



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – December 10, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Attendance		Present	Absent
Jim Lindner, Chair	City of Gem Lake	X	
Rob Rafferty	City of Lino Lakes		X
Sara Shah	City of North Oaks	X	
Ed Prudhon	White Bear Township		X*
Andrea West	City of White Bear Lake	X	
Katherine Doll Kanne	City of Vadnais Heights	X	
Phil Belfiori	Administrator	X	
Dawn Tanner	Program Development Coord.	X	
Brian Corcoran	Water Resources Mgr.	X	
Lauren Sampedro	Watershed Tech & Program Coord.	X	
Angela Hugunin	Communication & Outreach Coord.	X	

*= with prior notice
 **= alternate

Others in attendance: Susan Miller (TEC); Jeanne Vogt (Ehlers, Inc.); Troy Gilchrist (attorney).

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Board Chair Lindner.

II. Approval of Agenda 

The agenda for the December 10, 2025 Board meeting was presented for approval. No changes.

A motion was made by Director Shah and seconded by Director Doll Kanne to approve the December Board meeting agenda as presented. Vote: all: aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes 

The minutes from the October 22, 2025 Board meeting were placed on the agenda for approval, as presented.

A motion was made by Director Doll Kanne and seconded by Director Shah to approve the October 22, 2025 minutes. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Visitors and Presentations

A. TEC Report to the Board for December & Finance Report

Report given prior to quorum. TEC Member Susan Miller provided an overview of the December TEC Report to the Board. Commissioner Miller began by describing updates to the Watershed Management Plan, noting that the Plan is nearing its final stages. She shared that the TEC has been impressed by Houston Engineering’s work with developing the Plan. This process harvested all the comments from various entities and ensured that none of those comments were lost or buried. Houston’s work gave staff the ability to focus on other information and helped build trust with reviewers, who were able to see the results of their feedback as the Plan progressed through its phases.

Commissioner Miller then gave an update on the community outreach and grants programs over the last year. She shared that, in her years of experience on the TEC and as a volunteer, she had grown accustomed to encountering familiar faces. Commissioner Miller shared that she was impressed by Sampedro and Hugunin’s ability to add new faces to the outreach and grants programs over the last year and hoped the momentum would carry into the new year.

B. Public Visitors - Non-agenda items

None.

V. Consent Agenda 

Chair Lindner asked if any Board members wished to take items off the consent agenda for discussion.

Consent items on the agenda and included in the December Board packet were as follows:

- A. Consider 2023-2025 BWSR WBIF Grant Agreement Amendment
- B. Consider Ongoing Project Maintenance Scopes of Services (CarpS, NST, RCD Surveys, Barr)
- C. Consider End of Year Reports: Aquatic Vegetation Reports, Tamarack Lake Fish Report, and Oak Knoll Pond Memo
- D. Consider Ramsey County SWCD Contract for 2026-2027 Professional Services
- E. Consider Resolution 09-2025 for Clarifying VLAWMO’s Grant Program Approval Process
- F. Consider VLAWMO Employee Policy for PFML (New Legislation for 1/1/2026)
- G. Update on Watershed Awards Nomination Process

A motion was made by Director Shah and seconded by Director Doll Kanne to approve the consent agenda. Vote: all: aye. Motion passed.

VI. Business

A. Financial/Administrative

1. Consider Action from SSU Parcel Review Process – Resolution 10-2025 

Administrator Belfiori shared an update regarding the refund of Storm Sewer Utility (SSU) charges collected from three parcels. Staff and consultants recently completed a comprehensive review of VLAWMO’s stormwater utility language within its newly approved Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), along with a technical review of the formula used to calculate those charges. Administrator Belfiori explained that, as an additional part of this process, staff worked with consultants from Ehlers, Houston Engineering, and Attorney Troy Gilchrist to complete an analysis of approximately 2500 parcels where land divisions and reapportionments have occurred since 2008. Administrator Belfiori then introduced Jeanne Vogt from Ehlers.

