

# Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors Meeting

May 22, 2023

Via Zoom



## 1. CALL TO ORDER

President Vavra called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

Minnesota Watersheds Board (Board) members present: Linda Vavra, Jackie Anderson, David Ziegler, Mary Texer, Brad Kramer, Jeff Gertgen, and Peter Fjestad

Board members absent: Wanda Holker and Gene Tiedemann

Others present: Tina Carstens, Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA); Joe Collins and John Jaschke, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); April Swenby, Sandhill River WD; and Paul Gardner, Clean Water Council (CWC)

## 2. GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING

### ***Agenda***

Director Texer made a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the Drainage Work Group discussion. This was seconded by Director Anderson and carried unanimously.

### ***Member Comment Period***

No Minnesota Watersheds members were present to address the Board.

### ***Secretary's Report***

Director Texer made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 20 meeting. This was seconded by Director Gertgen carried unanimously.

### ***Treasurer's Report***

Director Ziegler reported on bills paid and the account balances as of May 22, 2023:

- Checking: \$70,611.06
- Savings: \$280,034.37
- Total: \$350,645.43

Director Anderson moved to accept the treasurer's report. This was seconded by Director Ziegler and carried unanimously.

## 3. NEW BUSINESS

### ***Director Anderson's Resignation***

Director Anderson has submitted her resignation from the Board of Directors effective May 31, 2023. The Board thanked her for her efforts on behalf of Minnesota Watersheds and wished her the best in her future endeavors. Director Ziegler made a motion to accept Director Anderson's resignation. This was seconded by Director Texer and carried unanimously.

### ***Appointment of Don Pereira***

Due to Director Anderson's resignation, there is a board vacancy beginning June 1. Don Pereira has submitted a letter of interest in serving on the Board of Directors. Director Anderson made a motion to approve the appointment of Don Pereira to the Board of Directors. This was seconded by Director Ziegler and carried unanimously.

### ***Communication Plan***

The Strategic Plan calls for the development of a communication plan that brings structure and consistency to all Minnesota Watersheds communication efforts. The Strategic Plan Committee met on

March 20 and May 8 to review draft documents. The Strategic Plan Committee unanimously recommends adoption of the draft Communication Plan. Director Ziegler made a motion to approve the Communication Plan. This was seconded by Director Gertgen and carried unanimously.

***Discounted Rate for Summer Tour Hosts***

Minnesota Watersheds has received requests from Shell Rock River WD for a discounted registration rate for managers and staff at the Summer Tour. Discussion was held regarding the need to keep in mind our budget and finances, that providing a discounted rate would be precedent setting, that a discounted rate could encourage members to host the Summer Tour, the benefits of the sponsorship in keeping costs lower for attendees, and that this was a last minute request and there was not adequate time to gather input to make a decision. Several options were discussed including the possibility of providing one percent of the net profit to the host district(s) and limiting the number of board and staff that would receive a discounted rate. Because this would be precedent setting, it is important for the membership to vote on this. Discussion was also held regarding providing an option to attend the social hour, dinner, and tour overview separate from the overall event.

Director Ziegler made a motion to have a separate price to cover the social hour, dinner, and tour overview and develop a way to differentiate between tour goers and those only going to the evening event. This was seconded by Director Gertgen and carried unanimously.

Director Ziegler made a motion to bring to the membership a draft policy and options for a reduced registration rate for Summer Tour hosts. If a policy is adopted, a rebate would be made retroactively to this year's host watersheds. Director Gertgen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Vavra thanked the Shell Rock River for their work in planning the Summer Tour. She encouraged everyone to register for the event.

**4. REPORTS**

***President's Report***

President Vavra reported on responding to emails, writing letters, making phone calls to legislators, working with the Executive Director, attending committee meetings, and encouraging membership renewal.

***Executive Director***

Executive Director Voit provided an update on monthly meetings with Justin Hanson, the MAWA/SWCD joint leadership meeting, Summer Tour, Communication Plan, handbook, Minnesota Watersheds and MAWA statewide organization survey, general operating levy, CWC Policy Committee meetings, the MAWA Executive, State Policy, and Legislative Platform Committees, membership, and newsletter and website analytics.

***Partner Reports***

**MAWA**

Tina Carstens provided an update on the MAWA Executive Committee meetings and the statewide watershed organization survey. This survey did include a request for quantitative information from each entity.

**BWSR**

John Jaschke congratulated Minnesota Watersheds on the general levy increase. He said that there are several policy items that need attention in M.S. Chapter 103D and now may be the time to consider working on those. He also gave an update on SWCD aid, climate activities in the general fund, bonding bill, and the Drainage Work Group. Director Anderson and Director Vavra thanked BWSR for their assistance with Minnesota Watersheds legislative efforts.

Clean Water Council (CWC)

Paul Gardner reported on the CWC field tour will be held in the metro in September, that there will soon be eight new council members, the Clean Water Fund recommendations, and the CWC's interest in drainage.

***Confirm Next Meeting Date***

The next meeting is scheduled for June 22 at the Country Inn and Suites in Albert Lea. BWSR will be attending to gather input for their Strategic Plan update.

Joe Collins commended Minnesota Watersheds for their work with the legislature, praised the work done in the April newsletter, and congratulated Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD for the Bone Lake South wetland acquisition.

Director Anderson asked that the comments from the chat be distributed to the Board.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Peter Fjestad  
Acting Secretary