



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
December 11, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of December 11, 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/CIJtc8bgPlk>. 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
Lyndsey Flaten, Monitoring Technician
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Patrick Williamson, Natural Resources Specialist
Mary Fitzgerald, Regulatory Specialist
Kendra Kloth, Regulatory Technician

Consultants:

Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Erin Anderson Wenz, 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 (0:13)

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

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (0:29)

- A. Approval of Minutes from November 6, 2024
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 24-51 Woodlane Drive Trail, Woodbury
 - ii. 24-52 Shoreview Villas II (Lots 1-8), Shoreview
 - iii. 24-53 RWMWD 2025 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project
 - iv. 24-54 Gladstone Village II, Maplewood

- D. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration – Change Order No. 1
- E. BMP Service Agreement – Washington Conservation District
- F. BMP Service Agreement – Ramsey County

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

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (3:22)

No comments.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (3:31)

A. Applications

i. 24-50 Flandreau-Case Pond Improvements, St. Paul

Nicole Maras provided details of the Flandreau-Case pond improvement. Nicole explained that the project is a stormwater basin in a historical wetland. Nicole provided details of the project location, noting that the purpose of the project is water quality and flood control. Nicole explained that an iron-enhanced filtration bench would be installed adjacent to the pond. Nicole provided details of other improvements that would be included with this project.

Manager Gernes requested additional information on the request to bank 32.2 cubic feet of volume and questioned if there is a tracking system for those types of requests.

Nicole Maras stated that because treatment is not required on this project the volume would be banked for future projects where treatment may not be feasible. Nicole stated that this practice is part of the alternative compliance sequencing in the stormwater rule. Nicole stated that an internal record is kept. Nicole went on to explain that there is a variance request due to the nature of the project with work occurring in the wetland and wetland buffer as well as areas of permanent impact due to boulder wall areas as well as an acknowledgement that the maintenance path is not a native plant mix due to the nature of the use of the maintenance path.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve permit 24-50 Flandreau-Case Pond Improvements, St. Paul.

Motion carried unanimously.

ii. 24-32 WCA Ramsey County Bruce Vento Trail (White Bear Lake)

Nicole provided details for permit application 24-32 WCA Ramsey County Bruce Vento Trail. Nicole explained that the replacement plan was brought to the board ahead of a grading permit submittal because the replacement plan can influence final design. Nicole provided details of the project. Nicole stated that impacts on the wetland have been reduced since the last iteration of the plan. Nicole explained that the county requested the mitigation at a 2:1 ratio through the purchase of banked credits. Nicole provided details on how the banking of wetland credits works. Nicole stated that the comment period for the TEP ended that day and noted that that this was brought to the board for discussion, feedback and approval if the Board saw fit.

Manager Karp stated that he was the Ramsey County representative and that he had also worked on the design. He stated that he would abstain from any action taken due to his involvement with the project.

President Eisele asked for more information on a comment received regarding the width of the trail and asked the WCA application reflected changes driven by that comment.

Nicole Maras explained that the comments were provided a few days prior to the meeting and the additional information had not been submitted by the applicant yet.

Manager Gernes asked for clarification that the comments had been provided but that WCA application was still the original version.

Nicole Maras confirmed that the application was the original version.

Manager Wang asked for information on the property ownership that was noted in the memo.

Nicole Maras explained that the biggest concern regarding the property ownership would be onsite vs. banked credits for mitigation. Nicole stated that some of the plan sheets showed parcel ids owned by entities other than Ramsey County. Nicole explained that if there was onsite mitigation, access for maintenance and monitoring would need to be looked into to see if easements would need to be involved.

Manager Karp provided information on the property ownership and what had been looked at during the design phase of the project.

President Eisele questioned what the ramifications would be if this were tabled until after the TEP comments were resolved.

Nicole Maras explained that statute requires a decision within 60 days of a complete application and that there would be time if the board preferred to take action at the January meeting instead.

Manager Gernes stated that he thought the TEP panel raised good points and noted that there were a few things in the application that were not clear. Manager Gernes stated he would prefer more clarification.