Vogt began by sharing background on the SSU, notably that the fee was established in 2008, at which point VLAWMO was working with SEH to establish upland acreage for approximately 10,000 parcels. Vogt explained that, over the last 17 years, divisions, boundary changes, and legal description changes have taken place in both Ramsey County and Anoka County. Vogt stated that there is a process to go from the old to new parcels once fees are

established. At the time of division, parcels are estimated between upland and wetland areas. They are looking to formalize that process moving forward.

Houston Engineering's comprehensive analysis and update of both the JPA and technical memo provided an opportunity to revisit the parcels as well. Vogt explained that there were about 2,500 of 10,000 parcels that have been divided since 2008. Houston then reviewed those parcels based on the NWI and PWI from 2019.

Administrator Belfiori defined the NWI and PWI acronyms as National Wetland Inventory and Public Waters Inventory.

Vogt explained that, in going through this process of reviewing the 2,500 parcels, there were 11 parcels that saw changes in fees of plus or minus \$100 for taxes payable in 2026. This came out to less than half of a percent of parcels that were reviewed.

Troy Gilchrist, attorney, provided background on his involvement with the review. He shared that he was contacted after the initial review process found a discrepancy of 11 parcels. Gilchrist offered a couple of key points to consider regarding the situation and how to proceed, namely whether or not to offer a refund and how to determine the amount of the refund, as well as how far back to look and how to address interest. Gilchrist suggested that it may be beneficial to consider developing a policy outlining how to deal with this sort of situation should it arise in the future. Gilchrist noted that \$100 was the level that was decided upon for this case. For look-back period, six years is the default statutory limitations. Gilchrist recommended the Board consider the statewide standard for judgements on interest, which is 4%.

Gilchrist shared that staff coalesced around a recommendation that was reflected in the presentation and recommended by the Board subcommittee. He shared that he would return to answer any questions regarding legal issues later in the presentation.

Vogt stated that 11 parcels experienced changes plus or minus \$100. They were listed on the screen in order from the largest change in upland acreage to smallest change.

Vogt described the review conducted for the 11 parcels to determine when the division occurred, who owned the parcels at the time, and how billing errors occurred. In eight of the 11 parcels, discrepancies were due to changes in the mapped wetland area since 2008. The remaining three parcels were due to error – with one parcel belonging to the City of White Bear Lake, one to Arcade Mob Partners, LLC, and one to Anoka Holdings Company (previously owned by the North Oaks Company). Vogt shared that when she went in to calculate the refund amount, she factored in the 4% interest as recommended by Gilchrist with the exception of 2026 as those bills have not yet been sent out.

Director Shah inquired about the parcels, asking how the non-wetland parcels were discovered. She asked if the changing satellite images of wetlands helped catch the discrepancies.

Vogt replied that when they looked at the changes in billing, they received updated upland acreage data from Houston Engineering, applied that to the 2026 rate, and compared that to previous upland acreage. Eight of those 11 were due to changes in what is considered mapped wetland area since 2008.

Director Shah asked whether the NWI and PWI were the source of the eight parcels. Vogt confirmed that this had been the case.

Vogt stated that the three parcels that were overbilled due to error, including interest, have a combined grand total of \$83,618.82.

Administrator Belfiori thanked Vogt and informed the Board that this information was presented to the VLAWMO Board Subcommittee on 11/17. The recommended action was as follows:

- Refund all years for three parcels with errors, plus interest;
- For the engineer (Houston) to review all VLAWMO parcels for Pay 2027 with the new wetland data;
- For the engineer to provide upland versus wetland acreage for all future divisions going forward.

Looking ahead, all parcels will be reviewed whenever new wetland data becomes available. It was recommended to have staff propose a policy update for future situations that may arise.

Director Shah asked how often the NWI and PWI are updated. Administrator Belfiori responded that these databases are run by the federal government or MN DNR. Information is available when these update processes are completed, not on a set schedule. As soon as these updates occur, parcel analysis is updated with the latest data.

