



**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
May 1, 2019**

The Regular Meeting of May 1, 2019, was held at the District Office Board Room, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, Minnesota, at 6:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Marj Ebensteiner, President  
Cliff Aichinger, Vice President  
Dianne Ward, Treasurer (arrived at 6:46 p.m.)  
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary  
Lawrence Swope, Manager

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tina Carstens, District Administrator  
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary  
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering  
Bill Bartodziej, Natural Resource Specialist  
Mary Fitzgerald, Inspection Intern  
Bruce Copley, Crestview resident  
Greg Windsperger, Crestview resident  
Steve Laberge, Crestview resident  
Laurann Kirschner, Galowitz Olson, PLLC  
Ben Meyer, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager  
Viet-Hanh Winchell, Attorney for District  
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector  
Kyle Kubitza, Water Quality Intern  
Dave Vlasin, Water Quality Technician  
Matt Gray, Crestview resident  
Ken Otto, Crestview resident  
Sarah Turensky, resident

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by President Ebensteiner at 6:35 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Lawrence Swope requested to move Spring Flooding Concerns (10C) to follow the Visitor Presentations and become Item 6C.

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Minutes from April 3, 2019

Tina Carstens noted that under Item 7, Permit #19-10, it should state, "...project ~~but noted that the District is the sole permitting authority for this.~~ that overlaps watersheds and South Washington has waived permitting

authority.” Under the New Technology Review, the second to last sentence, it should state, “Nicole Soderholm noted that often underground treatment options are coming forward and ~~therefore that measure would be redundant~~ the designs include redundant pretreatment.”

Viet-Hanh Winchell noted that under those present, it should state, “~~Lauren Laurann Kirschner, Galowitz and Olsen Galowitz Olson~~”.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve the consent agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **4. TREASURER’S REPORT AND BILL LIST**

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve the May 1, 2019, bill list as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **5. VISITOR PRESENTATIONS**

Bruce Copley thanked the District for the work it is doing to keep the Crestview addition as dry as it can be. He stated that the residents in that area are still on high alert because of the rising water. He recognized the concern from Shoreview residents regarding the flooding of parks, trails and roads. He stated that in spite of the emergency measures that have been taken, sump pumps are kicking on and there are concerns. He noted that numerous requests have been made in the past to look at the higher frequency events rather than the storms the models are based on. He stated that they would like to see model design and construction based on the more frequent events going forward. He recognized that possible options have been discussed but have not yet moved forward. He believed that lowering West Vadnais is critical and should be escalated to a high priority. He stated that there is not enough, and should be more, downstream capacity developed.

Matt Gray echoed the comments of Mr. Copley and thanked the Board for the efforts that have been put forth thus far. He stated that his family deeply appreciates the efforts of the District. He stated that in 2016 his family was severely impacted by high groundwater coming up through their basement floor, which persisted from late 2016 to mid-2017. He stated that since that time he has done everything possible to try to remediate the issue as best as he can. He stated that it has been a lot of work and he feels like they are back in the same position with Snail Lake being too high and the beach and trails unusable. He explained that he is afraid the same issues will once again arise. He asked the District to find a way to move forward with long-term remediation.

Dianne Ward arrived.

Lawrence Swope stated that the comments are reflecting comments from the residents in the Crestview addition. He explained that those residents are waiting for something to happen that will change the situation and the lack of usability of the amenities (parks and trails) in that area. He stated that the Rice Street closure impacts those residents as well.

Dr. Pam Skinner stated that the District only controls some elements. She explained that the parks and open spaces are controlled by the City and County and hoped that the comments are being directed to the appropriate parties.

#### **6. ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT (Previously Item 10)**

##### **C. Spring Flooding Concerns**

Brad Lindaman stated that District staff was out monitoring water levels today and provided the elevations for the Grass Lake area, comparing those to the elevations over the past two years. He explained the District’s role in attempting to prevent water from entering the lowest elevation of a home. He agreed that the beach is not usable, and the water level will most likely remain high for some time. He stated that the District is working with Ramsey County Parks to provide them with information to make a decision on what they would like to do with that park

property. He provided additional information on the Grass Lake overflow monitoring points and the projects that have been completed or are still scheduled. He noted that the first two points have overflowed but the remaining three points have not. He provided additional data on the Grass Lake overflow, which began on April 11, 2019 and compared that to the data from the past two years. He reviewed the challenges with keeping water out of the tunnel north of Gramsie Pond and some of the reasons that contributed to the sand bag berms failing. He noted that the overflow water levels are decreasing and the pumps are now managing water levels in North Gramsie Ponds.