Nicole Maras stated that she could pass along the Board feedback. Nicole stated that there would be another meeting with Kimley-Horn to discuss other watershed role implications with regards to this project.

Manager Kramer stated that he felt the comments would not lead to many changes and he was prepared to vote on the permit application. Manager Kramer stated that he felt there was little risk to the Board to vote on this now.

President Eisele asked for clarification that if a vote were to occur it would be on the plan and there would be another vote for the permit application when that time comes.

Nicole Maras confirmed that action taken during this meeting would be voting on the plan and a permit application vote would happen when that application came in.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve the WCA replacement plan. A roll call was preformed.

Manager Karp – Abstained

Manager Gernes – Aye

Manager Kramer – Aye

Manager Wang – Aye

President Eisele – Aye

Motion approved.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

Nicole Maras provided an overview of the monthly enforcement report for December. Nicole noted that there were still a number of active projects. Nicole stated that the permitting staff had been checking for soil stabilization prior to snow fall for the projects or portions of projects that will be inactive over winter. Nicole went on to review the summary of common Wetland Conservation Act application types that were included in the enforcement report. Nicole provided details on the application types and provided details how common the different types of the applications are.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (48:39)

A. Applications – None.

B. Budget Status Update

Ashlee provided an overview of the budget status report.

C. 2024 Program Overview and 2025 Program Approval

Ashlee Ricci provided an overview of the 2024 stewardship grant program. Ashlee noted that 54 grant applications had been approved. Ashlee provided a breakdown of the approved grants noting that there had been 2 churches, 2 commercial sites, 14 government sites, 3 homeowners associations and 33 residential sites. Ashlee continued on to provide details of the 2024 program overview. Ashlee provided details on the 2024 retrofit projects detailing where these sites were located within the district. Ashlee noted that there had been a trend of increased approvals year over year. Ashlee explained that the average number of projects had been 25-30 projects per year until 2023 when that number increased to 51 and again to 54 in 2024. Ashlee went on to explain that the commercial, government, and church sites that were approved had all been located within priority areas. Ashlee continued on to provide an overview of the program from its inception in 2006. Ashlee stated that the dollar amounts approved since the inception of the program were just shy of \$8,000,000 with near 600 grants awarded, averaging \$14,000 per project. Ashlee provided an overview of the targeted retrofits that had been completed since 2013, noting that the projects had been well distributed across the District. Ashlee went on to discuss maintenance grants. Ashlee explained that maintenance was one of the bigger concerns for landowners. Ashlee stated that maintenance grants had been a great success in helping with completing maintenance. Ashlee stated the average number of maintenance grants approved had been 16 approvals per year. Ashlee stated that in 2024 there were 20 approved maintenance grants.

President Eisele asked for more information on who would receive a maintenance grant.

Ashlee Ricci explained that a large number of the maintenance grants are awarded to homeowners with a few homeowners associations, churches and schools receiving maintenance grants as well. Ashlee continued on to discuss the proposed 2025 program with focus on the same priority subwatersheds. Ashlee continued on to discuss the priority subwatersheds and equity areas within the District. Ashlee provided information on the ongoing efforts to increase projects within the equity areas, including partnering with community organizations and door knocking in strategic locations. Ashlee noted that there was no proposed change to the program for 2025.

President Eisele questioned if the budgeted dollars for enhanced street sweeping would be enough with the increased interest in the program.

Ashlee Ricci stated that the allotted amount would be sufficient. Ashlee stated some of the targeted city partners has opted out of participation. Ashlee stated that the program is still in the learning phase while working to figure out implementation and city limitations. Ashlee stated the 2024 street sweeping data would be seen soon with more information provided at a future meeting.

Manager Wang questioned if stewardship money could be utilized for chloride reduction.

Ashlee Ricci stated that chloride reduction projects are eligible for grants but there is not a specific dollar amount allotted for those projects. Ashlee explained that more work is being done to determine how to prioritize effective chloride reduction projects.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Karp seconded to approve the 2025 priority areas, coverage amounts, and enhanced street sweeping.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. 2025 Board Meeting Dates (1:15:53)

Tina Carstens provided details of the proposed 2025 Board meeting dates and the proposed changed dates for January, July and December.

President Eisele suggested moving the July Board meeting to July 9th due to the 4th of July holiday.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Wang seconded to approve the board meeting schedule with the proposed changes to January 2025, July 2025 and December 2025.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2025 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project Bid Review and Approval (1:21:04)

Erin Anderson Wenz provided details of the 2025 CIP maintenance and repair project bid review and approval. Erin explained that four bids had been received. Erin reviewed the bids received, noting that Fitzgerald Excavating was the lowest responsible bidder. Erin explained that Fitzgerald Excavating was known to the district and that they had worked on similar projects for the District in the past. Erin provided more details on the engineer's estimates and the bids received.

Motion: Manager Kramer moved, Manager Karp seconded to approve and award the 2025 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project to Fitzgerald Excavating, direct staff to prepare and mail the notice of award, prepare the draft agreements and review the required submittals.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. 2025 Budget and Levy Final Approval

Tina Carstens discussed the details of the 2025 budget and levy final approval. Tina provided information on previous discussions that led to the 0% levy increase.

President Eisele stated that he believed the 0% levy increase was the correct move.

Tina Carstens provided additional details on the planned projects and the refined contingency budgets and how they related to the 2025 budget.

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded to approve the proposed FY2025 General Fund and CIP budgets and adopt resolution 24-04.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (1:32:41)

Tracey Galowitz provided details of the work the attorney's office had been doing over the past month. Tracey noted that the Fish Creek easements had been finalized and had moved to signatures. Tracey stated that other items being worked on were pond agreements and finalizing the volunteer waiver.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS (1:35:51)

President Eisele discussed the Minnesota Watershed Annual Conference and the takeaways he had. President Eisele stated that there was great discussions and work being done at the conference.

Manager Wang provided details on her experience at the Minnesota Watersheds Annual Conference and appreciated how it highlighted the good work being done across the state while learning about interesting technologies.

Manager Gernes stated that he found the conference to be informative. Manager Gernes provided details on the parts of the conference he found most interesting including technologies displayed and presentations given.

Manager Karp provided his takeaways from the annual conference.

10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (1:52:37)

A. Central Park (Roseville) Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study Scope Summary

No comments.

B. Beltline Inspection and Survey Scope Summary

No comments.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (1:54:52)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. Staff Anniversaries

No comments.

D. Board Action Log

No comments.

E. Minnesota Watersheds Updates

No comments.

12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (1:56:32)

Project Feasibility Studies

A. Watershed Approach to Retrofit Projects

B. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Planning Study

C. Maplewood Mall 2024 Assessment

Monitoring Water Quality/Project Monitoring

D. Special-Project BMP Monitoring

Watershed Management Plan Update

E. Stakeholder Engagement

F. Watershed Management Plan Update Scoping

Project Operations

G. 2024 Tanners Alum Facility Monitoring

H. Lake Phalen/Keller Creek and Twin Lake Operations Support and Communications

Capital Improvements

I. Woodbury Target Store Stormwater Retrofits

J. Roosevelt Homes

K. Targeted Retrofit Projects 2024

L. Stewardship Grant Program

M. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse

N. Fish Creek Tributary Improvements

O. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration

P. County Road C Culvert Replacement

Q. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Projects- Final Design

R. Kohlman Lake Alum Treatment

CIP Project Repair and Maintenance

S. Routine CIP Inspection and Unplanned Maintenance Identification

T. 2025 CIP Maintenance and Repairs

U. Beltline and Battle Creek Storm Sewer Five-Year Inspections and Beltline Detailed Survey

V. Beltline Mississippi Branch Outfall Replacement Project

Program Updates

W. Natural Resources Program

X. Communications and Engagement Program

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:03:30)

President Eisele stated that he would like to come up with a way to summarize the notes taken by the Board at the Minnesota Watersheds Conference.

President Eisele stated that a discussion should be had on Board members attending the upcoming legislative event.

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Karp seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.