



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
May 7, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of May 7, 2025, 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/JDVYxK0ByJI>. Video time stamps are included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

Val Eisele, President (arrived at 7:00 pm)
Ben Karp, Vice President
Mark Gernes, Secretary
Stephanie Wang, Treasurer
Gabi Grogan, Manager

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Staff:

Paige Ahlborg, Assistant Administrator
Nicole Maras, Regulatory Program Manager
Eric Korte, Monitoring Program Manager
Kendra Kloth, Regulatory Technician
Mary Fitzgerald, Regulatory Specialist
Patrick Williamson, Natural Resources Specialist
David Vlasin, Project Coordinator

Consultants:

Laurann Kirschner, Attorney for District
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering

Visitors:

Nolan Wall, City of Vadnais Heights
Blaine Barker, Real Estate Equities
Travis Fristed, Braun Intertec

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:11)

Vice President Karp requested to move item 5B Vadnais Heights Affordable Housing Project Introduction and Discussion to item 9B Board Discussion Topics to ensure that President Eisele would be present for the discussion.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Wang seconded, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried unanimously by those present (4-0). President Eisele was absent.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (1:58)

- A. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes from April 2, 2025
- B. Approval of Special Workshop Meeting Minutes April 2, 2025
- C. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- D. Permit Program
 - i. 25-10 Maplewood 2025 SIP – Prosperity Road, Maplewood
 - ii. 25-11 Helmo Station Development, Oakdale

- E. Stewardship Grant Program
 - i. 25-15 CS Pioneer Park Stormwater Enhancements
 - ii. 25-18 CS Cherokee Hills 3
 - iii. 25-19 CS Parnell
 - iv. 25-20 CS Oakdale 2025 Street Sweeping
- F. County Road C Culvert Replacement – Change Order No. 2
- G. CIP Maintenance and Repair – Change Order No. 2

Manager Gernes questioned if Ramsey County would be reimbursing the District for the County Road C Culvert Replacement – Change Order No. 2 increase of \$1,080.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that Ramsey County would be reimbursing the District for the additional cost.

Manager Wang requested more information on who would be responsible for maintenance for permit application 20-10 Maplewood 2025 SIP – Prosperity Road, Maplewood.

Nicole Maras stated that the property is owned by the City of Maplewood, and they would be responsible for the maintenance.

Manager Gernes questioned if the curb cut rain gardens would be eligible for maintenance grants.

Paige Ahlborg explained that maintenance grants are not typically awarded to permit sites. Paige noted that if the maintenance falls on the homeowners, there may be options to provide grants.

Manager Wang questioned if the City of Little Canada would consider reseeding with something other than residential turf grass for Stewardship Grant application 25-15 CS Pioneer Park Stormwater Enhancements.

Paige Ahlborg stated that it is something that could be brought to the city. Paige noted that the project had already gone out to bid.

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

Motion carried unanimously (4-0). President Eisele was absent.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (6:24)

No comments.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (6:40)

A. Applications

- i. 25-12 Oakdale 2025 SIP, Oakdale

Nicole Maras provided details of the Oakdale 2025 SIP street reconstruction project. Nicole explained that there was a proposed filtration bench adjacent to a wetland. Nicole noted that the wetland was currently used as a stormwater basin and had been excavated by the District in the past. Nicole went on to explain that the City of Oakdale proposed to partially meet volume reduction credits with the filtration bench and requested to defer the remainder of the volume requirement due to reconstruction of a nearby street that would take place in 2026. Nicole explained that the City of Oakdale would like to design and construct regional treatment with the 2026 reconstruction project, which would take care of the remainder of the credits. Nicole stated that due to the stormwater basin being a historical wetland there was a no loss application that had been submitted for processing. Nicole explained there was a variance request for temporary disturbance to the wetland buffer for access and grading as well as installation of the filtration bench. Nicole noted that the filtration bench would be considered a permanent impact.

Vice President Karp asked for more information on what will be used to replant the filtration bench.

Nicole Maras explained that there was no current plan to replant the filtration bench, noting that long-term weed management would be needed.

Manager Gernes asked for more information on the seeding plan.

Nicole Maras explained that the slopes that would need to be reseeded and restored as part of the temporary impacts to the wetland buffer. Nicole noted that there would be some restoration, but the bench itself would be iron enhanced sand.

Manager Genres asked for more information on the wetland. Manager Gernes noted that the wetland was identified in the District's classification management system as an 'A' wetland.

Nicole Maras explained part of the wetland was considered mitigation for the original impact in 2005. Nicole explained that any mitigation wetlands are automatically given the highest classification in terms of wetland buffer. Nicole provided more information on the classification of wetland being discussed and the details of the project.

