

Metro Chapter Minnesota Watersheds Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 7:00 PM
Capitol Region Watershed District

Metro Watersheds Board Member Attendees:	Staff and Guest Attendees:
Michael Welch, Bassett Creek WMO	Laura Jester, Bassett Creek WMO
Mary Texer, Capitol Region WD	Anna Eleria, Capitol Region WD
Shawn Mazanec, Capitol Region WD	Linda Loomis, Lower Minnesota River WD
Rick Sanders, Capitol Region WD	Kevin Reich, Mississippi WMO
Jackie Anderson, Comfort Lake–Forest Lake WD	Tina Carstens, Ramsey Washington Metro WD
Sherry White, Minnehaha Creek WD	Nick Tomczik, Rice Creek WD
Bill Olson, Minnehaha Creek WD	Jan Voit, MN Watersheds
Eugene Maxwell, Minnehaha Creek WD	Justin Hanson, BWSR
Peggy Kvam, Nine Mile Creek WD	Marcey Westrick, BWSR
Mike Bradley, Rice Creek WD	Dereck Richter, MDH
David Ziegler, Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek WD	Miranda Nichols, MPCA

I. Call to Order

A. Attendance, Introductions & Approval of the Agenda

Chair Sherry White called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

MOTION: Member Mary Texer moved to approve the agenda. Member David Ziegler seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

II. Action Items

A. Approve July 17, 2023 Meeting Notes

MOTION: Member Jackie Anderson moved to approve the July 17, 2023 meeting minutes. Member Mary Texer seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

B. Appoint Meeting Secretary

Tina Carstens agreed to take meeting notes.

III. Special Reports and Presentations

A. Water Policy Plan Research, Jen Kostrzewski, Metropolitan Council

Jen spoke on the regional 10-year planning cycle taken on by Met Council. As part of the planning, the water policies of the Council were reviewed, and research papers were written. On the research website, links to all of the papers are contained. Five-page executive summaries are available or you can dig into the full papers.

The research topics include topics such as highlighted contaminants of concern (chloride, nutrients, PFAS, TCE), climate change, wastewater issues, water reuse, source water protection, as well as rural water concerns.

The Met Council is looking for feedback on the papers and how they relate to our watersheds, including what policies should be included in the plan.

The link to the papers can be found here: <https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/2050-Water-Resources-Policy-Plan/Research.aspx>

IV. Agency and Association Updates

A. Metro Watersheds, Jan Voit

Jan provided an update on the annual conference planning, including the resolutions, finance, and bylaw changes. The annual meeting package will go to the members on October 31. An update on the schedule changes from the conference was discussed, including the change to start the event a day earlier and ending on Friday.

The summer tour will be hosted in the metro in 2024 with Tina Carstens and Anna Eleria leading the planning from the metro watersheds.

Jan updated the group on the Minnesota Watersheds lobbyist succession planning. Jan is completing interviews to bring it to 3-4 candidates for more formal interviews. The plan is to announce the selection at the annual meeting.

B. Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Marcey Westrick and Justin Hanson

In September, the BWSR Board approved the Watershed Based Implementation Funding with \$9 million allocated for the metro area. A change in the distribution formula includes a \$100,000 minimum per planning boundary. Each area will host a convene process again. Look for a webinar in January for updates.

In August, the competitive grant for the Clean Water Fund was closed. Determinations will be made at the December board meeting.

Melissa King has been named the internal tribal liaison for tribal government relations.

BWSR Academy will be held next week.

Justin Hanson introduced himself and the work that he is doing in the metro area. He is working closely with Jan Voit to stay engaged in our work and learn more about what we are doing.

Laura Jester asked about metro-specific training for managers and commissioners. Marcey indicated that

it is being considered by BWSR staff, and hope to have some more information for us soon. She indicated that Board Conservationist Steve Christopher, who had been working on this task, recently took a new job at Met Council. They are hoping to have a replacement by the first of the year.

C. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Miranda Nichols

Miranda introduced herself by saying she has worked at MPCA for 17 years and is now staffed in the watershed division. She reported on the Lower St. Croix One Watershed One Plan that the stressor ID is now complete.

In the Twin Cities, the monitoring was completed in 2022, and the MPCA will be presenting the results.

MPCA is working to fill positions regarding 319 grant funding where there are funds available for watershed districts.

Member Michael Welch asked a question about MPCA's stance on the plumbing board's decision on stormwater system design. Miranda indicated she would need to get more information before commenting.

D. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Dereck Richter

MDH staff, Tannie Echenbaur, is convening a water reuse task force to follow up on recommendations from the 2018 report. An agency meeting was held in September with another planned for October. After that, open meetings will be held where others may attend. This work will continue in 2024 with recommendations to follow.

E. Clean Water Council Update, Marcie Weinandt

Marcie wasn't able to attend the meeting but sent the following update via email that was read at the meeting:

The CWC met on Monday and expressed how pleased they were to see the amazing and effective Metro Watershed projects on our recent CWC Tour. Many thanks to those watersheds that hosted the tour.

At yesterday's meeting, we continued the discussion regarding planning for the 2024-25 CWC funding recommendation and an updated strategic plan. Topics included impaired waters list, nearly and barely; social measures, protection and restoration strategies, including the incorporation of the BWSR Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan.

You can follow the work of the Council and better still, the many projects funded by the CWFund at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNCWC/bulletins/373f0f6>. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me a mweinandt@ricecreek.org

F. Local Government Water Roundtable, Sherry White

Sherry indicated that she can no longer be a member of the roundtable because she is a watershed board member.

G. Minnesota Stormwater Research Council: John Bilotta

John thanked the watersheds for their support. The annual report is available for our information.

One area of focus is with stormwater pond research - how they are working and how they are not working. As well as how to improve their functionality. Four new projects are evaluating this need.

John and the Research Council are seeking stakeholder input on research needs. A survey should be available soon.

V. Updates from Watersheds

Member Michael Welch commented on the chloride limited liability issue and the concern over it not passing in 2023. He is hoping to correct the issues so that a new bill can be introduced next year. He indicated that a small group is looking into other options like regulatory approaches.

VI. Future meetings

A. Next Metro Watersheds Meeting – January 16, 2024 (virtual)

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm