



The Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
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Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
January 12, 2018
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room

Commission Members Present:

Ken LaCasse Vadnais Heights (VH) - alternate
Bob Larson North Oaks (NO)
Paul Duxbury White Bear Township (WBT)
Gloria Tessier Gem Lake (GL)

Commission Members Absent:

Marty Asleson Lino Lakes (LL)
Jim Grisim White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mark Graham Vadnais Heights (VH)

Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson, (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Jeremy Erickson, Justine Roe (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS); Ed Haddon (VH resident); Diane Gorder (NO Natural Resources Cmte)

I. **Call to Order** Treasurer Larson called the meeting to order at 7.30am.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Duxbury to approve the January 12, 2018 agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Duxbury to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2017 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. **Administration & Operations**

A. Administrator's report – BWSR Funding

Stephanie reported on the watershed based funding initiative presented by BWSR. "Fund-the-Plan" is a pilot project for BWSR and will involve all the watersheds in the metro area over the next two years. The funding allocated for the metro would go into two different pots – direct funding that may be used for projects or programs that are in our Water Plan and another percentage that would fund a competitive grant program. Over time the percentage of direct funding is anticipated to go up and the competitive funding will go down. The direct fund money would be distributed by how much land area each county has. Ramsey, as the smallest county will get 5%, Anoka will get 15%.

This is definitely a shift in how business is done. The eligible entities within each county can decide how to fund the priorities within the county. Watersheds, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and any cities who have approved local water plans can weigh in on how the money is divided up. We (the eligible agencies) have until June 30th to figure out how to do it in our respective counties. For VLAWMO this will mean conversations with both Anoka and Ramsey County. Ramsey County has a draft plan under discussion that is also based on land area with Ramsey CD getting 10% off the top. VLAWMO covers about 13.4% of Ramsey County which means we potentially could get we could get \$53,388 of the 2018 funding. There will be meetings with our communities and fellow watersheds and more organizing and approvals are on the horizon but it could be a regular source of project and program funding going forward. We will keep you posted.

B. Election of 2018 Officers

Every year we must elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer for the TEC. Mark Graham has been our Chair and said he would be willing to continue in that role if the TEC would like. Jim Grisim has been the TEC Vice Chair and Bob Larson has been the TEC Treasurer.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Duxbury to nominate Graham as Chair. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

It was moved by Duxbury and seconded by Tessier to nominate Grisim as Vice Chair. Vote: all aye. Motion passed. We will need Grisim to confirm he is willing to continue in this role.

It was moved by Duxbury and seconded by Tessier to nominate Larson as Treasurer. Vote: 3 aye. Larson abstained. Motion passed.

V. Reports

A. Financial Report for January & authorization for payment of checks.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Duxbury to approve the January Treasurer's report and payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Update to the 2018 Monitoring Report

Staff have worked to update the format of the annual monitoring report to be consistent with other VLAWMO reports and handouts. Brian gave a brief presentation of what the new format looks like. He stated that it should be available on the website by the end of next week.

VI. Programs

A. Education & Outreach

1. EOP Report Card

2. VLAWMO News: survey

3. 2018 outreach invite: Trivia Tuesday, blog entries

Nick was unavailable to attend the meeting. Stephanie reported that the 2018 EOP and a report card from last year's E/O efforts is now posted on the website. Stephanie showed the report card to the TEC and invites comment and feedback. TEC members have also been invited to participate in VLAWMO social media efforts. We have begun posting Trivia Tuesday and are inviting our partners to submit ideas, pictures, and trivia to help so we can have posts each week for this effort. Nick is also requesting that if people travel to other places, they could submit pictures of water resources (and that person standing by the water resources!) that could be used for blog entries to talk about water issues outside our watershed.

B. GIS – MIDS and School Drainage

Tyler discussed a simple open-source modeling program, called MIDS, was designed a few years ago by Barr Engineering for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to determine pollution reductions for various types of BMPs. VLAWMO has been going back through all of our past cost share projects and running this model for projects that apply. The end product will tell us pollution reductions for all of the applicable projects that happened per grant year.

Additionally, Tyler reported that simple school drainage maps have been made for all of the schools within VLAWMO for future use by the E&O program. These maps illustrate how stormwater moves from the students' school and where it ends up. This will provide a hands-on approach for students learning about water resources and stormwater.

C. 2018 Cost Share Updates

The last two years of the Landscape Grant Program have shown that it is becoming more popular and therefore it is time to create a way to evaluate and rank applications so as to allot the money in the best way possible. Kristine researched methods neighboring watersheds use and has created an evaluation form which gives a score for how much of an impact a particular project will have for the watershed. The evaluation form was included with the TEC packet and copies were available at the meeting. The form is heavily influenced by what Rice Creek Watershed District created. The TEC was welcomed to offer comments and feedback regarding the form.

Additionally, Kristine asked the TEC to discuss the idea of determining a grant award amount based on the evaluation score.

An example of how this could be done is listed below. The highest score a LL1 grant could receive is 25. A minimum of 15 is needed to be considered an eligible project.

Evaluation Score	% of request funded
15 (minimum)	30%
16 – 17	50%
18 – 20	75%
20+	100%

This form would work for both LL1 and LL2 grants. For LL2 grants, there is an additional ranking regarding the public outreach aspects of the project which would allow for a high score of 30.

Erickson – should we weight certain questions higher than others? For instance connectivity to water may be more important than wildlife habitat improvement.

Larson – thinks the scoring is needed in order to show a fairness in what does or doesn't get funded. But thinks the dollar amount should stay a bit more fluid.

Duxbury – do we have deadlines for application submittal? Kristine stated that the program has been open to applications until money is gone each year. It has only been in the last couple of years that we have run out of money, or come close to running out of money. If we had a deadline of May 1 for 2018 applications, we run the risk of missing out on good projects since people may not be ready with their applications by that date.

D. 2017 Report Card

Stephanie distributed a survey to the TEC members to fill in to help us with our report card assessment. We are asking the TEC to provide their input on our programs and efforts as well as their thoughts for how things should be adjusted or if they should keep steady. We'd like the surveys returned by the end of the month.

VII. Projects

A. Birch Lake Project

You may have heard already but VLAWMO was approved for a BWSR Clean Water Fund grant for our Birch Lake – 4th & Otter Lake Road project. We received the full award of \$97,000 for the project. Kristine will complete a work plan for BWSR and finalize financial match commitments from partners over the winter and hopefully this project can be installed in 2018.

A grant agreement will be signed by the Board at their February meeting and a work plan must be submitted by March 12. The deadline for grant execution is April 9. After that date, we should have the funding available for the project.

Next week, Kristine is meeting with Mary Peterson from BWSR to go over what they will be requiring in the work plan as well as with Greg Wilson at Barr Engineering to discuss the information we will need from them to create final engineering plans and budget figures for the project.

B. Lambert Creek RFP

1. Lambert Creek Cleaning – Public Meeting

The Board has asked staff to notify adjoining property owners for the cleaning activities we will do late this winter. Additionally, we will include a public meeting as part of the February Board meeting.

Brian stated that after walking the creek for the survey work this week, side casting the debris rather than trying to pull it out and haul it away. Discussion was had regarding the message that it sends to the homeowners when we leave the debris on the sides of the creek and we don't want homeowners putting their grass clippings and brush into the creek. Stephanie stated that the Wetland Conservation Act does not consider brush, trees, leaves that are naturally on site and fall in to be fill. However, people that bring their grass clippings and landscape debris and dump it into the creek or along the side, that is considered fill and is against the WCA laws. Brian stated that letters have gone out to some folks who have been found to dump debris in the creek but we haven't pursued further actions.

2. Engineering Project

At VLAWMO's December 2017 Board meeting, the Board approved the staff recommendation of hiring Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) to survey and develop a Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) model of Lambert Creek/Ditch 14. VLAWMO staff had a kick-off meeting with HEI on Thursday January 4th to get started on the project. HEI and staff were out the week of January 7th to begin the survey and soil boring work. Letters to residents adjacent to the Creek are being notified that a survey crew will be moving through. VLAWMO staff will accompany the HEI surveyors for at least a portion of the survey to provide insight and assistance.

After the survey and historical review is complete, modeling will begin. The model will be tied to GIS and can be adjusted as we complete projects in the creek. A draft Engineer's Report will be ready by July, and the Final is aiming to be complete by August.

C. Capstone Project – Pleasant Lake

The report is complete. They looked at 20 years of SPRWS data and developed a model. They find that Pleasant Lake is mostly groundwater fed, it's water quality matches that of the Mississippi River and is slightly lower than surrounding lakes. In dry years, there is a lot more pumping from the Mississippi River but their studies showed that there was still significant SPRWS keeps fluctuations within 3 feet over the 17 years of data. There were some instances when the water level went up significantly in a short period of time. Those rapid water fluctuations could play a part in the erosion along the shoreline. They also looked at wind action effects. The report stated that a combination of wind action and water fluctuation has affected the stability of the shoreline.

Encourage shoreline stabilization in target areas and continue monitoring. They wanted to create a model showing the effects of Pleasant Lake if there wasn't any pumping from the Mississippi but they ran out of time. The software they used is open source so anyone could access the model. Gorder asked if Barr Engineering would be interested in finishing that model. Gorder stated she was surprised to hear that groundwater fed into the lake. The soils around the lake are mostly sandy which is good to know when planning stabilization projects.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

Nothing to report.

IX. St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) Report

Justine stated that they went through an assessment, which is required every 3 years and that they passed.

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

Nothing to report.

XI. Public Comment

Gorder asked what other communities do regarding muskrat and beaver damage. Stephanie said she could get her Dale Bacon's contact info. He is president of the Birch Lake Improvement District and they have worked with the City of WBL to trap muskrats.

Ed Haddon stated that the channel cleaning of the ditch (Branch 5A) along Bear Ave to County Road F has been wonderful and he is very pleased with the results. He feels this work was a big step forward. He lives south of this work and is worried about the effects of the cleaning further downstream but that the City is getting bids to continue cleaning the ditch.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: February 9; Board: February 28

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Duxbury to adjourn at 8:58 am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.