



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
November 3, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of November 3, 2021, was held via Zoom web conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/VrG4VdsI4mc>. Video time stamps included after each agenda item in minutes.

**PRESENT:**

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

**ABSENT:**

Dianne Ward, Treasurer

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tina Carstens, District Administrator  
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District  
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector  
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist  
Lauren Hazenson, Communications Coordinator  
Jonathan Hash, St Paul Media

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering  
Simba Blood, Natural Resources Specialist  
Dave Vlasin, Project Coordinator  
Erin Anderson Wenz, Barr Engineering  
John Bilotta, Stormwater Research Council

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:24)**

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA (00:45)**

A. Approval of Minutes from October 6, 2021

B. Treasurer's Report and Bill List

C. Permit Program

i. 21-30 – Roseville High School Baseball Field, Roseville

D. Stewardship Grant Program

i. 21-38 CS – Highland Townhomes, Native Habitat Restoration

ii. 21-39 CS – Washington County Community Development Agency, Native Habitat Restoration

- E. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Project – Change Order No. 7
- F. North St. Paul Target Store Retrofit – Change Order No. 4

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. VISITOR COMMENTS (1:20)**

There were none.

**5. PERMIT PROGRAM (1:30)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During October, nine notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (1), install/maintain perimeter control (2), sweep streets (1), stabilize exposed soils (1), contain liquid/solid waste materials (2), and remove discharged sediment (2).

Manager Aichinger commented that he has noticed that the Maplewood Middle School project site has been very clean.

President Swope asked how often the 48-hour rain inspections are completed. Nicole Soderholm provided additional details on when those inspections are completed.

**6. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (3:06)**

A. Applications – See Consent Agenda

B. Budget Status Update

Manager Aichinger commented that it seems they received lower requests this year. Paige Ahlborg confirmed that the numbers are lower this year compared to last year. She stated that it was a drier year and therefore people are not thinking about things like rain gardens and the requests focused on native habitat plantings. She stated that they also did not see large city projects come in, recognizing that cities may have a focus on COVID-related funding. She stated that she had two large requests, each of about \$100,000, that had a goal of starting this year but commented that those may be delayed to next year.

**7. ACTION ITEMS (4:52)**

A. 2022 CIP Maintenance and Repair Project Approval of Plans and Authorization to Advertise for Bid

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that this set of projects is pretty representative of the projects they see from year to year.

Manager Aichinger commented that it seemed the first three projects had been completed recently. Dave Vlasin commented that those projects are completed almost every year. He noted that inspections are done each year to determine if maintenance is needed.

Erin Anderson Wenz provided a summary of the different projects included in the list.

Manager Aichinger referenced site six and wondered why that is not abandoned as that was a research site. Erin Anderson Wenz commented that it is a good research site and an opportunity to test another filter media.

Manager Aichinger referenced site seven and commented that does not seem to be a District responsibility. Tina Carstens stated that the County asked if the District could help facilitate the project, similar to the pond cleanout program. She confirmed that the District would be reimbursed for the work.

Erin Anderson Wenz and staff continued to provide details on the proposed projects.

Manager Eisele asked when the rate of occurrence or need for maintenance reaches a point when the Board should take different action. Tina Carstens stated that is always a consideration when staff completes inspections. She stated that if staff felt that changes would reduce the frequency of maintenance, it would be brought to the Board.

President Swope asked if the new maintenance system ranking would help to identify projects that need attention above the CIP program. Erin Anderson Wenz agreed that the intention would be to identify that as well as identifying other larger projects. She noted that they would use the ranking system on the activity from the previous years.

Dave Vlasin noted that some of the larger projects will be reimbursed. Tina Carstens estimated that about \$300,000 would be reimbursed.

Motion: Manager Eisele moved, Manager Aichinger seconded, to approve the preliminary design, estimated costs, and proposed project schedule and direct staff to finalize the design and bidding documents and advertise the project for bid.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. District Art Policy

Manager Aichinger referenced the language proposed in the fifth bullet. He noted that artists are not typically rich people and there would be a number of situations where funds would be needed to get materials and get started. He suggested alternative language that would allow for a request for a portion of the funds to be advanced prior to the project beginning. Tina Carstens commented that she would be okay with that language change.

