



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
May 5, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of May 5, 2021, was held via Zoom web conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/Hz0vRStgrkw>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

PRESENT:

Larry Swope, President
Cliff Aichinger, Vice President
Dianne Ward, Treasurer
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary
Val Eisele, Manager

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator
Andy Walz, Lake Owasso Resident
Melissa Elke, Twin Lake Resident
Ranee Edmundson, CAC member

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist
Teresa McDonald, Roseville Resident
Burt Johnson, Twin Lake Resident
Koreena Moua, Director of the Boys and Girls Club
Laura Eder, Roseville Resident

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (0:28)

Motion: Manager Ward moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to approve the agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (1:39)

- A. Approval of Minutes from April 7, 2021
- B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List
- C. Permit Program
 - i. 21-12 – Tartan High School Redevelopment Phase II, Oakdale

D. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Modifications – Change Order No. 4

E. CIP Maintenance and Repair 2021 – Change Order No. 1

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITOR COMMENTS (4:03)

Burt Johnson, Twin Lake Association, reviewed the goals of the association to ensure that there is not water inundation from West Vadnais Lake, to have an outlet for Twin Lake, and to ensure the long-term water quality and clarity within Twin Lake. He thanked staff and the Board for facilitating the upcoming discussion related to the water quality of Twin Lake. He noted that many residents are planning to attend. He stated that many members of the association have raised concerns with the Mondello Shores development across the railroad tracks. He asked what the District is doing to ensure compliance with the permits granted for that development and to ensure the conditions place upon the permits are being met.

Tina Carstens stated that staff has an inspection policy for permits issued and described that process. She noted that the City of Vadnais Heights also completes inspections. She stated that the District reviews sites for erosion and sediment control during construction and to ensure the approved plans are being followed for grading and construction of the stormwater elements. She stated that the contractor has been very responsive to staff and the project is moving ahead as permitted.

5. PERMIT PROGRAM (10:48)

A. Applications - None

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During April, seven notices were sent to address: install/maintain perimeter control (2), install/maintain construction entrance (1), sweep streets (1), and stabilize exposed soils (3).

Nicole Soderholm provided an update on the new general MS4 Permit process and noted that her staff report includes a highlight of the changes that were made to the program.

Manager Aichinger asked if the District was responsible for meeting performance standards on items such as bacteria, chlorides and temperatures. Tina Carstens indicated that many of these requirements were for cities, not watershed districts, but we do issue educational materials for items such as pet waste and chloride reduction.

Manager Eisele referenced the White Bear Lake High School south gym project and asked if there is an impact that the project began without District notification. Nicole Soderholm replied that typically when the Board approves a permit there are special provisions associated with the permit. She stated that those provisions do not require design changes and it certainly happens where applicants begin work without submitting all the items specified. She stated that while it is not desirable for that to occur, she does not recall a situation where the District has stopped work and instead reminds the applicant as to what is needed.

6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (18:13)

A. Applications

Grant #21-14 CS: Boys and Girls Club, Public Art

Paige Ahlborg stated that the proposed public art is planned to be installed near the front entrance at the Boys and Girls Club. She stated that signage would also be installed for the previously completed porous pavement parking area and landscaping. She stated that public art was approved by the Board in 2018 to be part of the stewardship grant program and noted that public art tends to go along with stewardship grant projects or targeted retrofit projects in order to help highlight the work that was completed.

President Swope asked if there are guidelines for the public art program. Tina Carstens replied that a specific public art plan was not developed, but staff presented a plan to incorporate public art into the stewardship grant program funding list. She stated that a policy document was not developed, but noted that staff could work to develop a policy document. She stated that there are criteria staff use to determine whether to bring a request to the Board, but there is not a formal written policy.

President Swope commented that he would find a written policy helpful. He requested that staff work to develop a draft policy to bring back to the Board for review.

Koreena Moua, Branch Director of the Boys and Girls Club, commented that the organization sits on a park dedicated in memory of an officer. She stated that the statue was previously in the back of the park but has been moved to the front in order to make it more visible. She stated that the garden is meant to be a reflection garden for the community. She believed that this would be a way to connect the police and youth of the community. She stated that the parking lot used to flood, and this garden will help to reduce runoff.