Administrator Belfiori highlighted that per the request of the Subcommittee, VLAWMO staff met with the City of White Bear Lake’s Manager and Finance Director on November 26th to update them on the data and background related to the topic and to share the Subcommittee recommendations.

Staff recommended approval of Resolution 10-2025.

Discussion:

A motion was made by Director Doll Kanne and seconded by Director Shah to approve Resolution 10-2025. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**RESOLUTION NO. 10-2025
of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO)**

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REFUND OF VLAWMO STORMSEWER UTILITY
CHARGES COLLECTED IN ERROR ON 3 PARCELS**

Resolution 10-2025 was moved by Director _____ and seconded by Director _____.

WHEREAS, Minnesota Laws 2008, Chapter 366, Article 6, Section 47 authorized the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (“VLAWMO”) to establish and certify to the county auditors a storm sewer utility charge (“SSU Charge”) for collection together with the property taxes imposed on the properties within the watershed;

WHEREAS, VLAWMO established the SSU Charge and adopted a rule (“SSU Rule”) setting out property classifications and rates for imposing the SSU Charge on the thousands of properties within the watershed;

WHEREAS, the SSU Rule identifies several land use classification as being exempt from the SSU Charge, including wetlands and public waterbodies;

WHEREAS, VLAWMO has completed an analysis of approximately 2,500 parcels that where land use divisions and reapportionments have occurred to determine if more recent changes in mapped wetland data changed the exempt area on those parcels;

WHEREAS, the updated wetland data showed 11 parcels with changes in fees +/- \$100 for Pay 2026, which was 0.4% of total parcels reviewed;

WHEREAS, changes in eight of the 11 parcels were the result of updated wetland data and the changes in the remaining three were due to error; and

WHEREAS, the VLAWMO Board Subcommittee reviewed this matter at its November 17, 2025 meeting and recommended that VLAWMO issue a refund for the three properties that were mistakenly overcharged, including payment of a four percent interest rate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE VADNAIS LAKE AREA WATER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION AS FOLLOWS:

1. VLAWMO shall issue refunds of the SSU Charge in the amounts listed below for all years for the 3 parcels with errors, which includes 4% interest:

Parcel ID	Owner	Over Billed (includes Interest)
23.30.22.42.0019	City of White Bear Lake	\$76,063.61
33.30.22.22.0037	Arcade Mob Partners LLC	\$5,136.86
34.31.22.44.0008	Anoka Holdings, LLC North Oaks Company	\$462.43 \$1,955.92
TOTAL		\$83,618.82

2. Authorizes Houston Engineering to do each of the following:
 - a. Review all VLAWMO parcels for Pay 2027 with 2019 NWI data;
 - b. Provide upland vs. wetland acreage for all future divisions; and
 - c. Review parcels whenever updated NWI & PWI data becomes available.
3. Authorizes staff to work with VLAWMO’s attorney to propose policy updates to address any similar situations that may arise in the future.

The question was on the adoption of the resolution and there were 4 yeas and 0 nays as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<i>Andrea West</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ed Prudhon</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
<i>Rob Rafferty</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
<i>Sara Shah</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Katherine Doll-Kanne</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Jim Lindner</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

_____ Board Chair Date

_____ Attest Date

2. Consider Resolution 11-2025 Regarding Approval of 2026 “Working” Budget 

Administrator Belfiori provided an update on the fund balance and carryover working budget. He gave background on the Board’s approval of the 2026 budget, which identified two key elements related to proposed fund balance carryover. It included a projected remaining fund balance at the end of 2025 in the range of \$1.2-1.5 million and the Board approved 2026 budget then utilized a predicted range of between \$200,000 to \$600,000 of fund balance to implement 2026 projects and programs.

Administrator Belfiori explained that analysis was conducted on the November finance report from the previous TEC meeting. Upon that analysis, the carryover was found to track higher than originally projected in June. This was primarily due to the receiving of grants for several projects where VLAWMO funds had been anticipated. A predicted range of \$1.2-1.5 million fund balance was still projected for 2026.

