



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
March 6, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of March 6, 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/4XyM0enJD4g>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

**PRESENT:**

Val Eisele, President  
Ben Karp, Vice President  
Mark Gernes, Secretary  
Stephanie Wang, Manager

**ABSENT:**

Matt Kramer, Treasurer

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tina Carstens, District Administrator  
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator  
Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District  
Dave Vlasin, Watershed Project Coordinator  
Joe Tillotson, Natural Resources Technician  
Ranee Edmundson, CAC Member  
Kyle Kubitza, Water Monitoring Technician

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Carrie Magnuson, GIS Technician  
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering  
Keith Pilgrim, Barr Engineering  
Paul Erdmann, Natural Resources Program Manager  
John Manske, Ramsey County Public Works

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:14)**

Tina Carstens requested to have item 4A: Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2024 be moved to Action Item 8E.

Tina Carstens requested the remove item 11A: Community Survey Results Presentation from the agenda.

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

**3. Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board Manager Oath of Office- (1:20)**

Laurann Kirschner administered the Oath of Office. President Eisele, Manager Gernes, Manager Karp and Manager Wang completed the Oath of Office. Laurann Kirchner noted that Manager Kramer will take the Oath of Office at the April meeting.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA (3:30)**

- A. Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2024
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
  - i. 24-11 MnDOT County Road Improvement, Woodbury
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
  - i. 24-07 CS Atchinson

- ii. 24-08 CS Woodbury 2024 Street Sweeping
- iii. 24-09 CS Dunn

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

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

No comments.

**6. PERMIT PROGRAM (4:38)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

Nicole Maras gave an overview of the monthly enforcement report, highlighting a higher number of permit closures. Nicole explained that this higher number is due to cleaning up the permit list, removing projects that did not move forward as well as older projects that have been completed.

President Eisele questioned if the warm weather has caused upsets in timelines and if that is important to keep track of.

Nicole Maras explained that inspections would be continued as warranted by weather. Nicole stated that the warmer weather has caused more activity. Nicole explained that there are some projects that were needing colder weather to complete the projects, such as the Bailey Nursery project. Nicole stated that inspection frequency is based on the weather and is adjusted as sites become active. Nicole explained that there was no real impact on District staff if a permitted project gets delayed, the same timeframes for soil stabilization and maintenance are applied.

**7. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (8:32)**

A. Applications - none

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg gave an overview of the budget status report and explained what is tracked in the report.

President Eisele questioned if the public art piece is advertised.

Paige Ahlborg explained that it is listed on the website but it is not widely advertised. Paige explained that the idea is that the public art piece is tied to restoration or stewardship grant projects.

Manager Karp questioned how district staff planned to advertise grants in equity areas.

Paige Ahlborg stated that she is working with Lauren Hazenson on a plan.

President Eisele stated that he thinks that advertising in equity areas would help those who would not actively seek out these types of projects.

**8. ACTION ITEMS (13:07)**

A. Bylaws and Board Governance Document Approval (13:13)

Tina Carstens provided an overview of the board of governance document, explaining that after the review comments were received there was some clean up and changes made as suggested by Board Members and the District's attorney. Tina explained that there were no substantial changes to the final draft and that the Bylaws and Governance document will be reviewed annually.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to approve the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Bylaws and Board Governance Document.

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Board of Managers Annual Meeting (17:33)**

Tina Carstens provided an overview of the recommendations given and explained that this is the official business of the annual meeting starting with the elections of officers.

- Election of Officers

Tina Carstens stated that she spoke to Manager Kramer and he indicated that he would be ok with continuing as treasurer and voiced his support for President Eisele to continue as president.

President Eisele self-nominated for the position of President.

Manager Karp self-nominated for the position of Vice President.

Manager Gernes self-nominated for the position of Vice President.

Discussion was had on the two manager's desire to serve as Vice President and why they would be a good fit for the position.

Laurann Kirschner stated that a vote must be taken and can be done in a group or privately. Laurann went on to explain that if there were a tie a second vote could be taken or a vote can be held at the April board meeting when all managers are present.

President Eisele called for a roll call vote on the position of Vice President.

Manager Karp	voted for Manager Karp
Manager Gernes	voted for Manager Gernes
Manager Wang	voted for Manager Gernes
President Eisele	voted for Manager Karp

President Eisele called for a second roll call vote on the position of Vice President.

Manager Karp	voted for Manager Karp
Manager Gernes	voted for Manager Karp
Manager Wang	voted for Manager Karp
President Eisele	voted for Manager Karp

Motion carries unanimously.

President Eisele nominated Manager Gernes for the position of Secretary.

President Eisele nominated Manager Kramer for the position of Treasurer.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to elect Val Eisele as President, Ben Karp as Vice President, Matt Kramer as Treasurer, and Mark Gernes as Secretary.

Motion carried unanimously.

- Community Advisory Committee Membership, Board Liaison Appointment, and Activities

Tina Carstens gave an overview of the recommendation to add additional members to the CAC roster. Tina continued on to review the proposed CAC work plan table for 2024. Tina explained the information provided in the table such as projects the CAC would like to work and proposed outcomes of those projects.

Manager Wang stated that she appreciated the well laid out information. Manager Wang continued on to state that it would be nice to include measurable metrics for outcomes.

Manager Gernes also commented that the information is well laid out. Manager Gernes stated that he appreciated seeing the continuity of projects the CAC had been working on as well as seeing new projects being added.

Carrie Magnuson stated that there are projects that happen year after year and that new initiatives have come up through members of the CAC.

Tina Carstens stated that new ideas are coming from CAC interests, board interests and the guidance of staff.

Manager Karp stated that he would like to continue as the liaison but would be open to others taking the position if they so wished. Manager Karp continued on to say that it nice to have open discussion about the CAC and what is communicated to the CAC. Manager Karp proposed setting aside time for the board to discuss the work of the CAC. Manager Karp stated that as the current liaison he had received comments from the CAC asking for more input from the board.

Manager Gernes stated that he would be available as a CAC liaison alternate if needed.

Manager Karp stated that he believed the CAC would be open to multiple board members attending and that if anyone wanted to join a meeting they should feel free to do so.

Tina Carstens mentioned that the maximum number of board members allowed at a CAC meeting should be two and that the CAC meeting would need to be public noticed if more than two would like to attend.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve the new and renewing CAC membership, select Ben Karp as the board liaison to the committee and approve the 2024 work plan suggestions.

Motion carried unanimously.

- Consulting Staff Selection

President Eisele explained that the board would be confirming the engineer, attorney, and accountant. President Eisele gave a brief overview of the proposals received.

The managers discussed the two proposals received for district engineer.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to appoint Barr Engineering, Galowitz Olson, and Redpath and Company as the consultants for 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

- Official Designations

President Eisele explained that this item was to approve the official bank of deposit as well as the official newspaper to publish in per the current legal standards. President Eisele stated that the newspaper does not mean the only place the district publishes, it is just the official place for postings.

Tina Carstens confirmed that information is also posted to the website. Tina stated the district used to post to local newspapers, as local newspapers started to go away the Pioneer Press became the official place of posting. Tina stated that the Pioneer Press covers the full area of the district.

Motion: Manger Gernes moved, Manger Karp seconded to approve the 4M Fund with LMC: US Bank as the official bank of deposit and the St. Paul Pioneer Press as the official newspaper for 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Roosevelt Homes Phase 2 Bid Award (47:46)

Paige Ahlborg provided background information on the Roosevelt Homes project. Paige explained that the contract would be for the planting portion of the project. Paige continued to provide an overview of the six bids that were received. Paige stated that the low bid from MNL came in under the engineers estimate and that the district had worked with MNL on many maintenance and planting projects.

Manager Karp questioned if there would be an irrigation plan in addition to the vegetation warranty.

Paige Ahlborg stated that there is an irrigation plan in the contract and that Roosevelt Homes will also work with the district on irrigation plans.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to accept the bids and award the 2024 Targeted Retrofit Roosevelt Homes Phase 2 project to MNL, direct staff to prepare and mail the notice of award and prepare the agreements, and review the required submittals.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Woodbury Target Bid Award (50:36)

Paige Ahlborg provided information on the project and the formal bid procedure. Paige stated that Kurilla Contracting came in with the low bid which came in under the engineers estimate. Paige explained that information has been requested from Kurilla and reference checks were still being completed. Paige asked the board for a contingent approval so that the reference checks could be completed and the district could make sure there was nothing outstanding before the contract is awarded.

President Eisele asked if the contingent approval would allow staff continue forward once the due diligence is complete.

Tina Carstens stated that signatures would still need to be collected for the contract and that the directive for staff to mail notice would come after the conditions were met.

Brad Lindaman stated Barr had not worked with Kurilla before, and that they were a relatively new company. Brad provided more information on what Barr asks for from contractors. Brad gave an overview of the timeline that the contractor was given to provide this information and stated that things are looking good so far and they have been responsive to the requests made.

Tina Carstens explained that if staff had any concerns, the item would be brought back to the board.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to accept the bids and award the 2024 targeted retrofit project to Kurilla Contracting at the bid price of \$602,645.75 contingent on staff approval of the qualification evidence and direct staff to request the required bonds and insurance information and execute the contract for work.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes from February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Tina Carstens explained that after reviewing the minutes, Brandon Barnes and Tyler Olson proposed a change to pg. 5 to better explain the intent of the presentation. Tina provided the original wording and the wording of the proposed change:

~~Tyler Olsen stated that the locations being discussed are not required to have the two feet of freeboard because they are above the 100-year flood plain. Tyler explained that part of the criteria is to make any improvement to the freeboard even though they are not at risk. Tyler continued on to explain details of the conceptual projects in the study area and discussed the projects that were recommended and explained which projects were not recommended and why.~~

*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.*

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to approve the February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 minutes pending the updates.

Motion carried unanimously.

**9. ATTORNEY REPORT (58:03)**

Laurann Kirschner expressed gratitude for being appointed for the next year and highlighted the history between Galowitz & Olson and the district. Laurann stated that if there are questions or if the Board would like a more in-depth explanation of services they would be more than happy to provide that. Laurann stated that they like to tailor their services to the specific needs of the board. Laurann continued on to provide an overview of the work completed over the last month including review of the board of governance documents.

**10. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (1:01:56)**

Manager Gernes brought up the topic of chloride and questioned if there are ways to look at chloride reduction outside of lowering the use of deicers and questioned if it were possible to use design of parking lots and buildings to help reduce the need for deicers.

Tina Carstens highlighted a presentation that was given at the last MN Watersheds meeting. Tina explained that this presentation included low salt design development.

Tina Carstens stated that at the legislative event there were discussions happening that includes the potential of writing low salt design and requiring salt management plans into district rules.

President Eisele stated that he was very interested in reading more about the low salt design plans.

President Eisele asked if there could also be an updated presentation on PFAS at some point in the year.

Tina Carstens stated that an update could be provided once the new guidelines are published.

Manager Karp brought up that the Met Council is starting to look at groundwater from a regional perspective and that he thought it would be an important topic for the board to discuss.

Tina Carstens confirmed that groundwater would be a discussion topic during the watershed management plan update. Tina explained that there was a groundwater goal in the district plan and that it is important to discuss what the districts role is.

**11. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (1:09:41)**

A. Community Survey Results Presentation – Lauren Hazenson

B. Kohlman Lake Study Presentation – Keith Pilgrim, Barr

Brad Lindaman introduced Keith Pilgrim and provided information on Keith's background and areas of expertise.

Keith Pilgrim provided an overview of the studies he is presenting on and gave history on how the studies came to be.

Keith Pilgrim explained the interaction with sediment and phosphorus in lake systems. Keith mentioned that both aeration and alum treatments were tools to manage phosphorus in lakes. Keith explained what alum treatment entails and how it worked to reduce phosphorus.

Keith Pilgrim stated that the last alum treatment of Kohlman Lake was in 2010 and that it was evident that the alum treatment was no longer effective. Keith explained that over the 10-year period enough phosphorus was deposited in the lake bottom sediment to render the alum treatment no longer effective and internal loading returned.

Tina Carstens added that both external and internal loading are managed. Tina explained the district wanted to reduce the external loading while also dealing with the legacy phosphorus.

Keith Pilgrim explained his involvement in the original alum treatment in 2010 and gave more history of his involvement with Kohlman Lake highlighting the aquatic plants. Keith continued to detail the different treatments and management projects that had taken place in Kohlman and connecting lakes and detailed other measures taken to control external loading. Keith explained the result of those efforts were an increase in aquatic plants and a notable drop in phosphorus levels. Keith stated that in 2019 the levels started to creep back up, highlighting changes on a chart within the presentation that showed the levels throughout the years.

Keith noted that there were questions on if aquatic plant management in 2022 and 2023 had a role in changes in water quality. Keith stated that it was also questioned if the alum treatment that was expected to last 10 years had also been contributing.

President Eisele questioned if there any premeasures of phosphorus coming into Kohlman Lake and asked if changes to BMPs or construction projects around the lake after the alum treatment were considered as possible contributing factors.

President Eisele stated he was wondering about the external factors that could be affecting loading.

Keith Pilgrim explained that monitoring had been done at the inlet of Kohlman for a number of years. Keith explained that he had previously done an intensive look at phosphorus concentrations coming into Kohlman Lake and noted that the annual average concentrations had been decreasing, noting that there is variability with climatic and storm events.

President Eisele asked if it could be expected for the alum treatment to last 10 years.

Keith Pilgrim confirmed that the expectation would be between 10 and 15 years noting that lakes with similar treatments had also seen similar time frames to Kohlman Lake.

President Eisele stated that the conclusion he was seeing was that the external load had decreased over time but the alum treatment reached its useful life.

Manager Gernes noted that it is important to know that the external loading had not been increasing and was shown to be decreasing so that it could be seen that the increase of nutrients was not from external loading and is due to internal loading.

Keith Pilgrim confirmed that the external loading had been decreasing and what was seen on the table provided in the presentation was due to internal loading.

Manager Gernes questioned if there was any information on why it tends to happen that way. Manager Gernes wondered if it is due to the aluminum getting buried or fully consumed over time or is it getting flushed.

Keith Pilgrim stated that lake sediment cores show the alum is still there but it has moved deeper into the sediment.

Keith Pilgrim reviewed a pre and post management table and detailed what information can be determined from this table and highlighted how the alum and aquatic plant treatments worked together to improve water clarity. Keith continued on to another table that showed different aquatic plants and noted a shifting in populations in recent years explaining that these changes may be due to an increase in herbicide treatment in Kohlman Lake, noting that in recent years there has been more acreage added to the treatment area.

Keith Pilgrim continued to show aerial images of Kohlman Lake and highlighting the changes shown in those images over the course of multiple years noting subtle changes. Keith showed drone pictures of both Kohlman and Beaver Lake.

Keith concluded that an abundant and diverse native aquatic plant population creates a more stable system over time and recommended the district consider another alum treatment for Kohlman Lake to reduce internal loading and to keep Kohlman Lake off the impaired waters list. Keith stated that changes in aquatic plant coverage and species composition likely contributed to declining Kohlman Lake water quality. Keith also noted that climate could be having an affect leading to some of the changes seen, and recommended an annual point intercept survey for Kohlman Lake and a control lake going forward, recommending Keller Lake as a control lake for this future monitoring.

President Eisele stated that this seemed like a pressing issue and is looking forward to discuss it more at a later date.

#### C. Shallow Lake Aeration Study Presentation – Keith Pilgrim, Barr

Keith started by explaining that originally aeration was used in shallow lake systems in order to manage fish populations through the winter as part of the carp management plan. This study was started to determine if aeration could also be used for water quality improvements.

Keith presented information on the shallow lake aeration study and highlighted the lakes utilized in the study and pointed to the locations of the control and study sides of both Bennet Lake and Gervais Mill Pond.

Keith listed the goals he had with this study starting with 'can simple technology increase oxygen levels throughout the water column and is water quality improved.' Keith provided an overview of the information gained starting with the aerators being turned on at Lake Bennet. Keith explained how the aerator mixes the water to provide more oxygen throughout the water column. Keith moved on to explain the second question he wanted to answer with this study 'does it prevent internal loading?'. Keith explained how this is a difficult question to answer because shallow lakes show no obvious signatures of internal loading at the bottom of a lake. Keith explained the solution he created, collecting sediment and sucking out the porewater and directly analyze the porewater for phosphorus and iron. Keith explained how this testing was done over time. Keith reviewed a chart showing total phosphorus concentrations in Bennet Lake and explained the data on the chart shown.



Keith Pilgrim explained that the oxygen demand in Gervais Mill Pond and stated that the aerators could not satisfy the oxygen need to prevent internal loading to a large degree. Keith explained that with alum treatment the phosphorus level would be much lower.

President Eisele questioned if more aerators were needed in Gervais Mill Pond or if the aeration wasn't good for this particular sediment loading.

Keith Pilgrim confirmed that the aeration was not compatible with the sediment loading and adding more aerators would not make a large difference and stated that only so much air can be forced into the water. Keith stated because of these limitations this methodology might not be right for Gervais Mill Pond. Keith suggested that direct oxygen injection may be a better option.

Keith Pilgrim continued on to state the conclusion of the study was that forced aeration can reduce internal phosphorus loading for certain lake systems however the reduction with forced air aeration may not be enough to meet standards. Keith explained that in systems such as Gervais Mill Pond, direct injection would be more effective. Keith stated that aeration should be considered as a viable alternative to alum treatments for small lakes with large watershed and when phosphorus in the sediment was organically bound phosphorus.

President Eisele asked for information on what Keith's recommendations would be.

Keith Pilgrim gave an overview of his conclusions and stated that the chemistry of the sediments will determine whether aeration or alum treatment would be effective. Keith explained he believed a viable approach would be to augment the sediments with iron and aeration to try to prevent internal loading. Keith discussed Wakefield and Bennet Lake as examples of lakes where alum treatment may not be effective and could benefit from aeration and iron treatments.

Tina Carstens stated that both Wakefield and Bennet have TMDLs where external loads have been targeted and internal loading is the next decision that will be coming to the board later in the year to discuss the best options of how it will be addressed.

## **12. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (2:31:42)**

### 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.

## **13. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:39:23)**

### *Project Feasibility Studies*

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

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

#### C. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas

D. Owasso Basin/North Start Estates Improvements

E. Street Sweeping

President Eisele requested to see a presentation on street sweeping stating that he thought it would be worthwhile. Manager Gernes agreed.

F. Watershed Approach to Retrofit Projects (WARP)

*Lake Studies/TMDL Reports*

G. 2024 Grant Applications

*Research Projects*

H. Kohlman Lake Aquatic Plants Management Effects Study

I. Shallow Lake Aeration Study

*Capital Improvements*

J. Woodbury Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Project

K. Roosevelt Homes

L. Stewardship Grant Program

M. Arbogast Stormwater Filtration BMP

N. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse

O. Fish Creek Tributary Improvements

P. Cottage Place Wetland Regeneration

Q. County Road C Culvert Project

*CIP Project Repair and Maintenance*

R. Routine CIP Inspection and Unplanned Maintenance Identification

S. 2024 CIP Maintenance and Repairs Project

T. Beltline Mississippi Branch Outfall Replacement Project

U. New Technology Mini Case Studies

Manager Karp highlighted the chloride reduction information. Manager Karp stated that the information was eye opening and he could see the importance of education and provision of tools. Manager Karp liked the goals and hoped to hear more about this during budgeting.

President Eisele also expressed interest in hearing more about the proposed chloride reduction techniques.

Paige Ahlborg explained that this study was sparked by the City of Oakdale who is looking to build a brine blending station. Paige continued to explain that the City of Woodbury partnered with South Washington Watershed District on a similar system about two years ago.

*Program Updates*

V. Natural Resources Program

W. Public Involvement and Education Program

X. Communications and Outreach Program

#### **14. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:45:40)**

#### **15. ADJOURN**

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.