



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – APRIL 24, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Attendance		Present	Absent
Jim Lindner, Chair	City of Gem Lake	x	
John Shuman	City of North Oaks		x
Rob Rafferty	City of Lino Lakes		x*
Ed Prudhon	White Bear Township	x	
Andrea West	City of White Bear Lake	x	
Katherine Doll Kanne	City of Vadnais Heights		x*
Kelly Jozwowski	City of Vadnais Heights	x**	
Phil Belfiori	Administrator	x	
Brian Corcoran	Water Resources Mgr.	x	
Dawn Tanner	Program Development Coord.	x	
Nick Voss	Education & Outreach Coord.	x	
Lauren Sampedro	Watershed Tech & Program Coord.	x	

\*= with prior notice

\*\*= alternate

**Others in attendance:** Jen Koehler (Barr Engineering), David Filipiak (SRF Consulting Group), Ezra Koetz and Christopher Knopik (CLA), Anne Sawyer BWSR, Susan Miller (NOHOA), Diane Gordner (NOHOA), Terry Huntrods (TEC)

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Lindner.

**II. Approval of Agenda** 

The agenda for the April 24, 2024 Board meeting was presented for approval.

A motion was made by Director Ed Prudhon and seconded by Director Jozwowski to approve the April Board meeting agenda. Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes** 

The minutes from the February 28, 2024 Board meeting were placed on the agenda for approval, as presented.

Director Prudhon and Director West abstained from the vote due to absence from the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chair Lindner stated the minutes looked good and reflected the meeting.

The Board discussed if minutes can be approved by members who were not present at the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Director West suggested tabling the motion until the next meeting in June.

A motion was made by Director Linder and seconded by Director Prudhon to table the approval of the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes to the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Visitors and Presentations**

**A. Oath of Office – Welcome Director West**

Director West took the oath of office to assume her new role as VLAWMO Director. Chair Lindner congratulated Director West.

**B. TEC Report and Financials for April**

Administrator Belfiori summarized the April TEC report to the Board. He highlighted the education and outreach program spring newsletter and annual report, two WAV meetings, cost share programs site visits occurring, the completion of the audit, the 2025 budget process beginning, and the finance summary approved by the TEC. Administrator Belfiori explained the TEC report to the Board process for new Directors.

**C. Public Visitors - Non-agenda items**

None.

**V. Consent Agenda **

Chair Lindner asked if any Board members wished to speak on any of the consent agenda items. No requests were made from directors.

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

- A. Consider Tamarack Lake Alum Project Plans and Specs and Access Agreement.
- B. Consider HEI Wilkinson Deep-water Wetland BMP Monitoring Task Order
- C. Consider Annual Report and Monitoring Report and Submittal to BWSR et al.
- D. Consider Updated Salary Table
- E. Consider Pleasant Signs and MOU with NOHOA
- F. Consider LL1 2023-06 Grant Agreement Extension
- G. Update on Spent Lime
- H. Update on Carp Management in Pleasant Lake

Discussion:

A motion was made by Director Prudhon and seconded by Director Jozwowski to approve the consent agenda. No comments.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

**VI. Business**

**A. Projects and Programming**

**1. Consider Barr Feasibility Study for Water Reuse at Polar Lakes Park **

Jen Koehler with Barr Engineering presented highlights from the Polar Lakes Park reuse feasibility study including technical findings, concepts review, permitting considerations,

conclusions and next steps. She described the irrigation system used for the athletic fields at Polar Lakes Park that can use 1.6-6 million gallons a year that rely on potable water. She stated the goals of the study are to reduce the demand on groundwater and improve water quality, as the Township is within the North and East Metro Groundwater Management area.

She explained one of the key findings from the feasibility study is there is enough water supply to support a water reuse system at Polar Lakes Park and meet irrigation demand for most irrigation scenarios. There is a large watershed that can contribute to the wetland that would be drawn from for the reuse system. The wetland storage can also supply up to two-four weeks of water depending on the irrigation demand. She described some of the irrigation scenarios of the park fields and the water supply availability. If only the lower fields are irrigated, 90-100% of the irrigation demand could be achieved on average. If both the lower and upper fields are irrigated, 65-80% of the annual irrigation demand could be achieved.

Koehler presented the two concept designs and stated both concepts are able to meet 80% or more of the park's annual irrigation demand and reduce groundwater use. She said though the second concept has a higher capital cost, it is the most cost-effective option because it provides almost double the reuse volume.

Koehler stated a water reuse system at Polar Lakes Park could reduce potable water demand by 1.9-4.3 million gallons per year depending on which concept design is chosen. Beyond pursuing several required permits, the main next step is to pursue potential grant opportunities including those offered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and potentially Metropolitan Council.

#### **Discussion:**

Chair Lindner asked how often the irrigation would run, and if the system would have rain sensors to avoid irrigating during rain events and allow the wetland to recharge. Jen Koehler responded the storage could handle over two weeks of water at a minimum and that it takes some weather forecasting into account. She explained the system would not irrigate every day and the wetland will have an opportunity to recharge between irrigation uses.

