



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 23, 2014

ATTENDING:

Bob Uzpen	Gem Lake
<i>Absent</i>	Lino Lakes
Marty Long	North Oaks
Marc Johannsen	Vadnais Heights
Dan Jones	White Bear Lake
<i>Absent</i>	White Bear Township

Stephanie McNamara	VLAWMO Administrator
Kristine Jenson	VLAWMO Project Coordinator
Brian Corcoran	VLAWMO Technician
Vanessa Strong	VLAWMO Education & Outreach Coordinator

Also in attendance: Mark Graham, Technical Commission Vice Chair; Mary Peterson, Board of Water & Soil Resources

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:42pm by Chair Johannsen.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Long and seconded by Jones to approve the agenda. Vote: all ayes. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2014**

A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Johannsen to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2014 Board of Directors Meeting. Vote: 3 aye; 1 abstain (Uzpen) Motion passed.

**IV. Technical Commission (TEC) Report to the Board**

**A. Activity Summary**

Mark Graham representing the TEC presented the TEC Report.

**B. April financial report**

Stephanie presented the April Financial Report.

**V. New Business**

**A. Acceptance of the 2013 Audit – Auditor, Kevin Knopik**

Kevin Knopik presented findings from the 2013 Audit at a pre-meeting supper. VLAWMO has a healthy amount of money in reserves. There were no significant negative findings.

A motion was made by Long and seconded by Uzpen to accept the 2013 Audit Report. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**B. Acceptance of the 2013 Annual Program and Monitoring Report**

A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Long to accept the 2013 Annual Program and Monitoring Report. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**C. Election of Secretary-Treasurer**

Bruce Ackerman has resigned from the North Oaks City Council. Bruce was the representative from the City for the VLAWMO Board and served as Secretary-Treasurer. Marty Long has stepped in to replace Ackerman to the Board. Due to his resignation, a new Board member is needed to fulfill the Secretary-Treasurer role. Jones stated that he currently serves on both the Policy & Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee. After 2014, he will no longer serve on the Finance Committee. Long asked how much time is required. Stephanie said she will request the Treasurer to come in a few times a year to

sign checks and then come in once per year for a budget meeting. Long said he would be willing to serve as Secretary – Treasurer.

A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Uzpen to elect Long as VLAWMO Secretary-Treasurer. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**D. Wetland Conservation Act: Request for Wetland Replacement Plan approval**

The proposed project includes plans for the extension of City Center Drive to the north and east of the existing County Road E and Willow Lake Blvd intersection in Vadnais Heights. The demonstration of wetland impact avoidance and minimization in the application follows the sequencing process of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) and the federal Clean Water Act. These procedures require that projects that may result in the draining or filling of wetland habitat should demonstrate avoidance and minimization of such impacts. Original road alignment impacted 22,737 SF of wetland. This was reduced through the purchase of adjacent land by 3122 SF. Wetland impacts that cannot be feasibly avoided or minimized must be replaced by compensatory mitigation.

The proposed project will result in 19,615 SF of permanent impact to wetland habitat for construction of the extension of City Center Drive. Under the Wetland Conservation Act public road banking credits are allowed for existing public road projects, but not for new public road projects.

The WCA Technical Evaluation Panel has advised VLAWMO that wetland banking credits in Anoka County are not acceptable for wetland mitigation of impacts in Ramsey County.

Current VLAWMO policy is to mitigate on site for wetland impacts, if this is not possible are there any off site locations within VLAWMO for mitigation which may include a banking site within VLAWMO or mitigation on other property owned by the applicant. Under VLAWMO policy banking credits are the third option if on site and off site mitigation is not possible.

Due to the unique circumstances presented with this project and the need for the public road VLAWMO staff does not believe this will set precedence for future wetland impact applications.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the City Center Drive Extension wetland plan application with the out-of-watershed banking due to the unique constraints of this public road project. The Decision will be contingent on acceptance of a wetland banking site within major watershed 20-Mississippi River (Metro) bank service area 7 <50%, if no banking site credits are available in major watershed 20-Mississippi River (Metro) banking site must be in the same county or wetland bank service area (7, <50%) as the impacted wetland.

A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Long to approve the City Center Drive Extension wetland plan application as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**E. Policy & Personnel Committee**

1. Staff step classification system with market based ranges

The Board directed research into how to retain staff in a method comparable to other watersheds. The Employee Handbook states under section 4.7 Salary Determination: “The Watershed will generally compensate employees based on the Watershed and general economic conditions, competitive market practices, employee performance, and other factors.” The PPC met in December and in April to discuss how to compensate employees based on the description in the Employee Handbook.

***The PPC recommends approval of a three-step classification system for all jobs except the Administrator: Program Manager, Water Resources Manager, and Communications &***

**Education Program Manager.** *The PPC recommends the salary range for the Steps be tied to the most recently available salary survey and analysis reports.* This will allow staff to have documented progress in their job area even though they may have the ‘same job’ for several years. Many public and private employers use this system including other watersheds. Generally there is a salary range attached to each Step of the Job description. Higher steps will have increasing skill, experience, and capability. The salary ranges on the attached Step system would be effective until updated. The current numbers are based on a salary survey and analysis done by Noah and Associates for three neighboring watersheds, dated September 2013. The Grade levels are based the Salary survey report, grade 4 indicating an Administrative assistant through grade 12 for the Administrator. All VLAWMO positions are professional level and start at grade 6 or above.

**Market Adjustment.** The salary survey on which this is based utilized data from 6 Twin City metro area watersheds of varied sizes, State govt., non-profit, for-profit organizations and city/county govt. **The PPC recommends approval of the market ranges as listed below to be effective as of July 1, 2014. Up to \$25,000 of funding for 2014 will from VLAWMO General Fund (reserves):**

**VLAWMO Step classification table 2014 - 2015**

Job Title	Step 1	Step II	Step III
Experience years	0 - 2	3 – 9	10+
Communications and Education	\$37,800 - \$56,800	\$46,400 - \$69,600	\$53,600 - \$80,400
Water Resources	\$37,800 – \$56,800	\$46,400 - \$69,600	\$53,600 - \$80,400
Program Manager	\$53,600 - \$80,400	\$59,400 - \$89,200	\$68,500 - \$102,700
Administrator - No Steps		\$84,800 - \$127,200	

Increased costs in 2015 are anticipated to be \$55,000. The impact to the 2015 budget is somewhat buffered by reducing some ‘cushion’ in VLAWMO’s largest single budget category and by reducing the intern expenses by going to a half time position. The 2015 Budget would need to be increased by \$44,000.

Actual market adjustments to current salaries range from 17% - 26% for the four different job positions. Should the Board authorize the market adjustment, salary ranges should be established by a reputable market survey. The Administrator is charged with establishing the appropriate salary within that range. The Administrator will use criteria such as the following to evaluate step classification and performance to establish the salary:

- Knowledge required by the position
- Supervision needed to perform duties
- Guidelines needed to perform duties
- Complexity of tasks or processes needed to carry out duties
- Scope & effect. How much do the tasks inform or affect other projects, programs, staff ability to complete their work, VLAWMO interactions with other agencies and partners.
- Personal contacts enable the work of the individual, other staff & the work of the watershed.

**Total market adjustment cost for Market adjustment recommendation:**

- 2014: \$25,000 would need to be transferred from reserves
- 2015 Budget: \$300,500 (22%) increase over 2014 to bring VLAWMO pay scale to market.

**Half step Option:** The PPC considered and the Board could also consider instituting the market adjustment in two phases. Phase 1: ½ of the market adjustment to be effective July 1, 2014. Required transfer from reserves, \$13,000. Phase 2: the full market adjustment would be instituted January 1, 2015 with an increase in the Payroll and Employer Liability of \$55,000.

DISCUSSION: Jones stated this change is very important to him because the employees we have are important and are being underpaid. To have an employee leave would be a big hit to the organization and it would cost a lot to bring in someone new. Long stated that he would like to include the performance of the employees in determination of the steps. Johannsen stated that it would be up to the Administrator to determine if the employee would be meeting certain performance standards. It will be up to the Administrator to determine the level for each employee. Stephanie said there was a request for guidance for how an employee can move through the steps and that will be something that gets flushed out via the PPC and presented to the Board at a later date.

It was moved by Jones and seconded by Uzpen to approve the market adjustment pay change for VLAWMO staff and that the Administrator will determine each staff person's rate of pay and step classification. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

2. Floating holiday consistent with Vadnais Heights

It is requested that the Board approve that VLAWMO staff receive the same floating holiday as Vadnais Heights City Staff. For 2014, that floating holiday will be Friday, December 26. The following language would be added to the Employee Handbook under 5.3 Holidays. Official holidays of the Watershed are: "Floating Holiday (Established annually)".

A motion was made by Long and seconded by Jones to approve giving VLAWMO staff the same floating holiday as Vadnais Heights City employees. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

3. Data Practices

The PPC directed the Administrator to contact the VLAWMO counsel to develop appropriate data practices policies and any necessary Tennyson warning documents. These will come to the Board at the June meeting.

**F. Preliminary 2015 budget report from the Finance Committee**

Johannsen stated that the Finance Committee met this week. There would be a small increase to the SSU fee to finance the market adjustment changes. The report is just for review and will be approved in June.

**VI. Report from the Chair**

**VII. Administrator's Report**

**VIII. Director's Report**

Jones mentioned that a senior living facility (with 2 raingardens) will be going in on Highway 61 and as part of their development plan with the City, he would like to encourage them to do more water quality improvement if possible and have VLAWMO engage with them. Jones also wanted to encourage the discussion about VLAWMO pursuing their own wetland bank. Stephanie stated that she has had some discussion with North Oaks Company about a property but it was small and therefore not cost effective to pursue a wetland bank. Johannsen stated all Board members should check with their respective Cities about whether there are any potential sites.

**IX. Next Meeting – June 25**

**X. Public Comment**

Mary Peterson introduced herself to the Board and wanted to state that she enjoyed being part of the Strategic Planning Workshop (held before the Board). Peterson has been with BWSR since 1994 and worked in the southern part of the State until the last couple of years when she moved to the Metro Office. Peterson is the Board Conservationist for Ramsey, Dakota and Scott Counties. Any BWSR programs that aren't "wet" (meaning those that deal with Wetlands) are ones that she would represent for VLAWMO. She took part in the VLAWMO tour last summer and got to learn a lot about VLAWMO. As we move forward, she will be working with us on our next 10 Year Watershed Plan and will be our BWSR contact. She offered her assistance and help on any BWSR issues. She praised staff for the efforts on the Grant Review conducted this winter.

**XI. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Long & seconded by Jones to adjourn at 8:24pm. Vote: all ayes. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.