Motion: Manager Wang moved, Manager Grogan seconded to approve permit application 25-12 Oakdale 2025 SIP, Oakdale with the special provisions and variance request.

Motion carried unanimously (4-0). President Eisele was absent.

B. Regulatory Monthly Memorandum

Nicole Maras reviewed the monthly regulatory memorandum. Nicole discussed violations from the month of April, meetings and training attended by staff as well as staff approved permits. Nicole highlighted larger projects with inspections beginning during the 2025 construction season.

Manager Wang requested more information on the Phalen Creek Daylighting maintenance discussion.

Nicole Maras explained that a permit application had not yet been received. Nicole provided details of the discussion.

Paige Ahlborg stated a formal ask could be expected later in the summer.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (24:07)

A. Applications – see consent agenda

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg provided a review of the Stewardship Grant Program budget status update. Paige stated that there had been several staff approvals. Paige noted that the City of St. Paul would be submitting a street sweeping grant application and applications were also expected to come in from the City of White Bear Lake and Landfall, which would be brought to the Board at the June meeting.

7. ACTION ITEMS (27:03)

A. 2024 District Annual Financial Audit

Paige Ahlborg provided an overview of the 2024 District Annual Financial Audit. Paige noted that everything went well with the audit process.

Motion: Manager Gernes moved, Manager Grogan seconded to accept the 2024 Annual Audit Report.

Motion carried unanimously (4-0). President Eisele was absent.

8. ATTORNEY REPORT (28:13)

Laurann Kirschner provided details of the work completed by the attorney's office over the last month which included contract document review for the projects at Cochran Recovery Services, Maplewood Toyota and Roosevelt Homes.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS

A. Board Discussion (29:22)

Vice President Karp discussed the CAC Watershed Management Plan update workshop that he had attended with Manager Wang. Vice President Karp provided details of the meeting and what had been discussed.

Manager Wang provided additional information on the CAC workshop.

B. Vadnais Heights Affordable Housing Project Introduction and Discussion (31:15)

Nicole Maras provided an introduction to the Vadnais Heights Affordable Housing Project. Nicole noted that representatives were present on behalf of the developer, consultants, and City of Vadnais Heights. Nicole explained details of the work that had been done to evaluate the proposed project over the last few months. Nicole noted that avoidance and minimization were at the top of mind during that time. Nicole explained that the proposed location was an undeveloped parcel and the project would call for a large permanent wetland impact. Nicole stated that no Board action was requested at that time, and the information was brought to the board for discussion. Nicole provided information on the steps that would be taken and approvals that would be needed for the plan to move forward.

Blaine Barker with Real Estate Equities, the developer of the Vadnais Heights affordable housing project began his presentation by providing background information on their previous work on affordable housing. Blaine stated that Real Estate Equities proposed to develop a 180 unit building in Vadnais Heights on the southeast corner of 694, near Highway 61. Blaine explained that over an acre of wetland would be impacted by the construction. Blaine explained that there would be plans for onsite mitigation as well as a plan to purchase credits to get to the 2-1 mitigation requirement. Blaine stated that at the time of the meeting only sequencing had been completed. Blaine explained that they wanted a discussion with the Board before going further into planning. Blaine stated that the proposed development would be a six-story building with one level of at grade parking. Blaine explained that there would also be 1.8 surface parking stalls per unit. Blaine stated that the City of Vadnais Heights required two stalls per unit, but they would be requesting a variance to that rule to minimize the wetland impact. Blaine went on to provide more details of the proposed development such as the amenities within the units, parking stalls provided, and amenities provided on the grounds. Blaine explained that other locations were looked at for their proposed development. Blaine stated the proposed location was the only location where they've been able to come to an agreement with a landowner.

Nicole Maras stated that a portion of the sequencing application had been provided in the May Board packet. Nicole explained that the information provided in the packet summarizes the avoidance, minimization and alternative sites that had been considered. Nicole stated that response to the comments from the technical review had been received and were under review. Nicole noted that a notice of decision would be forthcoming from staff. Nicole reiterated that this would only approve the sequencing and would not approve any onsite impacts.

President Eisele stated that the mapping illustrated a much larger wetland impact in the than what he had expected. President Eisele stated that he understood the priority of providing affordable housing while still protecting the wetlands. President Eisele questioned if other design alternatives had been investigated.

Nicole Maras provided information on the site and proposed location for the development. Nicole noted that design and feasibility studies for Geotech had not been completed. Nicole provided more information on the proposed design and how a future submittal would need to meet District rule E. Nicole noted that WCA would require a 2-1 replacement and any credits that would not be on site would be bank credits purchased.

Manager Gernes requested more information of the on-site wetland's locations. Manager Gernes noted that the

sequencing applications showed cases where incidental wetlands under WCA were present.

Nicole Maras explained that the wetlands were included in the sequencing application and the TEP had reviewed. Nicole provided more information on the on-site wetland locations.

Manager Gernes questioned if there had been a MNDOT setback that would not allow for the development to be built further north on the property.

Blaine Barker confirmed that the property was located against the MNDOT set back which would not allow them to build further north.

Nicole Maras noted that the site also included an easement for a sanitary sewer on the east side of the property which would not be eligible for inclusion for the wetland mitigation or buffer.

President Eisele asked for information on how frequently impacts of more than 1 ½ acres of impact were approved by the District.

Nicole Maras stated that the last time a similar impact had been approved was 9 years prior and the impact was around 1 acre. Nicole noted that the impact for that commercial site was less than what was currently being proposed but was the closest she was able to find.

Manager Gernes questioned if alternative parking solutions had been investigated.

President Eisele stated that he would also like to see alternative parking options, noting that the parking lot was what would be causing the wetland disturbance.

Blaine Barker stated that multiple alternatives had been looked at.

Manager Gernes provided ideas of what he thought would be good options for alternative parking and questioned multi-level parking had been looked at.

Blaine Barker stated that he believed multi-level parking would become cost prohibitive. Blaine stated that an alternative location for the parking lot could be looked into.

Travis Fristed provided information on why moving the location of the parking lot to the northeast may be challenging. Travis provided details of the proposed parking lot, BMP installations and overall site plans.

Manager Gernes stated that he wasn't comfortable with the size of the proposed impact.

President Eisele agreed that he was not comfortable with the size of the proposed impact. President Eisele noted that a large retrofit plan may need to be created due to water management issues that may arise. President Eisele reiterated that he would like to see more options.

Manager Grogan stated that she was aware of streams in the location and agreed that water management may become an issue, noting that there may be side effects that hadn't been accounted for.

Blaine Barker questioned if there was a number for amount of impact area that the Board would be comfortable with. Blaine noted that their intention was to follow all District rules.

President Eisele noted that the rules are intended to protect the wetlands from impact. President Eisele explained that with the current plans the replacement would be less than one acre while the impact would be more than one acre.

President Eisele stated that the current onsite replacement plan did not seem feasible in the current configuration.

Manager Gernes stated that there wasn't a magic number for what they would like to see as far as impact to the wetland. Manager Gernes reiterated that the rules are intended to protect wetlands.

Manager Karp questioned if culvert replacements would be needed. Manager Karp stated that if the rules are being met there wouldn't be a reason to say no.

The Board agreed that they would like to see more minimization efforts. The Board agreed to move forward with the sequencing decision with more discussion to come when a formal decision is needed and more site-specific investigation had been completed

