



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
September 4, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of September 4, 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/5dY9yepNRUM>. 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

Staff:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Paige Ahlborg, Assistant Administrator
Nicole Maras, Regulatory Program Manager
Ashlee Ricci, Grant Program Specialist
Kyle Kubitzka, Monitoring Technician
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Patrick Williamson, Natural Resources Specialist
Mia Collazo, Water Monitoring Intern
Kendra Kloth, Regulatory Technician

Consultants:

Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering

Visitors:

None

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:11)

Manager Wang requested to move permit application 24-23 Top Golf, Woodbury to permit program item 5A iii.

Manager Karp requested to move permit application 24-45 Goodrich Golf Course Cart Path Replacement, Maplewood to permit program item 5A iv.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (1:12)

- A. Approval of Minutes from August 7, 2024
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 24-40 Main Event, Woodbury

- ii. 24-42 Woodbury Middle School Renovation, Woodbury
 - iii. 24-43 Top Golf, Woodbury
 - vi. 24-45 Goodrich Golf Course Cart Path Replacement, Maplewood
- D. Stewardship Grant Program
- i. 24-43 CS Schwantes
 - ii. 24-44 CS Anderson

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Kramer seconded to approve the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

Manager Gernes requested to amend the August 7th Minutes to reflect his abstaining from the vote for permit application 24-39 Xcel Service Center, St. Paul.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve the August 7th minutes with the proposed revision to 24-39 Xcel Service Center, St. Paul showing Manager Gernes abstained from the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (6:30)

No comments.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (6:37)

A. Applications

- i. 24-41 Woodbury WTP Woodlane-Hargis Parkway, Woodbury

Nicole Maras stated that permit 24-41 Woodbury WTP Woodlane-Hargis Parkway, Woodbury includes a variance request for rule C stormwater management to exclude some of the reconstructed impervious area from treatment requirements. Nicole explained that the origination of the project was PFAS related. Nicole stated that the city of Woodbury will be constructing a water treatment plant and new water infrastructure was needed. Nicole went on to explain that the section of roadway adjacent to Gordon Bailey Elementary School had been reconstructed within the last five years. Nicole provided more information on the location of the project noting that it is in the southern most location of the District's boundaries. Nicole explained that the majority of the impervious surface is located outside of the District's hydrologic boundary. Nicole stated that the applicant submitted modeling to show the current jurisdictional and hydrologic boundaries and to explain that there is sufficient treatment for the impervious area and they meet today's standards.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Karp seconded, to approve permit 24-41 Woodbury WTP Woodlane-Hargis Parkway, Woodbury.

Motion carried unanimously.

- ii. 24-44 MnDOT Hwy 61 – Arcade/ 7th Street, St. Paul and Maplewood

Nicole Maras explained that permit 24-44 MnDOT Hwy 61 – Arcade/7th St., St. Paul and Maplewood is a MnDOT partial reconstruction and partial resurfacing of 7th St. East, which is in Capital Region Watershed District, and Hwy 61/Arcade. Nicole explained that Capital Region Watershed District is regulating areas within their jurisdiction separately and the proposed permit is for the portion of the project located within the District's jurisdictional boundary. Nicole stated that there would be underground treatment and a half-acre decrease of impervious area proposed within the District. Nicole explained that there is a variance request for temporary disturbance of a wetland. Nicole explained that the wetland being disturbed would be the wetland fringe at Round Lake. Nicole explained the temporary disturbance would be due to the replacement of existing stormwater conveyance sections.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Karp seconded to approve permit 24-44 MnDOT Hwy 61 – Arcade/ 7th Street, St. Paul and Maplewood.

Motion carried unanimously.

iii. 24-43 Top Golf, Woodbury

Nicole Maras provided details of permit application 24-43 Top Golf, Woodbury noting that it is directly adjacent to the location of permit 24-40 Main Event, Woodbury. Nicole stated that these are two separate parcels within a greater redevelopment area which also has a permit that was approved in 2023. Nicole explained the mass developer is completing the grading, stormwater infrastructure and utilities. Nicole explained that due to the ownership and different contractors working within the separate parcels the mass developer requested each parcel receive its own erosion control permits for inspection and enforcement purposes.

Manager Wang stated that she had concerns due to the large parcel, which is currently undeveloped, having an increase of impervious surface runoff being directed across the freeway into a higher quality wetland. Manager Wang questioned if disturbance to the wetland had been taken in to consideration.

Nicole explained that the permit request is centered on erosion and sediment control versus construction of the buildings noting that all of the stormwater requirements are being met for the 2023 permit. Nicole stated that the mass developer is installing facilities to treat impervious runoff.