President Ebensteiner asked if the worst is past.

Brad Lindaman stated that the water is ever so slightly receding and they are awaiting the arrival of the stoplogs, which will help. He noted that the city is looking at an upgrade to the pump system for Suzanne Pond and is also looking at connecting North Gramsie Pond to Suzanne Pond with a valve, which would assist in allowing water to drain. He stated that point there has not been overflow, from Grass Lake to Wetland A. He provided data from the piezometer levels from 2017 through present noting that the current levels are comparable to the levels in June and July of 2017.

Cliff Aichinger asked and confirmed that the higher groundwater levels are a regional issue and not specific to the area of flooding near Gramsie Road. He explained that this is not just a surface water issue and is also a groundwater issue. He explained that groundwater is influenced by many factors outside of surface water.

Dianne Ward stated that she has noticed in the north part of Wetland A, that remains open in the winter. She asked if the water in Wetland A has an impact on Snail Lake.

Brad Lindaman explained that Snail Lake has been high for some time while Wetland A has been lower, therefore there is not much influence there. He noted that the general flow is north to south.

He provided information on the elevation of West Vadnais Lake. He reported that Rice Street flooded beginning April 17, 2019 and remains closed. He stated that the District has been in communication with the County.

Tina Carstens stated that in her communications with the County public works staff, they are investigating options that could allow traffic to travel through that area. She noted that one option being investigated was to add a milled layer to the roadway but noted that there are restrictions because of the railroad bridge.

Brad Lindaman provided information on the 15-inch outlet pipe and potentially lowering that elevation. He explained that the District is in conversation with VLAWMO and the permitting issues as that pipe drains into that watershed. He noted that in the most recent conversations with VLAWMO they are asking for an EAW to assess the environmental impacts that could occur if the outlet is lowered. He explained the desired impact from the lowering of the outlet, which could provide additional storage when the conditions dry further. He stated that staff continue to look at different variations to increase the flow of water downstream but there are also concerns with additional flooding impacts downstream that must be considered.

Tina Carstens stated that the EAW can be completed in conjunction with other tasks in attempt to move that process forward more quickly. She noted that the water levels would need to decrease below 881.8 in order for a lowered outlet to be helpful, noting that the elevation has not reached that low elevation in the last two years of monitoring.

Sarah Turenskyasked if there is a way to get all the parties into one room to assist in these discussions.

Tina Carstens confirmed that would be an option and she could talk to VLAWMO staff about coordinating that type of meeting.

Dianne Ward asked if she heard appropriately that there is a fall timeline for this outlet discussion.

Brad Lindaman confirmed that the timing of the EAW should be completed by that time. He noted that if issues arise in the EAW, that could prolong that process.

Tina Carstens noted that she will attempt to work with the DNR on those elements as well during this time the EAW is being completed.

Dr. Pam Skinner noted that the District has come a long way in regard to the Grass Lake area and perhaps it would be helpful to share that timeline and data online for people that have not closely followed the issue. She noted that some elements, such as lowering the outlet, take time.

Brad Lindaman stated that the District can give local municipalities an idea of where issues may arise. He explained that the District is the technical resource for those organizations and shares its data, but the roadways and flood protection fall to the municipalities and County. He stated that historically the role of the District is to look at things on a regional basis and share that with the municipalities. He explained that the District has identified some homes that could be impacted by local flooding and then developed and shared an emergency response plan for the cities to use. He explained that the District assists with data and modeling but the action falls to the city. He stated that the District has received concerns from residents about rising water levels in Twin Lake, which does not have an outlet. He provided details on the additional monitoring that will be installed this year and noted that the monitoring data that will be gathered will continue to be used to calibrate the models. He asked Matt Gray to continue to send his pumping levels to staff and appreciated his cooperation.

Tina Carstens suggested moving Item 8 to follow this item.

## **7. PRESENTATION: WETLANDS, WCA, AND THE REVIEW PROCESS (Previously Item 8)**

Tina Carstens noted that the Board has had a lot of discussion about WCA, the value of wetlands and restoration and therefore staff asked Ben Meyer to come and provide information to the Board.

Ben Meyer, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, reviewed the definition of a wetland and provided examples of both commonly recognized wetlands and less recognized wetlands. He provided details on the process for a delineation and the three elements that must be included to be considered a wetland. He reviewed the value that wetlands provide including flood storage, water quality protection, shoreline protection, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, food/commercial uses, forestry, tourism, aesthetics, and many more. He provided a comparison estimating the wetlands that existed in the 1860's compared to the 1980's, noting approximately a 50 percent loss of wetlands during that time period. He provided background information on the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) which was enacted in 1991 and the activities which are regulated under WCA. He noted that the administration of the WCA is the local government unit (LGU) and could be a County, City, Watershed District, or SWCD. He advised that the others involved would be the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the DNR, the landowner/applicant, and private consultants that assist applicants. He reviewed the WCA process as well as the different determinations that can be made which include no loss, exemption, and wetland replacement. He provided examples of avoidance, minimization, and replacement.