Randee Edmundson, CAC member, commented that the Boys and Girls Club and its Youth Leadership met with the CAC and assisted with the Ames Lake project. She stated that this opportunity to install the pervious pavers and garden, together with the sculpture, will help to connect the children with their neighborhood and provide a sense of responsibility and ownership.

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to approve grant #21-14 CS.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Grant #21-15 CS: Nevins, Native Habitat Restoration

Paige Ahlborg provided details on the proposed plan to add native plants to the pond buffer to assist with erosion issues.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Eisele seconded, to approve grant #21-15 CS.

Further discussion: Manager Aichinger asked if the other lots have similar issues with erosion. Paige Ahlborg stated that staff met with a few neighboring property owners and they do not have erosions issues, but have issues with buckthorn and may come back with a request to remove that material and replace with native plants.

Manager Ward asked who owns the pond. Paige Ahlborg commented that she believed it is a city-maintained pond and did not believe this area has a homeowners association.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Budget Status Update

Paige Ahlborg noted that there is a placeholder for the Twin Lake project at \$180,000 and advised that item will be updated to the amount that will be approved by the Board late on the agenda tonight.

7. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (32:33)

A. Workshops – Topics, Scheduling, Attendance

President Swope stated that he provided a potential list of topics for upcoming workshops and asked for input.

Manager Aichinger commented that he was confused by some the terms used in the list provided by President Swope and asked for clarification as these presentations will require additional staff time. He noted that some of the topics were related to education and could be presented in a workshop with optional attendance for those that felt they needed more information, while the policy related discussion items should be presented in a workshop to the full Board. He noted that some items would only require a short presentation and could be included in a regular Board meeting. He believed that the workshops should be delayed until in person attendance is available to facilitate better discussion.

Manager Skinner requested that, in the future, things to be discussed at a Board meeting should be included in the Board packet rather than through email. She agreed that most of these topics could be incorporated into regular Board meetings. She stated that she would also like input from the other members of the Board as to whether there are topics they would like to discuss as this list was only provided by President Swope.

President Swope agreed that his intent was to get the ball rolling and other Managers were allowed to submit suggestions prior to the meeting as well. He agreed that some of the items could be included in a regular Board meeting but believed there would be benefit to having some items covered in a workshop setting with both new members and tenured members in order to facilitate better discussion based on the different levels of expertise. He also recognized that would require an additional time commitment from the Board and for staff to prepare. He agreed that it would be preferential to holding workshops in person but noted that would depend upon the discussion that occurs later tonight related to in person attendance.

Manager Ward commented that she thought the list was helpful and seemed to be topics that have come up during different meetings. She agreed with Manager Aichinger that some topics could have optional attendance, perhaps slating thirty minutes before a regular Board meeting to cover some of the education related items and Board members interested in learning more could choose to attend.

Manager Eisele asked for input as to whether there are some topics that could relate to items that may appear on an upcoming agenda that could be prioritized to occur sooner rather than later. He stated that he found a lot of value from conversations with other Managers that helped him to learn more about certain topics and with staff related to modeling. He asked if staff has input on any type of priority.

Tina Carstens commented that she can work with the members of the Board to prioritize the list. She did not see anything jumping out, with the exception of wetlands as that workshop has been discussed for the longest. She agreed that many of the educational topics could have a more robust staff report provided within the Board packet to provide the desired additional information.

Manager Aichinger commented that he did not believe there was urgency on any of the topics. He noted that funding strategies could be covered through a brief memorandum and if there are questions, Managers could bring those forward at the meeting. He noted that many of the other educational topics could be covered in the same manner.

Manager Skinner stated that perhaps modeling would be a priority as Manager Eisele seems to have some ideas to discuss. She stated that while it would be great to have some tours, it could also be helpful to have the new Communications Coordinator video record the tours so that the information could be shared on the District website.

President Swope asked that Managers to provide input on their prioritization of topics along with any other input with the intent that staff provide a draft at the next meeting.

Tina Carstens agreed that if each Manager provided their top three priorities, she could compile that and provide a draft schedule of how those could align with Board meetings. She welcomed any additional questions or comments that Managers may have or information they may be interested in.

Manager Eisele agreed with the suggestion from Manager Skinner to have tours recorded and available for viewing on the website.

B. Website

President Swope commented that the Communications Coordinator has begun reaching out to members of the Board to gather input.

