

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
January 14, 2026
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Jim Hauth (alternate)	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Tom Hoffman	City of Lino Lakes (LL)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Absent: Nick Ousky (Vadnais Heights)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff); Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS), Ed Shapland (WAV), Barbara Suciuc (Gem Lake City Clerk).

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Tessier called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve the January 14, 2026 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (December 10, 2025)

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the December 10, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. January Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori thanked the TEC members for their time on the Commission. He summarized the January financial statement as included in the TEC packet. He highlighted payments related to three SSU errors, with the most significant reimbursement to the City of White Bear Lake. He also pointed out work with Houston Engineering on the response to comments received as part of the Watershed Management Plan (WMP or Plan) formal review process, as well as payment to the Metro Watershed Partners group for annual dues. Additional

highlights included a final Oak Knoll spent lime payment, and continued expenses for the Deep Lake shoreline partnership with NOHOA. Administrator Belfiori recommended approval of the January financial report and payment of the bills.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the January financial report and authorize for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. 2026 Technical Commission Officer Appointments

Administrator Belfiori shared that the January meeting brings the need to elect or confirm a slate of officers for the Technical Commission. He stated that, per usual, the Board will officially appoint the TEC Chair, but they look to the TEC to recommend who they would like as the Chair for the year ahead. He reminded the TEC of 2025's appointments:

Nick Ousky, Chair
Gloria Tessier, Vice Chair
Terry Huntrods, Financial Officer
Susan Miller, Liaison to the Board

Vice Chair Tessier stated that Nick Ousky has been a great Chair. This was confirmed by Commissioner Philip and others. Administrator Belfiori clarified that the person elected as Vice Chair would need to fill in for the meetings while Chair Ousky is away and asked Mr. Hauth about anticipated return time. Mr. Hauth confirmed that Ousky is expected to return from leave in April.

Vice Chair Tessier stated she would be glad to continue as Vice Chair. Commissioner Huntrods said he could continue as Financial Officer, and Commissioner Miller stated she could continue as Liaison to the Board.

Staff recommended that the TEC confirm the officer slate for 2026.

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Miller to confirm the VLAWMO TEC's officer slate for 2026. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Confirmation of 2026 TEC Meeting Dates

Administrator Belfiori requested that the TEC discuss the 2026 meeting schedule and location so that this information can be shared with the Board of Directors and published on the VLAWMO calendar. He stated that the current approved meeting schedule is the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Vadnais Heights City Hall Council Chambers. He pointed out that the November 11, 2026 TEC meeting is currently scheduled for Veterans Day and will need to be rescheduled. Staff recommended either November 10 or November 12, 2026 as an alternate November meeting date and requested that the TEC confirm the 2026 TEC meeting schedule and location.

Vice Chair Tessier asked if anyone had preferences for moving the adjusted meeting. Commissioner Miller noted that she preferred Thursday, November the 12th unless others had scheduling conflicts. Other commissioners all affirmed interest in the Thursday, November 12th date.

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Miller to confirm the 2026 TEC meeting schedule and location and confirm November 12, 2026 as the adjusted November TEC meeting date. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. 2026 Working Budget Overview

Administrator Belfiori described the VLAWMO Board's December 10, 2025 decision to approve the fund balance carry over "working budget" for 2026. As approved, the final "working" budgeted expenditures for 2026 will be \$2,859,690, with 2026 being the first year of implementation under the new WMP, which is expected to be approved in the coming months.

Administrator Belfiori explained that, to pay these expenditures, the projected income within the approved working budget for 2026 is made up of 1) \$1,369,000 from the SSU and some small fees and 2) up to \$1,490,690 in fund balance carry over. It is also estimated that \$180,000 of grants/other outside funding revenue sources will be utilized to implement some of the projects and programs in the 2026 budget. Administrator Belfiori specified that this budget includes some flexibility, as longer-range partnership projects will involve some degree of adaptability. He shared a summary of some of the proposed key approved budget project highlights, including:

- East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Project
- Polar Lakes Part Water Reuse Project
- Resiliency Study—Vadnais Heights City-wide partnership
- Local match for 2nd 319 small watershed grant project design in the Wilkinson-Birch Lakes Subwatershed
- Water quality pretreatment project upstream of the Birch Lake iron-enhanced sand filter
- Internal load/alum on Tamarack Lake
- Pleasant Lake management partnerships or project partnership

V. Programs

A. Watershed Awards Reminder

Hugunin shared that the nomination form is still open for end-of-year watershed awards. She encouraged the TEC to spread the word or consider nominating community members who have been involved in water stewardship, and she noted that the deadline is Friday, January 23, 2026. The TEC is expected to vote on the award winner at their February meeting, with official announcement and celebration of the recipient at the February BOD meeting.

B. Consider New Website

Hugunin shared that initial development of the new website has been completed and is ready to launch for public viewing. She provided an overview of the most used pages and presented highlights for each section, pointing out new features such as featured projects, a searchable resource library, and where to locate meeting materials. She said that one of the goals of the updates is to streamline the website content for the public. She shared next steps in development, stating that pending TEC approval, the website will go to HDR for final coding checks before becoming publicly available.

Commissioner Miller asked whether the new website had been tested with mobile device viewing. Hugunin responded that HDR will be verifying functionality with mobile display in the coming days.

Staff recommended approval of the new website and its submittal to HDR for final updates and publishing later this month.

It was moved by Commissioner Phillip and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the new website and its submittal to HDR for final updates and publishing later this month. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. SHG 2026-01 White Bear Lake United Methodist Church Pollinator Garden

Sampedro presented a Soil Health Grant application for a pollinator garden across a total area of about 5700 square feet, the first grant application of 2026. Sampedro shared views of the existing project area, pointing out its proximity to Goose Lake.

Sampedro provided background on the project, explaining that the church has taken significant steps to combat invasive species, including hiring a contractor to complete a controlled burn on the proposed project location. Sampedro pointed out the location's high visibility to parked cars and frequent passersby. The church has also expressed interest in installing signage to educate the church community on the benefits of the proposed garden for pollinators and water quality.

Sampedro presented plans for the garden, highlighting the plant species they intend to include via plugs and a seed mix.

Commissioner Miller noted that they will need many volunteers to cover such a large project area. Sampedro agreed, stating that the church intends to share volunteer opportunities with church members.

Commissioner Miller asked whether the applicant proposed using a Prairie Moon seed mix. Sampedro confirmed that it was the Short and Showy seed mix and noted that the seed mix

includes cover crop to prevent erosion. Commissioner Miller stated that she has used that mix in her yard with good results.

Staff recommended approval of SHG 2026-01 in the amount of \$1,026.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve SHG 2026-01 in the amount of \$1,026. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VI. Projects

A. WMP Comment Response Table Submitted Update

Tanner shared that the December Board meeting included Board approval of the VLAWMO Formal Review Comment Response Table, as well as authorization for staff to notify and provide the response table to state and local authorities. Work has continued with Houston Engineering to move the Plan to design software. Tanner highlighted a few deadlines, including bringing the Adobe InDesign version of the plan to February 11th's TEC meeting. February 25th is the anticipated time to bring this to the Board. She then outlined timelines for bringing the Plan to Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) via their Metro meeting, Board authorization and anticipated sharing of the Plan after the April meeting.

B. Consider Tamarack Lake Temporary Access Agreement for Phase 4 Alum and Construction Amendment with LRI

Tanner gave an update on the Tamarack Lake alum project, explaining that staff worked with project partners to prepare an updated Temporary Access Agreement for Phase 4 of the alum project. Ramsey County signed and returned the agreement to VLAWMO.

Staff worked with Lake Restorations, Inc. (LRI) to prepare an amendment for updated pricing on Phase 4 of the alum project. Tanner shared that the cost of alum has not changed since Phase 3 pricing was obtained. She explained that work has continued with project partners after completion of Phase 3.

Staff requested that the TEC recommend to the Board to approve and sign the Temporary Access Agreement for Phase 4 and return the fully signed agreement to Ramsey County. Staff also requested a recommendation to the Board to approve and sign the Third Amendment to the Contractor Services Agreement in the amount of \$27,380.

Mr. Hauth asked whether Phase 4 was the final phase of the project and whether there is any data on results so far. Tanner responded that so far, phosphorus levels have dropped over half, and monitoring will continue.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend that the Board approve and sign the Temporary Access Agreement for Phase 4 and return the fully signed agreement to Ramsey County and to recommend to the Board to approve and sign the Third Amendment to the Contractor Services Agreement in the amount of \$27,380.

C. 319/Wilkinson Lake

Tanner provided a series of brief updates on 319 projects related to the Wilkinson Lake deep-water wetland. She began by sharing that ongoing maintenance for Phase 1 was authorized at the December Board meeting. Following Board approval, NST removed invasive trees and shrubs from the area in coordination with North Oaks Company (NOC). NOC staff removed the cut and piled debris. Staff appreciates collaboration with partners.

Tanner shared that work is continuing on the 25-acre restoration that NOC is working on with Stantec adjacent to the deep-water wetland. She shared that restoration work in that area creates a more cohesive landscape with native species that will ultimately provide reduced maintenance needs, improved habitat, and increased overall positive results for the project area.

Tanner stated that a draft contract for Phase 2 was received from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in December regarding U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 319 grant funds. She shared the varying amounts as included in the project, from cash match to project award amounts: the project award provides for a total project cost of \$516,986.44 of which \$310,191.44 will be grant funds, \$175,776.00 will be cash match funds anticipated to be shared equally between VLAWMO and NOC, and \$31,019.00 will be VLAWMO in-kind match. The MPCA has been notified of the steps being put in place by staff to formally move forward with next steps.

Staff requested that the TEC recommend to the Board to sign and return the MPCA grant contract for the Phase 2 project as part of the EPA 319 small priority watershed program, with VLAWMO's focus being to improve water quality in Wilkinson Lake.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend that the Board sign and return the MPCA grant contract for the phase 2 project as part of the EPA 319 small priority watershed program, with VLAWMO's focus being to work to improve water quality in Wilkinson Lake.

D. Tamarack Nature Center: Telemetry Equipment Loan Update

Tanner described the loan of telemetry equipment to Tamarack Nature Center. She explained that the invasive common carp removal project is transitioning to maintenance now. Staff are no longer using the project telemetry equipment because the battery life has been exceeded for active transmitters that were implanted in carp. Tamarack Nature Center borrowed telemetry equipment for the homeschool outdoor education program unit on telemetry in fall of 2025. This has enabled the Nature Center to extend their educational work and allowed five classes of

homeschool students to utilize this equipment. VLAWMO has extended this equipment loan into 2026.

Commissioner Philip shared that this was a great update to see—a nice opportunity to use the equipment and enable learning for young people.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Mr. Hauth shared that Vadnais Heights has a sanitary sewer project impacting a wetland behind Vadnais Heights Elementary. He noted that the City has worked with all proper agencies on the project and permits are in place for the wetland impact.

VIII. NOHOA

Commissioner Miller shared a recent resident inquiry from North Oaks about who maintains the channel between Deep and Pleasant Lake for beaver activity. Jeremy Erickson replied that SPRWS takes care of this and will move forward with addressing the resident's concerns.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD)

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC meeting: February 11, 2026 at 8:15 am; Board meeting: February 25, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Philip to adjourn the meeting at 9:01. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.