Tina Carstens stated that the District prefers to have no net loss of wetland within the District and would like replacement to occur within the District. She noted that BWSR prefers to have the replacement through credits purchased through BWSR and asked for input on the difference in preference.

Ben Meyer stated that he has heard that concern from other LGU's as well. He noted that BWSR is following the rules in statute on that item. He explained that the Army Corps of Engineers does not even look at the minor or major watershed and begins their review at the bank service area (BSA) level. He noted that BWSR is going through

a rule revision and will most likely match the Army Corps of Engineers starting with BSA for replacement. He noted that the Watershed District could be more restrictive in requiring replacement within the minor or major watershed.

Dr. Pam Skinner noted that as the District continues to become built out there are less options available for replacement within the District.

Cliff Aichinger stated that the District has been able to minimize impacts through the use of that rule. He noted that there have been very few exceptions.

President Ebensteiner asked the benefit of having a built out metropolitan area with little wetlands and adding more wetlands to a more rural area rather than requiring wetland replacement in the area.

Ben Meyer provided additional details on the fee in lieu program which will be added when the minor and major watershed steps are removed. He acknowledged that there will be areas with more wetlands and areas with less. He provided examples that have failed, noting that sometimes it is not feasible to restore or create wetlands in certain areas. He provided information on wetland banking and the multi-part process to develop mitigation credits. He also provided an example of urban restoration.

## **8. PERMIT PROGRAM (Previously Item 6)**

### **A. Applications**

Permit #19-18: Ferndale-Ivy Street Improvements – Maplewood

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve Permit #19-18. Motion carried unanimously.

### **B. Monthly Enforcement Report**

During April, 11 notices were sent to address: install/maintain inlet protection (1), install/maintain perimeter control (1), install/maintain construction entrance (2), sweep streets (1), repair erosion (1), remove discharged sediment (3), and protect/maintain permanent BMPs (2).

## **9. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (Previously Item 7)**

### **A. Applications**

None.

### **B. Budget Status Update**

No comments.

## **10. ACTION ITEMS (Previously Item 9)**

### **A. Review and Accept the 2017 District Annual Financial Audit**

Tina Carstens noted that the audit was included in the packet and there were no issues identified.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to accept the 2018 Annual Audit Report. Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (Continued)**

### **A. Meetings Attended**

No comments.

### **B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates**

No comments.

C. Spring Flooding Concerns

D. CAC Meeting Update

No comments.

E. MAWD Summer Tour

Tina Carstens noted the dates for the summer tour in June.

**11. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS**

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Flood Risk Response Planning
- ii. Owasso Park Stormwater Master Plan
- iii. Beltline Resiliency Study
- iv. FEMA Flood Mapping
- v. West Vadnais Lake Outlet Permitting
- vi. 500-Year Atlas 14 Modeling
- vii. Wetland Restoration Site Search

Dr. Pam Skinner stated that she would be interested in opportunities to create wetlands that could be used for banking as well, along with the prioritization of retrofit projects and identified future sites.

- viii. Auto Lake Monitoring Systems
- ix. Maplewood Mall Monitoring
- x. Wakefield Park/Frost Avenue Project
- xi. Targeted Retrofit Projects
- xii. Roseville High School Campus Project
- xiii. Willow Pond CMAC
- xiv. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration
- xv. Aldrich Arena Site Design

Paige Ahlborg stated that the County has started the bid process and Barr is finalizing the stormwater plans. She confirmed that there will be plants along White Bear Avenue.

Cliff Aichinger asked if the County has provided an agreement that they will do future phases, including the public art.

Paige Ahlborg confirmed that there is a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that includes those elements.

Lawrence Swope expressed confusion on the process and amount approved for the project.

Tina Carstens provided additional details on the approval process from the Board and how targeted retrofit projects move forward.

- xvi. CIP Maintenance and Repair 2019 Project
- xvii. New Technology Review – StormBrixx
- xviii. Natural Resources Program
- xix. Education Program

**12. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

No comments.

**13. REPORTS OF MANAGERS**

Lawrence Swope asked for an update on communications hiring.

Tina Carstens provided an update on the new communications intern that was hired.

**14. ADJOURN**

Motion: Dianne Ward moved, Dr. Pam Skinner seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary