



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
April 3, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of April 3, 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/QE5TphctOIQ>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator	Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Nicole Maras, Permit Coordinator	Carrie Magnuson, GIS Technician
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District	Brandon Barnes, Barr Engineering
Ashley Petel, Former RWMWD Intern	Matt Williams, City of Oakdale
Bryan Murphy, City of St. Paul	Eric Korte, Water Monitoring Coordinator
Bob Barth, WSB	Blake Hansen, SEH
Kristine Williams, SPPA	Jodie Cremers, Woodland Hills Church
Kevin Lyons, FlashVote	Dan Cazanacli, University of Minnesota
Lauren Hazenson, Communications and Outreach Coordinator	
Paul Erdmann, Natural Resources Program Manager	
Pat Williamson, Natural Resources Specialist	
Joe Tillotson, Natural Resources Technician	

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:36)

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

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (0:54)

- A. Approval of Minutes from March 6, 2024
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 24-13 3M Fire Main Replacement, Maplewood
 - ii. 24-14 MnDOT Hwy 36 Improvements, Roseville, Maplewood
 - iii. 24-15 St. Paul Suburban-Burns Sidewalk, St. Paul
 - iv. 24-16 Justice Alan Page Elementary Parking, Maplewood
 - v. 24-17 The Heights II, St. Paul

- D. Stewardship Grant Program
- i. 24-15 CS Lake Grove Townhomes
 - ii. 24-17 CS Landfall 2024 Street Sweeping
 - iii. 24-18 CS Oakdale 2024 Street Sweeping
 - iv. 24-21 CS White Bear Lake 2024 Street Sweeping
 - v. 24-22 CS Ryan

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

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (2:23)

No comments.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (3:05)

A. Applications

Permit #24-12 St. Paul Fish Hatchery Trail, St. Paul

Nicole Maras provided information on the proposed permit stating that the work would consist of reconstructing and realigning portions of an existing trail and an eventual trail connection along Warner Rd. and Highway 61. Nicole stated the plans include lined filtration basins and a payment to the stormwater impact fund due to site constraints and contaminated soils. Nicole explained that there is no net fill proposed in the floodplain based on the site grading. Nicole continued to explain there is a proposed quarter acre of permanent wetland impact to accommodate this project and provided information on memos included in the packet regarding wetland impact and wetland buffer variance requests.

Nicole stated that the applicant was asking to consider the Gerdau TMS area restoration as meeting the no net loss policy because the wetland created during the restoration was in excess of the proposed impact of the Fish Hatchery trail project and is located in the same subwatershed. Nicole explained it was recognized that this would not meet the state or federal Army Corps of Engineer requirements for wetland replacement so they would also be purchasing 2:1 credits to satisfy those agencies.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve permit #24-12 St. Paul Fish Hatchery Trail.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During the month of March, 16 notices were sent to address: general permit requirements (SWPP, inspection logs) (5), install/maintain perimeter control (4), install/maintain construction entrance (2), stabilize exposed soils (2), contain/dispose of liquid or solid waste (1), improper dewatering (1), install/maintain inlet protection (1).

Nicole Maras provided an overview of the monthly enforcement report highlighting the increase in violations related to record keeping and inspections. Nicole stated that this effort is an attempt to lessen violations throughout the season.

President Eisele stated that he appreciated the increased scrutiny. President Eisele questioned if contractors hire their own onsite inspectors.

Nicole Maras stated that some superintendents have trained foreman complete the inspections, if a company does not have a trained person or the resources to complete the inspections themselves they can hire an outside inspector.

Manager Karp questioned if there were any spills or leaks reported with the Norhart apartments violations or if was a lack of properly maintaining the materials.

Nicole Maras clarified that there were no spills documented and that the violation was due to the improper storage and potential for a spill.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (14:49)

A. Applications

24-16 CS Woodland Hills Church

Paige Ahlborg provided a history of past projects at the site and gave an overview of the proposed project, noting that it is eligible for 100% coverage up to \$100,000 given the location. Paige explained that this location is also in a medium priority area identified on the District's Social Vulnerability Index. Because of this staff would recommend providing additional funds from the stormwater impact fund for this project.

President Eisele asked for the levels associated with the social vulnerability index.

Paige Ahlborg explained that there are three levels, low medium and high. Paige reiterated that this project is in a medium level category. Paige stated that there is potential for an art project could be included in this project. Paige also noted that there is a request to pay the contractors directly for the costs incurred.

President Eisele stated that he would like to make sure that the criteria used to make the choice to prioritize this project for the social vulnerability index increase in funding would be clearly articulated. President Eisele stated that the beneficial removal of impervious area combined with the social vulnerability index aspects made him very comfortable with approving this project.

President Eisele stated that rain garden signage would be nice to include.

Paige Ahlborg stated that signage would be included.

Manager Gernes questioned if this is a one phase project or if there would be other components.

Jodi Cremers confirmed that it would be a one phase project.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to application #24-16 CS.

Motion carried unanimously.

24-19 CS Oakdale Brine Maker

Paige Ahlborg provided information on the proposed project stating that in-house brine production would be used to reduce chloride use in the City of Oakdale. Paige stated that the area of Oakdale within the district drains into Battle Creek Lake which was classified by the PCA as impaired for chlorides. Paige stated that it is proposed to offer 50% funding due to 50% of the roads being within the district.

President Eisele questioned if the application for the grant was for the construction of the building.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that it would be for the installation of the brine maker facility in their public works building.

Manager Karp stated that he believed this was a great project and that he liked to see cities pushing for alternatives to chloride when they can. Manager Karp stated that he saw this as a great use of money on chloride reduction.

Manager Gernes asked if there was a plan for storage or if storage would be addressed as needed.

Matt Williams explained that there will be two interior double walled tanks for storage with one storage tank used for brine and one used for additive.

Manager Wang asked if there were opportunities within the stewardship grant to go beyond the funding and include educational outreach.

Paige Ahlborg stated that she liked the idea and would work with Matt Williams and Lauren Hazenson to come up with an outreach plan.

President Eisele asked for more information on what stewardship grant criteria that are satisfied for this project.

Paige Ahlborg stated that it would fall under the water quality category.

Manager Gernes stated that he thinks this is a great direction to go.

Motion: Manger Kramer moved, Manager Gernes seconded to approve application #24-19 CS.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided an update on the budget status.

7. ACTION ITEMS (35:12)

A. County Road C Flood Risk Reduction Project Advertise to Bid

Brandon Barnes provided the details of the project and its location stating that this is the first of several drainage improvements on Kohlman Creek. Brandon explained this improvement is occurring ahead of the others due to the county resurfacing the road later in the year. Brandon explained the county policy on disturbing a resurfaced roadway, stating that the county would not allow work to be done within 5 years of the resurfacing. Brandon detailed an agreement being worked on with the county stating the county will fund 100% of the construction cost associated with the culvert. Brandon explained the districts role will be designing the project due to it being identified as a flood risk improvement. Brandon explained that the action needed is to authorize staff to finalize design and cost estimates and write authorization to solicit bids to bring back to the board in a month or two, giving time to get the permits needed.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve preliminary design, estimated costs, and proposed project schedule, and direct staff to finalize the design and bidding documents and solicit bid proposals.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (44:22)

Tracey Galowitz reviewed items being worked on including the County Road C culvert cooperative agreement, obtaining appraisals for the Fish Creek easements and reviewing certificates of insurance and documents for the Woodbury Target targeted retrofit project.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (45:47)

Manager Wang brought up the topic of chloride use and the possibility of using education on calibration techniques when applying chloride to help those applying chloride, such as private contractors, be better aware of how much is actually needed during applications. Manager Wang provided ideas of a partnership with a municipality or contractor to demonstrate calibration in action.

Manager Karp stated that CAC is looking for ideas and had mentioned salt education in the past. Manager Karp thought that the board could give direction to the CAC to work on providing chloride reduction information at WaterFest.

Manager Kramer questioned if the land acquisition policy should be removed from board discussion topics if it is no longer applicable.

Tina Carstens stated that it could still be discussed and would be a good policy to have in place. Tina stated that the watershed management plan updates would be another good place to discuss the topic.

President Eisele stated that it would be beneficial policy to have but may not be a necessity.

Tina Carstens stated that purchasing land is not something the district does regularly and the district owns very little land. Tina explained that there was a unique situation when the golf course went up for sale.

10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (59:04)

A. Community Survey Results Presentation – Lauren Hazenson and Kevin Lyons

Lauren Hazenson provided background on how the idea of completing a community survey came to be. Lauren provided insights into the demographics of those most engaged with the district. Lauren explained that the goals of completing a community survey including gauging the overall visibility of the district, measuring water concerns and values, getting a sense of how water resources are used, getting respondents consistent with the demographic breakdown of the district and finding out what water quality means to the public vs. the water management sector. Lauren introduced Kevin Lyons the CEO of FlashVote, the company used to complete the survey. Lauren stated that Kevin will review the logistics of the survey.

Kevin Lyons provided background on FlashVote and provided an overview of how they complete their survey work. Kevin explained that short surveys were sent out through text messages to both priority and non-priority areas, focusing more on priority areas. Kevin explained the response rate and how it related to other surveys that were sent out through FlashVote. Kevin proceeded to provide the questions that were asked in the survey and explained responses received.

Lauren Hazenson provided more details on how the information received through the survey can be used to communicate clearly to different audiences. Lauren detailed how the survey helps in identifying needs and audiences, which allows for a communications strategy to be created to reach those audiences, once the content is delivered an evaluation can be done to then identify new needs continuing the outreach cycle and engaging people on a long-term basis. Lauren went on to explain how this would be put into action within the district and highlighted some of the plans she has to connect with more people within the district. Lauren explained how another survey would be conducted in a few years to find out how effective the communication strategy was.