Administrator Belfiori explained that \$172,000 in additional fund balance was also recommended in resolution 11-2025 which will result in a predicted \$800,000 to \$1.3 million range in the end of 2026 fund balance. He noted this year’s end 2026 range in fund balance remains in line with the fund balance policy of holding 35-50% of total annual budget.

Administrator Belfiori highlighted carryover amounts as identified in the table included in Resolution 11-2025, noting the \$83,619 as the Board approved refund for the SSU errant parcels, plus \$10,000 additional for additional analysis of the remaining parcels with wetland data as well as work with VLAWMO’s attorney to develop a policy in case of any similar cases in the future. Administrator Belfiori outlined the proposed addition of \$78,826 to be utilized for three primary items: proposed maintenance on the Birch Lake iron-enhanced sand filter, a proposed partnership with the City of Vadnais Heights design or implementation, and encumbered funds from the Soil Health, Landscape Level 1, and Landscape Level 2 Grant Programs.

Administrator Belfiori shared the Board Subcommittee’s recommendation. Staff recommended approval of carryover/”working” budget for 2026 as summarized in table 1.

Discussion:

A motion was made by Director Shah and seconded by Director Doll Kanne to approve the carryover/”working” budget for 2026 as summarized in table 1. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 11-2025

A RESOLUTION FOR COMMITTING THE FUND BALANCE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization, does hereby find as follows:

WHEREAS, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board’s Statement No. 54 defines committed fund balance as amounts that can only be used for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the Board,

WHEREAS, Board action is required before year end to formalize the commitment of fund balance to specified purposes,

WHEREAS, those committed amounts cannot be used for any other purpose unless the VLAWMO removes or changes the specified use by taking the same type of action it employed to previously commit those amounts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the VLAWMO, that the specific portions of fund balance in the identified funds are committed as follows:

Committed

Fund Name and Description	Approved “working” 2025 Budget (from Board action on Dec. 2024)	TOTAL Predicted Year End 2025 Fund Balance amount (from 2025 to 2026- apx. range).	Proposed Carry Over “committed” Funds (into 2026 “working” budget) and Purpose	TOTAL Rough est./Projected Year End 2026 Fund Balance amount (from 2026 to 2027-apx. range)
General Fund - Fund 3.1. Operations and Administration	\$838,008	\$1,200,000 – \$1,500,000 (Estimate)	\$93,619 Per Subcommittee approved direction related to pay 2026 SSU reimbursements and or pay 27 SSU analysis and related SSU policy development	\$800,000- \$1,300,000 (Estimate)

General Fund - Fund 3.2. Monitoring and Studies	\$184,000		
General Fund - Fund 3.3. Education and Outreach	\$43,000		
General Fund -Fund 3.4. Capital Improvement Projects and Programs	\$1,528,199		<p>\$1,397,071</p> <p>The approved 2026 budget (approved at the June 2025 Board meeting) already included utilizing <u>\$1,318,245</u> of fund balance carry over to implement the 2026 Capital Improvement Projects and Programs. The proposed 2026 “working” budget now proposes an additional <u>\$78,826</u> of additional fund balance carry over for a total Proposed Carry Over “committed” Funds (into 2026 “working” budget) of <u>\$1,397,071</u>. For implementation of the proposed projects in several subwatersheds including: Birch Lk. IESF Maintenance, Proposed partnership on the City of Vad. Heights Firestation design and/or implementation (in addition to already approved 26 budget for Resiliency Project), and Level 1/ 2 and SHG cost-share partnership projects, and those proposed projects identified in the approved 2026 budget.</p>

The question was on the adoption of the resolution and there were 4 yeas and 0 nays as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<i>Andrea West</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ed Prudhon</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
<i>Rob Rafferty</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
<i>Sara Shah</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Katherine Doll Kanne</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Jim Lindner</i>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Upon vote, the Chair declared the Resolution adopted on this 10th day of December 2025.