Manager Wang expressed concern that if sediment were to get through it would end up in the higher quality wetland.

Nicole Maras explained the District has an agreement with the city of Woodbury stating that Washington Conservation District staff completes routine inspections for sites located in Woodbury. Nicole stated that if issues are noted in those inspection reports such as offsite impacts the District can step in to complete its own inspections at any point. Nicole explained that an initial erosion control walkthrough would be conducted with the Top Golf contractor to communicate what the expectations are.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Karp seconded to approve permit 24-43 Top Golf, Woodbury. There were four ayes with Manager Wang abstaining.

Motion approved.

vi. 24-45 Goodrich Golf Course Cart Path Replacement, Maplewood

Manager Karp stated that he would be abstaining from the vote on permit 24-45 Goodrich Golf Course Cart Path Replacement, due to his involvement in his job at Ramsey County, noting a conflict of interest.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve permit 24-45 Goodrich Golf Course Cart Path Replacement, Maplewood. There were 4 ayes with Manager Karp abstaining

Motion approved.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

Nicole Maras provided a review of the monthly enforcement report. Nicole noted that an increase in rain events caused an increase in violations during the month of August. Nicole stated that due to prior warnings given and discharge of sediment after large rain events being seen there were violations given as well as deductions from escrows.

Manager Gernes questioned if an improvement had been seen for permits 23-29 and 22-23 Shoreview Deluxe Redevelopment Phase I & II, Shoreview, noting that the enforcement report showed many violations.

Nicole Maras stated the staff had visited the site on September 4th and all but one of the items had been brought into compliance. Nicole explained that a violation was given for the item that had not yet been brought into compliance. Nicole stated that there had been good cooperation with the city of Shoreview staff helping provide enforcement at the site.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (24:33)

A. Applications – See consent agenda

B. Budget Status Update

Ashlee provided an overview of the budget status report noting August staff approval projects.

7. ACTION ITEMS (26:50)

A. 2025 Preliminary Budget and Levy Public Hearing

i. Approval of 2025 Preliminary Budget and Levy Certification to Ramsey and Washington Counties – Resolution 24-03

Tina Carstens provided details of the 2025 preliminary budget, noting that the levy was brought down to a 4.88% increase. Tina explained that the decrease was due to the District receiving a MPCA grant for the third phase of the Roosevelt Homes project. Tina stated that she had not made many other changes but there would be adjustments as the budget planning moved forward. Tina reviewed project breakdowns and provided an overview of CIP project funds. Tina proceeded to provide further details of the budget breakdown and how it was spread across programs noting that 84% of the budget goes to projects and programs and the remaining 16% was for administrative costs. Tina continued on to review information provided from the counties which showed the levy impact on resident taxes.

President Eisele closed the regular board meeting and opened up the public hearing for comments at 7:05:10 p.m.

No comments.

President Eisele closed the public hearing at 7:05:40 p.m. and reopened the regular board meeting.

Manager Wang noted a change in the calculation of the contingency line items and asked for more information on why the change was made.

Tina Carstens stated that the change was made after comments from President Eisele at the August meeting asking for standardization.

Manager Wang asked for more information on how the contingency funds are utilized.

Tina Carstens explained that in cases such as feasibility studies or research where a new idea, problem or situation may occur where it would not make sense to wait until the following year the contingency budget allows for changes. Tina stated that the contingency fund usage in the water monitoring program varies depending on if a year is more wet or dry, noting that wet years can require more than dry years.

President Eisele questioned how unused contingency funds affect future levies.

Tina Carstens explained that contingency funds that are not used are moved to the general fund and carried over for the next year which helps decrease the levy need.

Manager Wang stated that she felt that the standardization was not the correct approach for the budget.

Tina Carstens stated that the contingency budget use can be unpredictable.

President Eisele stated he was looking for what the standard risk assumption for particular items would be based off of the budget. President Eisele stated that currently he believed 10% was the best guess.

Manager Wang stated that a great job was done bringing the levy down to under 5%. Manager Wang explained that she is sensitive to the fact that taxes are on everyone's mind. Manager Wang stated that adding the standardized 10% was not the right approach to managing the budget.

President Eisele stated that the historical representation of what the contingency should be is what he believed the baseline should be. President Eisele stated that he thought 10% was ok. President Eisele stated the outcome he was looking for is to not have a levy increase. President Eisele stated that he was comfortable with targeting the contingency budgets and it would be a step in the right direction. President Eisele stated he would like to avoid a levy increases while still planning for a build year with beltline repairs and other contingency projects occurring.