B. Schletty Tamarack Wetland Presentation – Ashley Petel

Tina Carstens introduced Ashley Petel stating that she is a former natural resources intern who also did work within the district for her master's program.

Ashley Petel provided details on how her restoration plan for Schletty Tamarack Wetland came to be and provided background on her areas of study and how that played a role in creating the plan for this wetland. Ashley overviewed the steps taken in creating the plan starting with a site assessment then moving to creating a concept plan and a final plan narrative. Ashley provided information on the location of the site and discussed historic aerial photos, noting that it was undisturbed until 1991 when development began around the wetland. Ashley explained the plant communities found on site as Tamarack Swamp, Mesic Hardwood and Cat Tail Marsh. Ashley proceeded to explain the key assets found when assessing the site, noting that there were a large number of native plants found. Ashley detailed some of the challenges of the site noting evidence of emerald ash borer and large amounts of buckthorn. Ashley provided details on how these pressures affect the wetland. Ashley explained Tamarack regeneration was not found and that this could

be due to the buckthorn. Ashley moved on to explain the concept plan and gave information on reference sites nearby. Ashley stated the goals of a restoration would be enhancing the Tamarack swamp plant community, improve wildlife habitat and other water quality actions. Ashley provided more information on the goals for each plant community. Ashley provided ideas for invasive species control, highlighting the Oregon kiln biochar. Ashley then went into the seeding and planting plans for the site. Ashley explained the detailed narrative she created including project benefits, funding ideas, research opportunities, and a plant community enhancement plan. Ashley stated that she believed that this project would meet with the districts mission statement.

Tina Carstens stated that from a practicality standpoint the site might be a good location to monitor, looking at the Tamaracks and invasive species while putting it on the list of restoration sites for future wetland restoration.

C. 2023 District Water Monitoring Report – Eric Korte

Eric Korte explained that he would be reviewing trends over the last year and also trends over the past ten years. Eric explained how the lakes are looked at over a period of time and that one year does not always show an accurate picture of how a lake is doing. Eric describe the sampling that is completed as well as the techniques and times lines used for sampling. Eric stated that some of the things that are looked for are in sampling are phosphorus, chlorophyll A, and nitrogen.

Eric Korte continued to explain the trends that are looked at and how that data is used to determine the health of the lakes. Eric proceeded to explain the details of a chart showing the trends of phosphorus, chlorophyll A and Secchi in all lakes within the district over the last 10 years, noting that Owasso Lake, Carver Lake, Snail Lake, Wabasso Lake and Wakefield lake all showing improvements while Kohlman Lake and Emily Lake show worsening trends. Eric noted that Emily Lake had not been monitored in over 10 years but it will be put back on the regular monitoring list starting this year. Eric provided more detailed information on the trends found in each lake.

Eric Korte continued on to review data collected from creeks and the Beltline interceptor, noting where creeks have improved or worsened and also how they compare to state standards.

Eric Korte continued on to discuss BMPs starting with the alum plant. Eric explained how the alum plant works and provided details on the results noting that there is a decrease in removal rates over the last four years. Eric described changes that may be causing this to occur, noting the dosing could be off after installing an upgraded system in 2019 or that shutting down the plant due to low Ph in the inlet caused untreated water to get through. Eric detailed what his next steps for trying to make sure things are working correctly.

Eric continued on to discuss chloride monitoring and detailed the sites looked at, the timing of the chloride sampling and explained the results. Eric noted the biggest factor seems to be percentage of impervious surface in a location. Eric explained how weather trends can also relate to the levels of chloride found.

D. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Projects, Final Design Scope Summary

President Eisele questioned if there is an outreach plan to connect with residents in the area.

Brandon Barnes stated there is a plan to communicate with nearby residents throughout the design phase but will talk with the cities about that.

11. ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT (2:24:34)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens reviewed the upcoming meetings and dates.

C. Staff Anniversaries

No comments.

D. Board Action Log

No comments.

E. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

No comments.

F. Staffing Update

No comments.

12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:25:39)

Project Feasibility Studies

- A. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Feasibility Study
- B. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study
- C. Phalen Village Flood Risk Reduction
- D. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas
- E. Owasso Basin/North Start Estates Improvements
- F. Street Sweeping
- G. Watershed Approach to Retrofit Projects (WARP)

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. Targeted Retrofit Projects 2024
- M. Stewardship Grant Program
- N. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse
- O. Fish Creek Tributary Improvements
- P. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration
- 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

Program Updates

- U. Natural Resources Program
- V. Public Involvement and Education Program
- W. Communications and Outreach Program

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:27:49)

No comments.

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.