_____ Board Chair Dated: December 10,2025

_____ Attest Dated: December 10, 2025

B. Projects and Studies/Plans

1. Consider Final Formal Comment Response Table for Watershed Management Plan

Administrator Belfiori shared that development of the Watershed Management Plan (Plan) is nearly complete as it enters its final phase. Initial development began approximately two years ago, with development nearing its end in 2026 as the Plan moves to the formal review and public hearing approval process. He noted staff’s appreciation of the support and positive feedback from local partners as well as agency staff and partners.

Tanner provided more detail on the remaining step in the process. She outlined key milestones of development earlier in 2025, including formal review of the draft Plan over the summer, with that period closing on August 26th. Comments were received from several groups during that time, with many reviewers expressing gratitude for having been included in the review. The TEC+ process allowed for feedback to be incorporated throughout the process, ultimately reducing the number of comments requiring response as part of the formal review process. Tanner explained that the Board packet included the Formal Review Comment Response Table, including all comments received, whether or not a change was needed, revision text if relevant, and/or a comment response by VLAWMO.

Tanner explained that staff reviewed and discussed proposed changes, working closely with Houston Engineering as well as VLAWMO’s Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board Conservationist, who guided staff through Plan development. BWSR requested the inclusion of numeric goals for key projects whenever possible, so VLAWMO requested more specifics from project engineers and updated the draft Plan accordingly.

Tanner noted that six high-priority groupings of comments were identified and flagged as part of this process: first, the recommendation to identify priority resources for focal efforts over the next 10 years; second, the request to more clearly provide measurable goals with more quantifiable measures wherever possible; third, making note of the timing of approval of the Plan and possible need to add budget information for 2026; fourth; the addition of clearly-identified priority wetland areas; fifth, the inclusion of water quality trends from monitoring data; sixth, clarifying the degree to which the Plan can be adopted by reference by any of the member communities, adding that member communities may adopt data and maps by reference, but not the implementation section.

The response table was reviewed and approved by the Board Subcommittee in November. In addition, VLAWMO’s Board Conservationist sent emails of support for the comment response table and Word document with incorporated changes, and the TEC recommended approval earlier in the day. Tanner noted that VLAWMO’s Board Conservationist wrote on December 9th to express her gratitude for staff’s thoughtful integration of BWSR comments, to provide a few additional minor comments, and to share no significant concerns with the Plan moving forward.

Tanner outlined remaining dates in the process, including the submission of the comment response table to review authorities as required; Board review of the designed draft Plan at

their February meeting, which will also include a public hearing and a request of Board approval of Plan submission to BWSR; BWSR's metro meeting on April 6th and request their Board authorization on April 22nd; then BWSR's approval for Plan adoption and sharing with review authorities.

Staff recommended approval of the VLAWMO Formal Review Comment Response Table and authorization of staff to notify and provide the response table to local and state review authorities, and to further request that staff work with HEI to transition the Plan document to the formal InDesign layout for review by BWSR.

Administrator Belfiori noted that it can be helpful to have a Board member or two join staff to present the Plan. He suggested bringing this item to the February meeting to determine who would be willing to consider attending the meeting.

Chair Lindner asked where the meeting will be held. Administrator Belfiori answered that it will be held at the BWSR office in St. Paul.

Discussion:

Director Doll Kanne moved and Director West seconded to approve the VLAWMO Formal Review Comment Response Table and authorize staff to notify and provide the response table to local and state review authorities; the Board further requested staff work with HEI to transition the WMP document to the formal InDesign layout for review by BWSR. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VII. Discussion/Administration Communication – Year-end Thank You

Administrator Belfiori extended a thank you to the Board for their leadership throughout 2025, which included exciting projects and continued development of the Watershed Management Plan. He also thanked staff for their work to keep the organization moving. Administrator Belfiori wished the Board and their families a happy and peaceful holiday season.

Chair Lindner thanked staff and the Board for their work over the last year.

XI. Adjourn

A motion was made by Director Shah and seconded by Director Doll Kanne to adjourn at 7:43 pm. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.