Tina Carstens stated that she appreciated the comments and the goal of keeping the levy increase at 0%.

Manager Gernes noted that in previous conversations the preliminary levy is more of an estimate that is submitted to the counties with most years having a significant decrease when it comes to the final levy.

Tina Carstens stated that the project budgets are continually being refined. Tina noted that there would be a better sense of carry over for the general and project budgets as the year is worked through, which also helps refine the levy.

Motion: Manger Kramer moved, Manager Gernes seconded to approve the draft budget for purposes of the preliminary levy and approve resolution 24-03.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (53:11)

Laurann Kirschner provided details of the work the attorney's office had worked over the past month which included the public hearing notice as well as document and contract review for several projects.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (55:48)

President Eisele highlighted the nomination requests for the upcoming recognition dinner awards and urged others to make nominations. President Eisele also reiterated the desire for additional education opportunities and provided a status update on the additional education opportunities proposal.

Tina Carstens stated that planning was occurring for a site visit prior to the October meeting.

Manager Wang stated additional learning opportunities on how to best review permit materials and presentations would be helpful. Manager Wang noted that an executive summary and time limits on future technical presentation may also be helpful in understanding what to expect and to digest the information.

10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (54:40)

None

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:01:50)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens reviewed the upcoming meetings and dates.

Manager Wang requested more information on the Phalen Creek daylighting design meeting and asked when the Board should expect to see further developments.

Tina Carstens stated that the schedule was to submit 90% for permit review in September with the hope of starting construction in the spring. Tina stated that it could be expected to see something in the next several months through the permitting program.

President Eisele questioned if updates on the Phalen Creek daylighting project could be provided in the program and status report.

Tina Carstens stated that it would be a unique add due to it not being a District project but it is something that could be included in the Project and Program Status Report.

C. Staff Anniversaries

No comments.

D. Board Action Log

No comments.

E. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

No comments.

12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:10:27)

Project Feasibility Studies

A. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study

President Eisele questioned why the process seems to be going slower than expected.

Tina Carstens stated that it is due to the HRA's need for policy on how they work with organizations such as the District. Tina stated that they are supportive of the project. Tina provided more details on the discussions that have occurred with the HRA.

B. Phalen Village Flood Risk Reduction

President Eisele requested more information on the modifications requested to the storm sewer system and questioned if there is work being done to get the final section installed.

Tina Carstens stated that the final section would not be completed at this time but could be looked in the future if there is a change with the private property owner. Tina noted that the benefits of the system will still be seen even though the last section is not installed.

C. Resiliency Study for Non-Beltline Tributary Areas

D. Maplewood Mall 2024 Assessment

E. Watershed Approach to Retrofit Projects

F. Tanners Lake, Battle Creek and McKnight Basin Outlet Operation Plan

Watershed Management Plan Update

G. Watershed Management Plan Update Scoping

Manager Gernes questioned when Watershed Management planning would begin and when the Board would see information on it.

Tina Carstens stated that the kick off meeting with staff is set to occur within the next month with a presentation planned for the December meeting.

Research Projects

H. New Technology Mini Case Studies

President Eisele questioned if a larger presentation would be given once an assessment is completed.

Brad Lindaman stated that there is still additional tracking to be done and once that is complete there will be better understating of if this is something to take a deeper look into.

Project Operations

I. Lake-Level Station Maintenance and Rain Gauge Installation

Capital Improvements

J. Woodbury Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Project

Manager Gernes asked for an update on the timeline of this project.

Paige Ahlborg stated that things are on track and scheduled to be wrapping up soon.

Dave Vlasin stated that pavement is scheduled for the 17th of September and it should be wrapping up in about two and a half weeks.

K. Roosevelt Homes

L. Targeted Retrofit Projects 2024

M. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse

N. Double Driveway and Fish Creek Tributary Improvements

O. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration

P. County Road C Culvert Project

Q. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Projects: Final Design

CIP Project Repair and Maintenance

R. Routine CIP Inspection and Unplanned Maintenance Identification

S. 2024 CIP Maintenance and Repairs Project

Brad Lindaman stated that there has been more pond clean out requests this year than ever before and expects a lot of upcoming activity.

Dave Vlasin stated that there are 20 ponds expected to be surveyed with cities on board noting that it looks like it will be a busy year.

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 liked the illustration shown and would like more information on how it would be utilized.

Tina Carstens stated that more information could be added in the next report.

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (1:22:51)

No comments.

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Wang moved, Manager Karp seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.