10. NEW REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS (1:35:15)

A. 2024 Water Monitoring Annual Report Presentation, Eric Korte

Eric Korte began his presentation by giving an overview of what was discussed in the 2024 Water Monitoring annual report. Eric proceeded to give details on the lake and pond water quality monitoring completed by staff. Eric gave details on the frequency and techniques used in lake and pond sampling. Eric explained that samples are taken to look for phosphorus, chloride, chlorophyll A and nitrogen. Eric provided an overview of the 2024 state standards for lakes. Eric noted that several lakes were shown as not meeting standards for phosphorus, chloride, chlorophyll A and nitrogen. Eric explained that the intense rain periods followed by periods of draught caused dips in water quality in 2024. Eric noted that things can vary from year to year, so it is best to look at 10-year trends. Eric provided details of the 10-year lake trend analysis for Battle Creek Lake, Snail Lake, Gervais Lake, Beaver Lake, Tanners Lake, Kohlman Lake and Owasso Lake. Eric moved on to discuss creek water quality monitoring. Eric provided details of the samples and measurements that are collected as well as the sample collection timeline. Eric proceeded to provide information on the 2024 state standards for creeks and details on the creeks that were not meeting the 2024 state standards. Eric went on to discuss the 10-year creek trend analysis. Eric continued on to discuss BMPs starting with the alum plant. Eric provided details of the alum plant noting that it was in the Tanners Lake subwatershed. Eric noted that the average total phosphorus (TP) removed in 2024 had been 52% while the TP reduction from 1998 to present was 70%. Eric provided information on why there was a decrease of TP removal in the last few years and explained the steps taken to fine tune the system. Eric went on to discuss the Frost Kennard spentlime chamber in the Wakefield Lake subwatershed. Eric provided details of what the spentlime chamber is and how it is utilized. Eric noted that an over TP reduction of 63%, total suspended solids (TSS) reduction of 88% and orthophosphate(ortho) removal of 27% since monitoring began in 2019. The next BMP Eric discussed was the Willow Pond continuous monitoring and adaptive control (CMAC.) Eric stated that the Willow Pond CMAC was in the Bennet Lake subwatershed. Eric explained how the CMAC system is used, noting that it is highly programable. Eric noted some hardware issues that had occurred since the installation. Eric stated that after 3 rounds of testing in 2024 there had been a 26% reduction in TP, 13% reduction on ortho and 36% reduction in TSS, showing a trend of improvement. Eric moved on to discuss the Wakefield Lake experimental iron and granite sand filter. Eric provided information on the use of the iron and granite sand filter. Eric gave details of the TP, TSS, and ortho removal, noting a larger percentage of removal was seen after a media change in 2022. Eric went on to discuss the Woodlyn Rain Garden Iron-Enhanced Sand Filter located in the Kohlman Lake subwatershed and provided details of the iron-enhanced sand filter. Eric noted over TP removal was 58%, Ortho removal was 54% and TSS removal was at 88%. Eric continued on to discuss the Arbogast CC17 filter, which was installed in 2023 with monitoring beginning in 2024. Eric stated the 2024 removal rates were 47% TP, 11% ortho, and 93% TSS. Eric noted that due to large amounts of sediment the filter would need regular cleaning. Eric went on to highlight the tree trench synthetic storm that took place at Maplewood Mall. Eric explained details of the synthetic storm noting that 15,575 gallons had been pumped into a portion of the tree trench system with calculated run off of 2,460 gallons with the system storing 13,000 gallons between two tree trenches. Eric continued on to discuss the Fish Creek and Battle Creek study. Eric reviewed the impairments and stressors found in both creeks, which included chloride, E.Coli, "non-support" of aquatic life and TSS. Eric provided details of the samples being taken and stated that the goal of the study was to find out what was causing the impairment in the creeks. Eric

went on to discuss chloride and PFAS monitoring being conducted throughout the District. Eric provided details of the monitoring process and noted how the sampling sites were chosen.

The Board expressed appreciation for the water quality monitoring update.

B. RWMWD Watershed Management Tools Memo (2:10:46)

No comments.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (2:14:42)

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 (2:16:45)

Project Feasibility Studies

A. Manufactured Homes Resilience Evaluation

B. Evaluation of Compliance with South Metro Mississippi River TSS TMDL

C. Street Sweeping

D. Interim Emergency Response Plans

E. Roseville Central Park Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study

F. Stormwater Model Updates

Monitoring Water Quality/Project Monitoring

G. Annual Water Quality Report Assistance

H. Special – Project BMP Monitoring

Planning

I. Watershed Management Plan Update: Phase 1- Stakeholder Engagement

Lake Studies and TMDL Reports

J. 2025 Grant Applications

Research Projects

K. New-Technology Mini Case Studies

President Eisele stated that he found that the bio-char to be very intriguing and would like to learn more about its use. .

Manager Wang provided additional information on bio-char that she learned at the Washington County Consortium.

Project Operations

L. Lake-Level Station Maintenance and Rain Gauge Installation

M. Lake-Level Station Forecast Integration

Capital Improvements

- N. Roosevelt Homes
- O. Targeted Retrofit Projects 2025
- P. Stewardship Grant Program
- Q. Pioneer Park Stormwater Reuse
- R. Fish Creek Tributary Improvements
- S. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration

Manager Gernes requested more information on the status of the grading.

Dave Vlasin stated that black dirt would be brought in for planting with sifting and raking occurring to remove rock.

- T. County Road C Culvert Replacement
- U. Kohlman Creek Improvements
- V. Lake Wabasso Outlet Replacement

President Eisele requested more information on the foot bridge removal at Lake Wabasso.

Dave Vlasin stated that the foot bridge was located on private property and the removal had been requested by the property owner.

- W. Kohlman Lake Alum Treatment
CIP Project Repair and Maintenance
- X. Routine CIP Inspections and Unplanned Maintenance Identification
- Y. 2025 CIP Maintenance and Repairs
- Z. Beltline Long-Term Fix Near River Outfall

President Eisele asked if a response had been received from the St. Paul Port Authority.

Paige Ahlborg stated that a positive response had been received with a request to defer the reimbursement payment to 2026.

- AA. Beltline and Battle Creek Storm Sewer Five-Year Inspection
Program Updates
- BB. Natural Resources Program
- CC. Communications and Outreach Program
- DD. Citizen Advisory Committee

13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:26:41)

14. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Karp moved, Manager Gernes seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.