Tina Carstens confirmed that staff would be reaching out to each Board member as well as members of staff and other partners and stakeholders.

C. Budget Categories

President Swope asked the Board to review the budget categories and provide any input as to items they believe may need to be addressed.

Tina Carstens stated that typically she provides a budget presentation to the Board in July, but noted that in June she could provide an earlier presentation to provide additional explanation and discussion on the budget process overall, including the categories.

D. Communication Terminology

President Swope commented that while some terms are common industry terms (such as BMP) he believed that additional explanation of those terms and/or better communication would help to engage the overall community.

Manager Eisele commented that as a new member he began to build his own glossary of terms. He found that some other watersheds have helpful information on their websites that help to explain some of those industry terms that he could share with staff.

8. PRESENTATIONS AND/OR ACTION ITEMS (1:02:53)

A. Twin Lake Shoreline Restoration Accept Bids and Order Project

Paige Ahlborg stated that they were excited to receive four bids back on this project and staff is happy with the low bid as it was lower than expected. She stated that staff reviewed the itemized cost, and the most significant difference was the cost for annual maintenance. She stated that the District has worked with Landbridge in the past on different projects and have no complaints.

Manager Eisele asked if there was an assumptive difference in the cost for annual maintenance as there was a large range on that item between contractors.

Paige Ahlborg replied that the maintenance cost from each contractor was not itemized but the cost from Landbridge was similar to the annual maintenance for the Snail Lake project which had a similar number of homes. She noted that Landbridge did go out and walk the properties and she was unsure if all contractors did that.

Manager Aichinger asked if Twin Lake were to recede in elevation to where it used to be, it would be several feet lower than where it is now and would create a space between the restoration and the new water line. He asked what the plan would be to fill that gap.

Paige Ahlborg stated that the two-year maintenance plan was factored in to address anything that may arise. She noted that a similar situation occurred at Snail Lake and additional plants were added.

Manager Aichinger asked what would happen if the water to recede in five or ten years, whether a new grant application could come forward.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that would be an option. She noted that if the water level moved slow enough, hopefully the plants could follow on their own.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Ward seconded, to accept the bids and award the Twin Lake Shoreline Restoration Project to Landbridge Ecological, Inc. and direct staff to prepare and mail the notice of award, prepare the agreements, and review the required submittals.

Further discussion: Manager Eisele asked if he should abstain.

Tracey Galowitz agreed that Manager Eisele should abstain as he is participating in this project.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	abstain
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Review and Accept the 2020 District Annual Financial Audit (1:08:29)

Tina Carstens stated that each year the audit is completed and advised of the different documents included in the audit from Redpath. She stated that there was a clean opinion and no findings of legal noncompliance. She stated that the audit has been finalized and sent to BWSR and the State Auditor. She welcomed any questions the Board may have.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to accept the 2020 Annual Audit Report.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Presentation: Protecting the Long-Term Viability of District Investments (1:10:12)

Brad Lindaman stated that this presentation is meant to provide details on the CIP maintenance and repair program the District completes to protect the long-term viability of District investments. He welcomed Board input on how things could be done better or the process could be refined. He provided historical background on the program, its creation, and the partnership with local units of government for pond cleanouts. He stated that the District system refers to its CIPs, creeks, lakes, and other general areas of inspection (some of which are owned by others). He stated that there are 38 CIPs or assets included on the inspection list and also reviewed the different creek systems in the District that are reviewed on a routine basis. He also reviewed the common issues and inspection frequency for different creeks, lakes, the Beltline Interceptor, and other key inspection points.

Manager Eisele asked how modeling helps to inform these key inspection points. Dave Vlasin stated that he would not say that a model informs these locations and explained that it is more a list of District projects and other known locations that staff monitor to ensure they are working in a proper way. Brad Lindaman provided additional details on design and standard practices that account for 50-80 percent blockage of trash racks within modeling.

Dave Vlasin noted that because of vegetation growth and other debris items that end up in the water, some areas need to be cleaned after almost every large storm event.

Manager Ward commented that after some projects are completed which change the existing conditions, she has noticed that it takes a bit for things to settle around that area. She asked if there are plans to conduct extra inspections in areas where projects have been completed. Brad Lindaman agreed that there is a recovery process that follows larger projects. He stated that when significant work is done on a CIP project that area is identified for higher frequency inspections for the next year.

Dave Vlasin noted that in highly visible areas there are other sets of eyes and the District often receives calls that alert staff that additional inspection may be necessary.

Brad Lindaman provided additional details on what is involved in the inspection process and the staff that are involved in the inspection process. He explained how the inspection issues are evaluated. He stated that the inspection and maintenance process in ongoing, completing the maintenance needs necessary, identifying additional issues and scheduling future repairs and maintenance.

Manager Eisele commented that he would be interested in going along with staff on an inspection. Dave Vlasin confirmed that could be done. Manager Skinner commented that she would also be interested.

Brad Lindaman reviewed some of the typical maintenance and repair activities. He provided examples of different inspection points throughout the District systems. Additional details were provided related to the tracking of the inspections and the color-coded system that was eventually developed.

Dave Vlasin reviewed the location of key problem trash racks and the number of hours and visits completed in the last year. Brad Lindaman explained that some of the key projects on this list were designed with oversized trash rack systems and redundancy to ensure problems would not arise when the trash rack is blocked.

Dave Vlasin reviewed photographs from different years of inspection, noting that staff used the photographs in the process to monitor critical areas to determine if any changes have occurred over time. He highlighted different situations that staff come across during their inspections.

President Swope asked if there is a formalized process for residents to register problems they may come across, such as a place on the website where residents could submit information. Tina Carstens confirmed that there is a reporting link available on the District website that is used.

Dave Vlasin provided photographs on cattail mats and how staff determines that a cleanout is necessary.

Manager Eisele asked the threshold that would trigger automated flow monitoring. Brad Lindaman stated that the District has not used flow monitoring in that way and typically uses it for water quality purposes. He stated that the issue with cattails is easy to view by driving by and then completing a more complete survey to gather additional information.

Dave Vlasin provided before and after photographs of a cattail removal. He stated that after the cattail removal in this instance a tree fell down and asked for input as to whether the Board would want to see that removed. Brad Lindaman noted that the fallen tree can actually provide benefit in skimming materials that are allowed to pass through to the pipe.

Manager Aichinger commented that there is not a lot of flow in that area and therefore the fallen tree does not seem to have an impact on the flow. Tina Carstens stated that this is a Ramsey County Parks property and therefore staff the County would take ownership of that as it is their property and the District assisted with the cattail removal project.

Dave Vlasin provided additional photographs of different maintenance activities such as trash rack cleaning and permeable weir plugging and other maintained District CIPs and assets.

President Swope referenced the benefit that was mentioned from a fallen tree and asked if that is something that could be considered as part of the design of future projects. Dave Vlasin confirmed that a skimmer was placed in a pond for the similar purpose of skimming debris and keeping it away from the trash rack. Tina Carstens noted that Barr Engineering has also looked at different designs for trash racks, which has come from a need seen through the maintenance program.

Manager Eisele stated that he was very impressed with the manual effort required for the maintenance program. He asked if there are written guidelines for the inspection process as much of it seems to be subjective. Dave Vlasin provided additional details on the document that is completed for each reach of a creek inspection.

President Swope asked for details related to silt in culverts and whether there is an inspection process for that activity. Tina Carstens replied that the culverts that are part of the creek system would be part of the creek inspections. She noted that some culverts are known to fill with silt more often and are inspected more frequently. She stated that the remainder of the culverts are the responsibility of the cities and included in their inspections as part of the MS4 permit.

Manager Ward referenced the form residents can fill out to report a problem and asked if the response is posted to the website. Tina Carstens commented that the response is provided to the resident directly.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (3:02:30)

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. Ramsey County Permitting Follow-Up

Tina Carstens stated that this is in process and staff continues to work on this.

D. Twin Lake Association Meeting

Tina Carstens stated that as mentioned staff will be making a presentation to residents the following Monday.

E. COVID-19 Back to the Office Plans (Staff and Board Meetings)

Tina Carstens stated that she included information within the report on the informal survey she did of similarly sized Districts. She stated that it is proposed that July and August be used as transition months to allow some staff members to begin to return to the office in some capacity. She stated that the day after Labor Day would be targeted as a back to the office time, dependent on the COVID conditions at that time.

Manager Skinner asked if there are thoughts related to the vaccination status of staff prior to returning from work. Tina Carstens stated that she would not want to go down the path of requiring vaccination or report of vaccination staff legally. She commented that the District will continue to follow guidelines for social distancing and mask wearing as recommended by the CDC. She stated that the current policy only allows one staff member per vehicle and staff has asked if two people could be in a vehicle together if they are vaccinated. Manager Skinner commented that CDC regulations would allow that.

Manager Aichinger asked if the District could trust people to say they are vaccinated or whether the vaccination card would have to be shown. He stated that some employers have stated that they can legally require vaccination before returning to work and he was not sure why the District would not be able to do so. He stated that if people are vaccinated, they could then operate freely in the office.

Tracey Galowitz stated that people would have to voluntarily share that information to avoid any concerns with HIPAA.

Manager Skinner stated that perhaps if people are choosing not to be vaccinated, they could sign something voluntarily. Tracey Galowitz stated that there still could be some liability risk related to HIPAA.

Tina Carstens noted that she could follow up with the HR legal services to determine options. She believed staff could return to the office whether or not people are vaccinated as long as social distancing and mask wearing occurs. She stated that the same discussion would apply to Board meetings noting that there would be options to socially distance around the table and use a hybrid approach. She noted that the approach for Board meetings will be reliant on direction from the Governor.

Manager Eisele asked if there would be capability to hold outdoor meetings for the Board. Tina Carstens replied that there would be some logistical details to work out and noted that option would also be dependent upon weather.

President Swope commented that meeting outdoors would be difficult with vehicles driving by as well. He stated that perhaps this discussion continues at the June meeting as it applies to the Board.

President Swope asked for an update on the meeting that was held related to Victoria Shores. Tina Carstens provided an update on the discussion that occurred at that meeting. She also reviewed the review timeline.

F. Watershed Based Implementation Funding and MAWD

Tina Carstens stated that she sent a letter to the Board received from the President of the MAWD Board related to the proposal they will be sending to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). She stated that MAWD would like each metro watershed Board to determine if they would like to send their own recommendation to BWSR in support.

Manager Aichinger stated that it appears that MAWD is supporting a system in which the funds would be distributed to Districts with an approved plan and asked how the funds would be calculated for distribution. Tina Carstens replied that is yet to be determined. She stated that during the pilot periods the funds were distributed by percentage of land area. She stated that in essence there are funds available through BWSR for distribution within the metro area. She stated that each organization has its own extensive watershed plan and therefore it was decided that the metro watersheds would not be part of the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) process so the money would be distributed differently in the metro area. The provided information from MAWD is a recommendation to BWSR on how the funds should be distributed in the metro area and who should receive the funds.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, President Swope seconded, to direct staff to prepare a memorandum of support for the MAWD recommended approach and authorize President Swope to execute and approve the memorandum.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.

10. ATTORNEY REPORT

Tracey Galowitz had nothing further to report.

11. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

i. Response to Question: XP-SWMM Model Update and Permitting

President Swope was unsure this addressed the comments of the resident. He believed the resident was asking why the area is behaving so much differently than it did before and whether the modeling contained data that would inform why the area is behaving differently.

Manager Aichinger commented that the data provided is accurate. He commented that the resident appears to believe that the development in the area has impacted the area, but the changes were not a result of development. Tina Carstens stated that the write up was in response to the Board's questions that followed the resident comments. She indicated she can follow up on this item with the resident.

Manager Eisele stated that if the Board holds a workshop on modeling, perhaps an invitation be extended to the commenter.

- ii. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- iii. FEMA Flood Mapping Updates
- iv. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- v. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- vi. Grass Lake Berm Wetland Mitigation
- vii. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- viii. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- ix. Phalen Chain of Lakes Changes in Water Quality
- x. Automated Lake Monitoring Systems
- xi. Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- xii. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- xiii. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- xiv. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- xv. Beltline/Battle Creek Tunnel Five Year Inspection
- xvi. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021
- xvii. Natural Resources Program Update
- xviii. Education Program Update
- xix. Communications Program Update
- xx. Citizens Advisory Committee Update
- xxi. WaterFest Update

12. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH’S MEETING

President Swope noted that the public art policy, budget categories and workshop categories would appear on the next agenda.

13. ADJOURN

Motion: Manager Skinner moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

Manager Aichinger	aye
Manager Skinner	aye
Manager Ward	aye
Manager Eisele	aye
President Swope	aye

Motion carried unanimously.