Director Prudhon commented the Township had to install drain tiles in the fields because of flooding. Director Lindner added that the middle soccer field area holds a lot of moisture. Jen Koehler responded that the average irrigation used would be 0.3 inches/week, which is lower than the average Minnesota irrigation use of 1 inch/week to account for rainfall.

Director Prudhon said the Township can lead by example if this project moves forward and influence developers to do similar projects. He said the Township has a proposal for the upper soccer field that is in the concept approval stage, which would eliminate half of the upper soccer field from the project. He asked if this would impact the grant process. He said the Township supports moving forward with pursuing grants. Corcoran clarified that the staff recommendation is to approve the feasibility study in order to start moving forward with next steps.

A motion was made by Director Prudhon and seconded by Director Jozwowski to approve the 3/14/2014 Barr Engineering Polar Park Water Reuse Feasibility Study report.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

## **2. Consider 2023 Audit**

CLA auditors Christopher Knopik and Ezra Koetz provided a presentation on the 2023 audit deliverables, financial results, and the last steps for finalizing the audit. Christopher Knopik said it is CLA's goal to provide an opinion on financial statements using a risk-based audit approach. For audit results, he stated VLAWMO will receive a clean audit opinion, which is the highest level.

Knopik stated one management area for VLAWMO is documentation of a review process before journal entries are documented. He said there could be more memorializing of the review process taking place, such as through an email exchange or initials on pieces of paper. He said there are no compliance issues. The only material weakness is CLA prepares VLAWMO's financial statement, but it isn't a concern.

Koetz discussed the financial results including an increase in compensated absences in 2023 due to increases in employee wages and an increase in unused hours, such as an accumulation of sick or vacation hours. He also stated the net pension liability of the MN General Employee Plan decreased statewide.

Koetz highlighted that there is \$289,268 left of outstanding payable loans and the fund balance for 2023 is good at 67%, which is above the 35-50% minimum range. Monthly expenditures at the end of 2023 could support 12 months of expense payments without income. He provided a high-level review of the total revenue and expenditures from 2023 and noted both increased.

Knopik noted that no difficulties or disagreements were encountered with the governance communication letter. He said a few audit adjustments were made so the receivables and payables reflect VLAWMO activity. He shared the audit representation letter can be signed off with final results shared after Board approval.

**Discussion: None.**

A motion was made by Director Prudhon and seconded by Director Jozwowski to accept the 2023 Financial Report and audit documents and direct them to be distributed to the appropriate state and local agencies.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

### 3. Consider Resiliency Study for E Vadnais Lake Subshed

David Filipiak with SRF presented highlights from the completed East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study, including results and next steps. He shared one of the overall goals of the study is to reduce flooding while improving water quality to provide a more resilient stormwater management system. Study partners VLAWMO, the City of Vadnais Heights, Ramsey County, and Saint Paul Regional Water Services were all aligned in their goals for flood resilience and water quality for the community. Infrastructure was considered with the study, but also community practical uses such as transportation and emergency vehicle access.

The subwatershed drainage area is 288 acres, which were divided into six areas. Filipiak noted that drainage area F is the area of historic flooding, and the study's strategy strives to reduce the drainage to that area. Filipiak explained a map of modeled existing 100-year flooding conditions, which showed 89 parcels that would be impacted by 100-year flood conditions. The study considered Best Management Practice (BMP) types and locations to

alleviate flood risk. The underlying principal used for this process is that flood control is easier closer to where flooding is occurring. Filipiak summarized the proposed BMP options and stated they will all increase the amount of water stored in the upstream wetland near the City Hall campus, and improve the resilience for the overall subwatershed.

Filipiak shared maps of the modeled 10-inch storm conditions. The proposed BMPs removed 65 parcels from flood conditions, and reduced street flooding/duration at key emergency vehicle locations. The duration of flooding also reduced by 40-80% for the 10-inch storm event. In terms of water quality, the modeling indicates the BMPs would also remove TSS by 11,000 lbs and TP by 39 lbs.

Filipiak summarized the decision for the project team to not submit the proposed alternative BMP concept for the MPCA Implementation for Stormwater Resilience grant including the need for more time to prepare project plans and the assurance that the grant program is continuing into the future. He described some of the next steps for implementation including collecting additional data, conducting a field survey, and assessing permitting needs. Other steps include identifying applicable grants to pursue, coordinating with other planned local projects to install resilient features. Filipiak recommended using the new hydrologic modeling tool to evaluate staging improvements.

**Discussion:**

Chair Lindner inquired about the timeframe and rate of discharge in the 10-inch storm event. Filipiak responded that the model was built around a 24-hour period.

Director Prudhon asked about what the improvements imply in terms of stormwater pipe improvements. Filipiak responded that increasing capacity is the main pursuit, and that may include sizing. Director Prudhon also encouraged the combination of project work with street renovation on Garceau lane.

