

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
December 10, 2025
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Nick Ousky	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)

Absent: Terry Huntrods, City of White Bear Lake (WBL).

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff); Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS).

I. Call to Order

Chair Ousky called the meeting to order at 8:16 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

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

III. Approval of Minutes (November 12, 2025)

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the November 12, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. December Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the December financial statement as included in the TEC packet. He stated the financial statement will also be presented later this evening at the Board meeting. He listed the main expenses of the month, which included expenses for engineering work to provide measurable outcome data for the Watershed Management Plan (WMP), updating the WMP based on comments received and creating a comment response table, and reimbursement for the White Bear Lake Sports Center project through the Landscape Level 2 grant program and Birch Lake subwatershed funds. Belfiori recommended approval of the December financial report and payment of the bills.

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

B. TEC Report to Board for December

Administrator Belfiori presented some of the highlights from the TEC Report to the Board for December including continuing to work with the City of Vadnais Heights staff on the East Vadnais Lake subwatershed project, which is currently focused on gathering geotechnical information. He shared staff are hoping to receive an update on the City's Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources grant application by the first or second quarter of next year. VLAWMO is also continuing to work with the City on public engagement and data collection for the whole-city resiliency study.

Administrator Belfiori said staff are still waiting to hear back on the MPCA/EPA 319 grant and hope to hear more soon. He stated the audit process will start in the next few weeks, and the 2026 working budget is going to the Board meeting tonight for approval. He shared that a SSU parcel analysis and associated refunds to landowners will also be considered at the Board meeting. Administrator Belfiori recommended approval of the December TEC report to the Board.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the December TEC report to the Board.

V. Programs

A. Watershed Awards Nomination Process

Hugunin presented an overview of the watershed awards process, announcing that the nomination form is now open. She said this is a chance to celebrate collaborations that helped make projects and events possible. The award nominations will be for the Watershed Steward award this year, which can nominate outstanding volunteers, neighborhoods, community groups, and businesses. She shared that initiatives which occurred under the last calendar year can be considered for the award. Hugunin encouraged the TEC to nominate someone for the award by submitting a nomination form on the VLAWMO website. She said members of the public and municipal partners and affiliates are also welcome to nominate someone. The last day to nominate is January 23, 2026. She said the TEC will be asked to choose an award winner at the February meeting.

B. Get Gritty Campaign Update

Hugunin shared that VLAWMO is participating in a new "Get Gritty" outreach campaign launched this year that is led by Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD). Rice Creek Watershed District and Coon Creek Watershed Districts are also partners on the

campaign. Free bags of chicken grit are given away at participating businesses as an alternative to salt for winter traction. She said that the nearest location to VLAWMO's boundary is the Frattalone's off Highway 61 in White Bear Lake. Hugunin shared the campaign website, educational materials, and the pickup process. She said one of the only requirements for people in exchange for grit is to provide their zip code to allow the watershed management organizations to analyze demand and follow up in the future. She added that there is already press coverage on the campaign by Channel 5 News and Kare 11 that is hopefully raising more awareness about salt use. RWMWD is also testing geo-targeted YouTube ads to publicize the campaign.

Commissioner Miller said she visited the Frattalone's off Highway 61 and received a 25-pound sack of free grit and was not offput by the request for her zip code.

Commissioner Philip commented that the campaign is a great idea because many people are still putting out salt to avoid slipping on ice and salt alternatives need more publicity.

Commissioner Tessier added that she saw the campaign last night on the news, possibly on Channel 9.

C. Grant Program Website and Signage Updates

Sampedro and Hugunin shared that staff are working on website updates and one of the updates is streamlining the landscape grant program processes, especially the site visit request process. Sampedro highlighted the goals for the grant program webpage updates and compared what the current website looks like for the grant program versus what the new proposed website looks like. The grant program page on the new website will be more visually appealing, clear, and easier to use. It will also have an option to fill out a site visit request form to start the site visit scheduling process.

Commissioner Miller asked about how the page could coordinate with Sampedro's schedule for the site visits. Sampedro replied the form will ask for the requestor's availability so she can schedule around their response.

Hugunin presented what the site visit request "Jotform" will look like, as well as the back-end page that will allow staff to customize auto replies and create a framework to gather information on potential grant applicants.