President Swope asked if it could be included to state where the other 50 percent of funding is coming from.

Manager Aichinger stated that there will be some projects that exceed the 50 percent funding and that is where he believes this would be appropriate. Tracey Galowitz stated that she is not worried about the exposure for the District in the respect this language is proposed.

Manager Aichinger stated that the District has had positive experience with the artists they have worked with, and this would provide another tool for consideration.

Manager Skinner agreed with the proposed language change.

President Swope confirmed the consensus of the Board to use the language suggested by Manager Aichinger.

Motion: Manager Aichinger moved, Manager Skinner seconded, to adopt the Public Art Policy as amended to include the language suggested by Manager Aichinger.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**8. ATTORNEY REPORT (23:17)**

Tracey Galowitz had nothing further to report.

**9. BOARD ISSUES, POLICIES, AND OPERATION (FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING) (24:20)**

A. Wetlands Workshop Follow-Up

President Swope commented that the Board held an excellent workshop a few days ago. He welcomed any preliminary thoughts the Board may have as a result of the workshop.

Manager Eisele commented that he found the meeting very informative. He commented that there is a mountain of work that previous groups have already done, and it would be wonderful to see how that information could be used going forward.

Manager Aichinger commented that the earlier data, prior to 2005, was a big input to the Comprehensive Plan and new rules of the District. He stated that perhaps there is documentation that would satisfy the concern of Manager Eisele. Tina Carstens noted that in January staff would really begin to move on the discussions that came out of the workshop. She stated that she can provide the background information to Manager Eisele.

B. West Vadnais Lake Follow-Up

Tina Carstens confirmed that she reached out to the Administrator for that organization, but they were unable to attend the November meeting. She stated that they are attempting to schedule for December but could not guarantee that attendance.

**10. PRESENTATIONS (30:00)**

A. Minnesota Stormwater Research Council Update – John Bilotta

John Bilotta extended thanks from the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council to the District for the continued support in the program. He stated that this year they completed 15 of the 23 projects that they have invested in since their work began. He identified four additional projects that would be completed by the end of 2021 and five additional projects that will continue into 2022. He stated that project impact statements were requested and provided for the different projects, explaining the impact that the project results would have. He reviewed details on the stormwater pond research strategy. He noted that they will continue to do monthly seminar series through at least June of 2023. He stated that on average they have had 130 people join their monthly seminars. He stated that he is working to develop the next competitive research cycle which will come out in January of 2022 and is

when they will review the list of projects they will work on for the next two to three years. He provided details on the new Extension Educator that has joined their team. He provided details on the research program funding that has been received, noting that their goal this year is to pool together \$175,000 for 2021 from the different sources. He estimated that they are about two thirds of the way to reaching that goal. He presented a request for the District to continue to stay involved and contribute to the Council. He believed that the work they are doing would continue to provide benefit to districts and contractors as well.

Manager Aichinger thanked Mr. Bilotta for the leadership he provides and the work the organization does.

Mr. Bilotta commented that they do have another great leveraging opportunity with the Center for Water Protection. He stated that they are trying to use their resources to leverage additional funding and expertise to provide the answers for stormwater management.

President Swope stated that he likes that there is always a practical outcome in mind rather than research for the purpose of research.

Manager Aichinger commented that there is also a strong focus on technology transfer in order to share the information.

President Swope thanked Mr. Bilotta for his presentation.

#### B. District Website Update – Executive Recommendations

Lauren Hazenson stated that Jonathan Hash from St. Paul Media is present tonight to provide an update on the website update. She stated that the executive recommendations and proposed scope of work for the website design were included in the Board packet for consideration. She provided clarification on the land acknowledgement statement, which was requested by staff.

President Swope noted that would be a separate discussion the Board would need to have and would not be related to the website.

Jonathan Hash provided an update on the website update process noting that they finished the research portion of the process. He stated that while they are still working to compile the report, he has provided an executive recommendation report and was curious to hear the input from the Board. He reviewed the different recommendations within that report and the input they received requesting those features.

Manager Eisele asked if the recommendations are listed in order of underlying priority.

Lauren Hazenson stated that these recommendations are based on trends and recommendations from the consultant, and were reviewed by staff before distribution to the Board.

Jonathan Hash stated that they are entering the user experience phase of the process. He stated that a lot of the information that will be within the report will most likely not be a surprise to the Board as many of the items are the reason the update was requested.

Lauren Hazenson provided examples of the different personas they developed during this phase for testing.

Manager Eisele stated that he would like to see how things are prioritized based off the different personas.

Jonathan Hash reviewed the deliverables that will be provided and the usability testing that will be conducted.

Tina Carstens noted that the items marked as pending Board approval were not included in the original scope but are recommended and she believed could be accomplished within the budget for the website development.

Manager Aichinger asked the primary benefit of using the testing approach.

Lauren Hazenson stated that in the initial stakeholder interviews there was concern with the design matching the intended audience. She stated that the testing would ensure that the desired audience would be able to find the content they would be looking for. She also discussed the advantage to having content mitigation and population which would provide efficiency and would not take away from the regular duties of staff.

Jonathan Hash noted that the prototype training would be training District staff on how to populate the content as well, as continued information will need to be updated on the website.

President Swope commented that he agrees it would make sense to have the consultant migrate the information. He also believed that there is benefit to having the usability testing to ensure the general public can find the information they are looking for.

Manager Eisele stated that his company also completes usability testing and agreed that it is a good investment.

Lauren Hazenson highlighted some of the executive recommendations such as a simplified event calendar, mapping system, along with a volunteer and/or engagement section. She stated that she has been connecting with staff at member cities in order to build relationships, acknowledging that the first point of contact is often at a city or county prior to the District.

Jonathan Hash and Lauren Hazenson continued to review the executive recommendations and the input received from stakeholders that support those recommendations.

Tina Carstens commented that staff believes that these recommendations cover the wants and needs identified for the website.

President Swope agreed that these recommendations answer the concerns that he had. He asked if there is prioritization or how these would be tackled. Tina Carstens replied that a prioritization would be developed based on the different user personas.

Lauren Hazenson stated that some of the needs will overlap for the different user personas. She stated that the overall goal is to make the website easy to navigate and find the information one is looking for.

#### C. Emergency Response Plans: Kohlman Creek and Ames Lake Flood Risk Reduction Study Updates

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that the purpose tonight is to discuss the RWMWD Emergency Response Plans, Kohlman Creek Subwatershed Flood Risk Reduction Study and Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Study. She stated that in 2013 there was an update as to how to design flood risk reduction projects, using Atlas 14. She noted that the District was one of the first to bring its modeling up to the Atlas 14 numbers. She provided additional background information including the development of the Beltline Resiliency Study which broke the area up into five phases. She stated that an important focus of 2020 and 2021 was to survey and verify the topographic surveys in order to confirm low entry elevations. She noted that updates were then made to the tables of potentially flood prone structures in the Kohlman Creek, Willow Creek and Phalen Chain of Lakes subwatersheds.

Manager Aichinger asked if the necessary information for the parcels that access was not granted can be gained from adjacent lots using the laser technology. Erin Anderson Wenz confirmed that staff was able to do that for some properties but not all properties on which the homeowner did not want to give permission for staff to be on the property.

Manager Aichinger referenced the area south of Ames Lake and commented that it would seem there should be a way to prevent water from getting into that area which would eliminate a number of homes from the list. Erin Anderson Wenz stated that the solutions so far are pretty extreme because there is a lot of water. She stated that they continue to look at alternatives to provide a range of options. She stated that this area is tough because it is pretty shallow, so the water gets in and nothing else on the surface can get into those area. She stated that sometimes the problems causing the flooding issues are significant. She stated that it will be important to review a number of solutions with the Board and then discuss those with the city, as city cooperation and funding would also be necessary.

Manager Aichinger noted that many of those issues were caused by development 50 years ago when this type of runoff was not anticipated. He stated that it is difficult for entities to acknowledge is a mistake was made.

Manager Eisele referenced information that was included in the August board packet related to flood targets and the tool that was developed and stated that it would be great to see use of that tool with this information.