A motion was made by Director Jozwowski and seconded by Director Prudhon to approve the East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study in Attachment 1 with non-material changes.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

**4. Consider LL2 2024-02 Elmwood Park Raingarden Grant** 

Sampedro presented the Elmwood Park raingarden grant application for Board consideration. The project is in the City of Vadnais Heights and proposes a curb cut raingarden at Elmwood Park. She noted the Lambert Creek TMDL recommends large bioretention retrofit projects in parks like this. Four bids were received for the project, with Sandstrom Land Management being the lowest bid. Sampedro noted that the project is located in a priority subwatershed identified in the Board of Water and Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding program workplan and recommended utilizing this funding for the project.

**Discussion:**

Director Prudhon asked about the scope of work, particularly how it may have been interpreted differently to result in different bids. Sampedro responded that the bids included the same scope of work and the different bids depended on the pre-existing workload from the companies.

It was moved by Director Jozwowski and seconded by Director Lindner to approve the Landscape Level 2 grant application 2024-02 at 90% of eligible project expenses, not to exceed \$30,064.05 in accordance with VLAWMO staff & TEC's recommendations and established VLAWMO and BWSR WBIF program guidelines.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

## **B. Administration and Budget**

### **1. Discussion and Consideration of 5-year Partnership Projects Table**

Administrator Belfiori presented a draft of the five-year partnership project table. He noted eleven staff stakeholders groups were involved in the development of the table and separate interviews were held with each one in March. The Board Subcommittee reviewed the table and found it to be a good approach. Belfiori stated the focus of the table is to maintain momentum to implement large-scale capital improvement projects, which will guide the watershed management plan process.

Administrator Belfiori explained the four budgeting scenarios ranging from funding all of the projects to funding 60% of the projects on the table. He noted the fourth scenario of funding apx. 60% of the project is likely the most realistic scenario due to the uncertainty of projects. The fourth scenario would require a 5% increase in the stormwater utility fee for 2025 and between a 9-10% increase for years 2026-2029.

Administrator Belfiori noted there are many project ideas, but additional projects could come up that were not budgeted for. He explained the table tries to build up the budget to be ready for unexpected project opportunities.

#### **Discussion:**

Chair Lindner noted that he saw MnDOT was working in the Highway 61 median in Gem Lake to control runoff and said this is an example of projects occurring outside of VLAWMO that could impact the project list if they were not expected. Administrator Belfiori added that project planning is a constant process because of new projects that can come up.

Director Prudhon asked if VLAWMO has a priority list. Administrator Belfiori responded VLAWMO's top priorities are projects that are listed in the Watershed Management Plan. The next priority level would be if a project is listed in a partner community's local water management plan.

Chair Lindner added that the table isn't locking VLAWMO into specific dollar amounts, but acknowledging a vision that Board members can bring to their communities for discussion.

It was moved by Director Prudhon and seconded by Director Jozwowski to approve that the attached 5-year partnership project table (Attachment 1) generally captures a high-level long-range plan for partnership projects for the VLAWMO.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.

### **2. Discussion and Authorization of VLAWMO Subcommittee to Provide Recommendations on Rough Draft Preliminary 2025 Budget**

Administrator Belfiori presented the preliminary 2025 budget. He said feedback will be brought to the Board Subcommittee meeting on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The Subcommittee will provide a recommendation to the rest of the Board at the June Board meeting.

He discussed the 2025 preliminary budget was recommended from the five-year budget table. He reiterated that projects in the budget have a high level of uncertainty, but the recommendation is to have money in the budget to be prepared if the projects happen.

Administrator Belfiori summarized the subwatershed budget amounts proposed in the 2025 budget table and noted the total preliminary budget is \$2.2-2.7 million. He described the next steps of the May 30<sup>th</sup> Subcommittee meeting with a TEC representative present and the June 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting where the Board will formally consider the budget. Stormwater utility fee rates will be considered at the August Board meeting.

**Discussion:**

Chair Lindner said the Subcommittee will recommend a total budget between the high and low amounts.

It was moved by Director Prudhon and seconded by Director West to authorize the Subcommittee to review the draft 2025 budget materials and provide the full Board recommendation(s) at the June 26 meeting.

**VII. Discussion -Discuss 6/26/24 June Board Meeting Date per Subcommittee Request**

Administrator Belfiori asked if anyone is planning to attend League of MN Cities Conference on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Director Jozwowski responded she will be attending and Director Doll Kanne will also be absent that day, but another alternate will be present to represent Vadnais Heights. Director West said she is not sure, but will notify Administrator Belfiori.

**VIII. Administration Communication-Discussion on Scheduling Late May/Early June Board Subcommittee Meeting (possible dates: 5/29 or 5/30)**

Administrator Belfiori said he will follow through on the Subcommittee meeting scheduling with a phone call since the other Subcommittee members are not present.

**XI. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Director West and seconded by Director Jozwowski to adjourn at 8:34 pm.

Vote: Lindner: aye, Prudhon: aye, West: aye, Jozwowski: aye. Motion passed.