Chair Ousky asked what used to happen to schedule a site visit. Sampedro responded people call or email her to request a site visit. Chair Ousky commented that the form sounds more efficient for staff.

Commissioner Hoffman suggested seeing if the form can auto-populate the address so the process can quickly identify if the potential applicant lives in VLAWMO or a different

watershed. Hugunin and Sampedro responded they will investigate Jotform's capabilities to see if it is possible.

Hugunin presented new designs for grant program yard signs for grant recipients. She highlighted alternative turf projects will now have sign options.

Several commissioners stated they were impressed with the new website items presented.

D. White Bear Lake Sports Center Project and BWSR WBIF Program Update

Sampedro provided an update that the White Bear Lake Sports Center bioswale project was completed in July, and staff are working with the City of White Bear Lake and Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division on final closure items. This project used the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) program funds, which expire at the end of this year. She said the project used the funds from the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 WBIF programs. She added that funding is still available through the 25-27 BWSR WBIF program for more projects and shared the focus areas for the grant. She asked the TEC to consider project ideas for spending the remaining funding.

VI. Projects

A. WMP Update and Recommendation of Formal Review Response Table

Tanner presented the WMP process timeline to date. VLAWMO is currently on the formal review and public hearing approval stage, and the process is almost complete. She shared that comments received during the required 60-day formal review of the WMP have been addressed. The formal review process closed on August 25th, and seven public agencies provided comments, including comments of gratitude for the TEC+ process. She said that the TEC+ process gave opportunities for feedback throughout the planning process, which paid dividends for the formal 60-day review. Tanner said staff worked with Houston Engineering to create a formal response table that displays how VLAWMO responded to the comments received during the WMP formal review process, and, if needed, what changes were made to the plan to address the comments.

Tanner said the next steps after the Board meeting tonight are for the comment table to be sent to the review authorities so they can evaluate the WMP changes in response to their comments. She presented six of the high priority comment areas that were received during the 60-day review, including that BWSR requested more clearly measurable goals with quantifiable outcomes wherever possible. VLAWMO met with the BWSR Board Conservationist to ensure comments were being addressed with the proposed WMP changes. VLAWMO received initial positive feedback on the proposed changes.

Tanner stated the VLAWMO subcommittee has approved the comment response table, and the full Board will be considering it tonight. The Board will also consider the approval of the fully

complete WMP at the February 25th Board meeting, and a formal public hearing will be held. Tanner thanked the TEC for being the formal review entity for the WMP review process.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to recommend to the Board 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; further to request staff to work with HEI to transition the WMP document to the formal InDesign layout for review by BWSR.

B. Oak Knoll Pond Technical Memo Update

Tanner provided an update that staff worked with Barr Engineering to determine how well the Oak Knoll project worked now that it has been completed for more than a year. She said staff have been monitoring the project and asked Barr Engineering to prepare an analysis of its performance so far. Tanner shared that, in general, results of the analysis indicate a 50% reduction in total phosphorus levels since the project began and an improvement in the average Secchi depth readings. She said Barr Engineering recommended continuing to monitor the project until next year and to collect sediment cores to analyze the sediment in the pond.

Commissioner Miller asked if this spent lime project can be completed at other waterbodies in the future. Tanner confirmed. She said it will likely be most feasible on smaller waterbodies and ponds like stormwater ponds rather than larger waterbodies due to the time and expense required to achieve the desired dosage.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend the Board approve receipt of the Oak Knoll Pond Spent Lime Treatment Evaluation Technical Memo from Barr Engineering.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Philip announced that she is working with one of the Town's board members on a possible native planting in one of their parks, located in the Rice Creek Watershed District. She shared that she hopes this project could lead to more projects in the future.

Chair Ousky shared he will likely be temporarily absent from the TEC for the next three months starting on January 15th. He will coordinate with City staff on who can attend in his absence.

VIII. NOHOA

Commissioner Miller shared that NOHOA and the City of North Oaks worked together to create a Beach Task Force for Pleasant Lake. She thanked Administrator Belfiori for connecting NOHOA and the City to helpful resources. She said they will have actions that can be taken to make Pleasant Lake Beach more swimmable.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD)

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC meeting: January 14, 2026 at 8:15 am; Board meeting: December 10, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.