projects would not be happening on residential properties. Brandon stated that the city has been supportive of the efforts.

Tina Carstens reiterated that the projects would only be placed on public owned land.

Manager Gernes requested more information on the elevation of the berm along PCU Pond and questioned the aesthetics of the berm height.

Tyler Olsen stated that the berm is planned to be manageable and would be around three feet in height. Tyler explained that it will be fine tuned through final planning and the city would be consulted on the aesthetics.

Manager Skinner stated that the District is responsible for doing routine maintenance on the PCU pond being discussed due to it being constructed by the District. Manager Skinner asked if the pond excavation option would be going above and beyond the normal clean out by making the pond deeper.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that the project would be making the pond deeper as well as increasing surface area to provide more live storage and would also include upland grading. Tyler explained that while looking to add storage at the north side of the pond it was found that excavation would not be cost effective due to a historic dump at the location and making changes to the PCU pond was the option.

President Eisele asked for clarification on the phrase recommended vs. not recommended. President Eisele asked if this phrasing is based solely on cost benefit ratio or if other elements are considered.

Tyler Olsen explained that cost is a big driver but environmental concerns and other information is also considered. Tyler goes on to explain in more detail what is looked at for recommended vs. not recommended projects.

Tyler continued on to provide information on the next location in this study on a wetland east of White Bear Ave and highlighted alternatives that were found. Tyler explained that two structures in the area are below the 100-year flood plain and stated that significant improvements would be needed to remove the flood risk. Tyler explained potential improvements such as increasing wetland storage and how those improvements would have permanent complications and environmental considerations as well as having greater impacts downstream. Tyler went on to detail additional improvements that were looked at and the impacts those improvements may have. Tyler stated that due to these concerns they are not recommending improvements at the wetland being discussed due to the impacts. Tyler explained that while improvements in this location are not recommended this location is benefiting from improvements made elsewhere.

President Eisele questioned what the 10- and 50- year flood risks would look like for the structures being discussed.

Brandon Barnes stated that it is currently being looked at through the lens of the 100-year flood plain, which is the maximum regulated, and that the 10- and 50- year flood risks are being added to the feasibility study.

Tyler Olsen continued on to discuss the area west of White Bear Avenue and what alternative is recommended for that location, such as a berm and storm sewer outlet to help drain low areas. Tyler described more alternatives and detailed what benefits they may have.

Manager Gernes requested more information on the berm alternative and the affects it may have on a nearby wetland.

Tyler Olsen stated that an outlet was proposed at the elevation of the impacted homes and that it would be noted for final design to make sure the wetland would not drain too low or have additional water added.

President Eisele questioned if the proposed culvert would have one-way flow.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that the culvert would have a back-flow preventer.

Tina Carstens asked for clarification that the berm would be on Ramsey County property.

Tyler Olsen confirmed that while still being close to the nearby homes the berm would be located on Ramsey County property.

President Eisele asked if the berms would be planted.

Tina Carstens confirmed that they would be planted.

Tyler Olsen continued on to review the modeling and flood elevation changes with the proposed berm along an apartment complex on the south side of the wetland. Tyler gave an overview of the proposed project would not be needed except to meet the District's stormwater rules. Tyler went on to discuss what the details of the proposed projects, emphasizing the need to match existing conditions downstream as to not cause additional issues.

Manager Gernes questioned what the bottom elevation would be for the culvert that was previously discussed and asked if the elevation would allow for aquatic movement and not necessarily to maximize storage.

Tyler Olsen stated the invert elevation of the culvert would be matched and that only the shape and size of it would be changed.

President Eisele asked if the culvert would include any automatic controls.

Tyler Olsen stated that would not be needed to see the benefits. Tyler explained features that could be added temporarily that would help prevent downstream impacts. Tyler went on to discuss the next steps and the recommended order the projects would be completed in and the cost to complete the projects.

President Eisele asked for clarification on the project recommendations.

Brandon Barnes provided more information on what would be looked at in the next steps and what would be brought up for further discussion before moving forward.

Tyler Olsen further discussed the next steps and what would take place in order to develop the final designs as well as finalizing the project report to be shared with the cities and incorporating any feedback that would be received.

President Eisele questioned if residents in the area have been engaged.

Brandon Barnes reiterated that all of these projects are on city or county property and conversations have been had with those entities.

Tina Carstens stated that the District would work with the public agencies involved and those agencies would be in charge of the notification process.

The board appreciated the information provided in this presentation.

#### B. Watershed Approach to Retrofit Projects (WARP) Scope Summary

Tyler Olsen provided background information on what was looked at in the scope and how it will help identify potential targeted retrofit and stewardship grant projects. Tyler explained the goal is to develop a more systematic and strategic

approach for finding projects. Tyler gave an overview of the flow chart that describes how the process would look utilizing the data available to objectively evaluate locations for potential projects, including data involving equity, flood risk and habitat corridors. Tyler explained that heat maps can be made from the data to create launching point for outreach and finding those interested in participating in the targeted retrofits or stewardship grant program. Tyler continued to explain how the data and partnership with District staff can be utilized to create mapping and scoring methods to target projects that would have the most impact. Tyler stated that this will allow the district to identify projects equitably and objectively.

President Eisele questioned if the updated vulnerability index was in line with WARP.

Tina Carstens confirmed that is was.

President Eisele asked if the 2025 retrofit planning can be moved up so there is time to view how this new tool is working and to make comments.

Tina Carstens explained that the retrofit planning is typically done in the late summer and early fall. Tina stated that this should give time to bring it to the Board for comments.

Paige Ahlborg stated that this should be a better way to track and plan projects.

President Eisele expressed excitement for this new tool and is eager to see it put to use.

## **11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:22:54)**

### A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

### B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens reviewed the upcoming meetings and dates.

### C. Board Action Log and Updates

No comments.

### D. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

No comments.

### E. Staffing Update

No comments.

### F. Annual Meeting Reminder

No comments.

## **12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:31:13)**

### *Project Feasibility Studies*

#### A. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Feasibility Study

#### B. Improvements to Phalen Village

#### C. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study

President Eisele wanted clarification on when a meeting will take place with the HRA.

Brandon Barnes confirmed the meeting had happened and provided more insight into what was discussed in that meeting and the feedback that was received after the meeting. Brandon reviewed the tentative schedule of when the go ahead will be given on this project.



D. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas

E. Owasso Basin/North Start Estates Improvements

President Eisele asked for additional information on the recent meetings that have taken place and where things are at with the project.

Brandon Barnes stated that the meeting with the North Star Estates engineer consultant and property management took place. Brandon highlighted what was discussed in that meeting. Brandon explained that they confirmed they are not interested in the project at this time. Brandon stated the next steps taken were to reach out to the city of Little Canada to update them. Brandon explained the City of Little Canada's involvement in this project and explained that the District will work with the city to look into other options.

F. Street Sweeping

G. Retrofit Inventory

*Research Projects*

H. Kohlman Lake Aquatic Plants Management Effects Study

President Eisele commented that he would like to do a lessons learned on this project.

I. Shallow Lake Aeration Study

*Capital Improvements*

J. Woodbury Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Project

K. Roosevelt Homes

L. Targeted Retrofit Projects 2024

M. Stewardship Grant Program

N. Arbogast Stormwater Filtration BMP

O. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse

P. Fish Creek Tributary Improvements

Q. Cottage Place Wetland Regeneration

Manager Gernes asked to hear the feedback that was received from the community on this project.

Paige Ahlberg provided insight on the feedback that was received. Paige explained that there was a loop trail that was a concern for the residents and that this trail had been removed from the plan. Paige stated that there will be one more meeting to gain approval for the project.

President Eisele questioned if a park or area of play are still being considered for this project.

Paige Ahlberg explained that a park is not a part of the current plan but there is a look-out that would be included.

R. County Road C Culvert Project

*CIP Project Repair and Maintenance*

S. 2024 CIP Maintenance and Repairs Project

President Eisele questioned if there is any risk to scheduling due to weather.

Dave Vlasin stated that a lot of projects were waiting until spring and that the CIP schedule is in good shape.

T. Beltline Mississippi Branch Outfall Replacement Project

*Program Updates*

U. Natural Resources Program

V. Public Involvement and Education Program

W. Communications and Outreach Program

President Eisele stated that he would be interested in viewing the community survey.

Tina Carstens confirmed that the survey will be in the packet for next month.

**13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:46:01)**

President Eisele spoke a few words about Manager Skinner's impact on the District and her hard work during her time on the Board.

**14. ADJOURN**

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Karp seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.