



1. CALL TO ORDER

President Vavra called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. A quorum was present.

Minnesota Watersheds Board (Board) members present: David Ziegler, Peter Fjestad, Linda Vavra, Mary Texer, Jeff Gertgen, Don Pereira, Brad Kramer, Gene Tiedemann, and Wanda Holker

Others present: Tom Duevel and Jill Crafton, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (WD); Marcie Weinandt and John Waller, Rice Creek WD; Celia Wirth, Brown’s Creek WD; Bill Peterson, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD; LeRoy Ose, Red Lake WD; John Jaschke, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Jackie Anderson, Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD; Louis Smith, Smith Partners; Ray Bohn and Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds (MW)

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

Agenda

Director Fjestad made a motion to approve the agenda. This was seconded by Director Ziegler and carried unanimously.

Member Comment Period

No MW members were present to address the Board.

Secretary’s Report

Director Fjestad made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23 regular meeting and the November 15 special meeting. This was seconded by Director Ziegler and carried unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Director Ziegler reported on the Review of Financial Procedures. There were no findings. He also provided an update on the Year-end Financial Report. The ending balance in 2022 was \$185,974 and this year it is \$244,957. This is substantially better than last year.

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

2024 Calendar

The Board reviewed the draft 2024 Calendar. The meeting dates are based on the schedule for 2023. The dates are tentative. If there is no business, meetings will be cancelled. Director Ziegler made a motion to approve the 2024 Calendar. Director Fjestad seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Annual Conference

Executive Director Voit gave an update on the annual conference.

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103D Proposed Fixes

Louis Smith presented the proposed housekeeping changes to M.S. Chapter 103D. It is not yet known if this will be an agency bill that stands alone or includes other things. BWSR Executive Director Jaschke said that the bill will need to be perceived as being well prepared and ready to go. The details will have to be in order early in the process. When the final version is ready, talking points will be needed that explain the intent and why the changes are necessary.

The proposed changes are only for housekeeping, nothing controversial. The appointment of managers is not included. If anyone feels there are other items that need to be addressed, those should be provided as soon as possible.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #2023-01

Louis Smith presented a proposed amendment to Resolution #2023-01. This resolution expresses the desire to have the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) apply for WD permits for projects it is undertaking. Within MW there is broad support for this, but we don't know how the DNR feels about this. The proposed language was to add DNR. The concern is that other state agencies, colleges, universities, or other state facilities will be perceived as being excluded from the permit requirement. Rather than just adding DNR, it is proposed to amend the resolution to include language that clarifies that the intent is for all state agencies to apply for WD permits, including MnDOT.

BWSR Executive Director Jaschke cautioned against this resolution. This is a political matter. When the original bill was written to include MnDOT, they were not happy. The governor will not support this. The agencies will be against it. This would give MnDOT an opportunity to remove the requirement for them to get WD permits. Antagonizing state agencies will affect everything that MW does at the legislature.

Louis Smith stated that he respected those comments. This is a difficult piece of legislation to pass. It would be better to include all state agencies.

Other comments included:

- Before legislation is pursued, there should be a significant statewide problem.
- Working with DNR has its complications, but it's not insurmountable. Knowing where the problems are would be helpful.
- This is an issue that could affect everything Minnesota Watersheds does.
- Board concerns should be brought to the membership during the resolutions hearing.
- The resolutions process doesn't allow for amendments from the floor. Resolutions are either approved as presented or rejected.

Director Ziegler made a motion to approve moving the amendment to the membership. Director Kramer seconded the motion. In favor: Fjestad, Gertgen, Kramer, Texer, Tiedemann, Vavra, and Ziegler. Opposed: Holker and Pereira. Motion carried.

Program Coordinator Duties and Contract

At the October meeting, the Board directed Executive Director Voit to work with Maddy Bohn to prepare a new contract, develop a reasonable template for Minnesota Watersheds events expectations, and to have the contract reviewed by legal counsel before it is brought for approval. A job description for the Program Manager was developed. The draft contract was reviewed by legal counsel and provided to the Board in the meeting packet.

Director Ziegler made a motion to accept the contract as written. Director Gertgen seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS

President's Report

President Vavra reported on her attendance at committee meetings, the importance of knowing what the organization is doing, and working hard to bring people together. She answers phone calls and emails from members.

Executive Director

Executive Director Voit provided an update on Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators meetings, legislative activity, and drainage.

Partner Reports

BWSR

Executive Director Jaschke gave an update on the climate action framework that included funding for water storage and soil health; seeking Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding for water storage; the Clean Water Council (CWC) recommendations that were passed during the last legislative session; drainage; Local Government Water Round Table staff meetings; 103D policy bill; wetland protection statute; and RIM easement program rule repeal. The upcoming legislative session will be a bonding year. BWSR will pursue funding for wetland restoration and wetland road replacement.

CWC

Marcie Weinandt provided information on the Clean Water Fund (CWF). Over half of the CWF funding went to BWSR. The intent was to push as much money to on-the-ground projects as possible. There are some CWF contingency funds available. With the petition to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding concerns in southeast Minnesota, there are legitimate reasons to use some of those funds in that area of the state.

The CWC drafts policy statements. This year they addressed drainage. The CWC's intent with this policy was to discuss supporting additional water quality benefits for drainage projects. The CWC is working on their strategic plan. The Summer Tour was held in the metro. She thanked watersheds for hosting.

Her position on the CWC is open again. She is willing to continue serving and would appreciate a letter of authorization from MW. She also explained that the Legacy Amendment will be expiring in 11 years. It is important to note that the projects being done with CWFs would not be possible without this funding.

Director Texer made a motion to support Marcie Weinandt's appointment to the CWC. This was seconded by Director Fjestad and carried unanimously.

Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 1 immediately following the annual business meeting at the Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center in Alexandria.

Reminder

Anyone interested in assisting with name tags was asked to see Executive Director Voit immediately following the meeting. Photos of the Board for the website will be taken at 5:00 p.m. on November 30.

It was suggested to create a Board contact sheet.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

Wanda Holker
Secretary