Erin Anderson Wenz stated that the map was updated, removing the homes that were able to be removed through the survey work. She highlighted the other updates that were made to the mapping through this process. She reviewed system modifications considered and evaluated. She provided different examples of system modifications currently being considered and evaluated.

Manager Eisele asked if it could also be shown what would be needed to completely remove the inundation area.

Erin Anderson Wenz provided an example of an emergency response plan and what would be needed to protect a residential facility. She noted that it has been helpful to show what would be needed to the cities in order to have those discussions. She stated that all the emergency response plans, once completed, will be provided to the cities.

Manager Aichinger stated that in the past the District has volunteered to assist the cities with some of the resources necessary to follow through on those plans. Erin Anderson Wenz stated that assistance is also provided as to when the plans should be enacted. She stated that this process should also include a discussion at to the level of assistance the District should have. It was noted that the plans that have been provided to cities have not been adopted by their City Councils.

Manager Aichinger asked what liability the District would have if those plans were provided to the cities and the cities chose not to adopt the plans. Tracey Galowitz commented that once the District tells the cities what needs to be done, that falls onto the city. She stated that liability for the District would fall on the District only if the District has information and then chooses not to share that or if the District does not follow its steps and process.

Tina Carstens stated that the District provides the plans and then it is up the city as to whether they want to follow that plan.

President Swope asked if the solution takes into account how long an area would be inundated. Erin Anderson Wenz stated that would come into play with the mechanical options. She stated that they review a range of small and large options. She noted that timing is also considered when reviewing areas that are tough to pull out of the floodplain. She confirmed that there are times when sandbags would be appropriate and times when that would not be a feasible option.

## **11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (2:24:56)**

### **A. Meetings Attended**

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

Tina Carstens noted the upcoming Watershed Excellence Awards dinner that will be held on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

C. Ongoing Project/Program Updates

Tina Carstens stated that the Victoria Shores EAW comment letter was emailed to the Board and welcomed any comments or questions before she sends the letter to the city.

D. MS4 Permit Issuance

Tina Carstens stated that the new MS4 Permit has been issued for the District.

E. Daylighting Phalen Creek Update

Tina Carstens noted that the update was provided in the packet for informational purposes.

President Swope asked the level of involvement the District would have in the daylighting project. Tina Carstens stated that generous funding was received for the project and therefore she believed that in-kind support would be provided through the design process. She noted that St. Paul has stated that they would like assistance with the maintenance for that stretch of the creek.

Paige Ahlborg stated that there is a tentative public meeting scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup> on the project.

Manager Aichinger commented that he is not a strong proponent of this project as it is a very short “token” stream restoration that he did not believe would provide much education or indication of what used to be there. He commented that a lot of money will be spent on a short channel that will struggle to hold water during dry times. He did not want the District to contribute a lot of funding for the project. Tina Carstens stated that she did not see it being a large commitment of staff time or funding from the District. She confirmed that it is not a high priority for the District.

President Swope commented that he shares the reservations of Manager Aichinger.

**12. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (2:32:38)**

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Interim Emergency Response Planning
- ii. Kohlman Creek Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iii. Ames Lake Area Flood Risk Reduction Feasibility Study
- iv. Special Project BMP Monitoring
- v. Kohlman Permeable Weir Test System
- vi. Shallow Lake Aeration Study
- vii. Keller Channel and Phalen Outlet Operations Plans
- viii. North St. Paul Target Store Stormwater Retrofit Projects
- ix. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- x. Keller Channel Weir and Phalen Outlet Resiliency Modifications
- xi. Ryan Drive and Keller Parkway Conveyance Project
- xii. District Inspection Standardization
- xiii. County Road D Ravine
- xiv. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2021
- xv. CIP Maintenance and Repair Project 2022
- xvi. New Technology Review: Clean Beach System
- xvii. Natural Resources Program Update
- xviii. Education Program Update

- xix. Communications Program and Website Update
- xx. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Manager Eisele stated that he does have some questions but believed those could be answered through email outside of the meeting.

**13. MANAGER COMMENTS AND NEXT MONTH'S MEETING (2:33:20)**

President Swope commented that he attended the two-day water conference hosted by the University of Minnesota and found it quite interesting.

Tina Carstens highlighted items that will appear on the December agenda.

**14. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.