

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
March 9th, 2022
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Jesse Farrell	Chair, Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Vice Chair, Gem Lake (GL)
Bob Larson	Tresurer, North Oaks (NO)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Absent: None

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff); Rachel Olm (Houson Engineering), Justine Rowe, (SPRWS), Ed Shapland (Watershed Action Volunteers/CAC), Nick Ouski (City of Vadnais Heights), Patricia Orud (NOHOA).

I. Call to Order

Chair Jesse Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:00am

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Larson to approve the February 8th, 2022 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (Feb 9th, 2022)

It was moved by Huntrods and seconded by Larson to approve the February, 2022 meeting minutes, as presented. Vote: all eye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for March

Belfiori presented the Finance report for the month of March as included in the March TEC packet. Belfiori noted unique items for this report includes the audit, work on strategic direction process and the Birch Lake vegetation restoration, and Adaptive Plant Management consultant work. Staff recommended approval of financial report.

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Larson to approve the February Treasurer's Report and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

B. Discussion on draft Partnership Project Planning Table

Belfiori introduced the draft strategic plan table and also reviewed the strategic discussion with the Board at their January Workshop. Belfiori described trends for what VLAWMO has invested in since 2017, and observed that current budget funding covers a better balance of multiple priority issues than it did in the past. Olm (Houston Engineering) presented the results of the Board survey as outlined in the TEC packet presentation.

Farrell noted White Bear Lake groundwater issues in recent years and the general raised public concern, and asked how groundwater ties into the definition of what WMO's does. Belfiori explained that groundwater has multi-management governance, with many state and higher-level entities. Currently, watersheds around the Metro are varied between not being as involved due to the existence of many entities already involved, or to create another layer of involvement. The groundwater issue are further divided into quality and quantity, each with their own regulations. Belfiori expected a possible increase in VLAWMO's focus according to the Board's input in January particularly related to groundwater quantity. This could include cost-share efforts for irrigation related items.

Phil introduced the draft table of projects. Summarized that meetings / discussions from all 10 entities is included in the table. Reviewed rough draft possible partnership projects listed on the table per each subwatershed as was contained in the slides in the packet.

- Gem Lake- no comments
- Lambert Subwatershed – no comments
- Goose Lake Subwatershed- no comments
- Birch Lake Subwatershed – no comments
- Gilfillan-Tamarack-Black- Wilkinson-Amelia – no comments
- Pleasant-Charley-Depp Lakes – no comments
- Sucker-East and West Vadnais Lakes – no comments

Belfiori described the 7 steps that the strategic plan table will go through before it becomes finalized within the VLAWMO watershed plan amendment.

Farrell asked about White Bear Lake augmentation, or sometimes referred to as aquifer recharge, and inquired about whether lakes should be fed with water outside of their natural watershed. He noted that this comes along with emerging surface water issues such as pharmaceuticals and micro-plastics, and that these emerging contaminants could accumulate in a lake that doesn't have an equal outflow. Belfiori confirmed that augmentation strategies could create possible complications, including higher risks for aquatic invasive species, infrastructure, hydrology, and landowner impacts along the route, among others.

Phil summarized the presentation noting that the costs and dates associated with the possible partnership projects in the draft table are very rough and will change. He also noted that the draft table identifies rough estimated project costs upwards of 5 million or even a bit more and that VLAWMO cannot do it on their own and need the Partners to make many /most of these projects happen.

Tessier expressed an interest and support for partnerships with local golf courses. She also asked why groundwater quality and quantity were grouped together if they are two different topics. Belfiori noted that the original 2017-2026 VLAWMO water plan had them grouped together, but that was further discussed by the Board at the January, 2022 workshop.

Farrell commented that local flooding funding appears to coincide with years of high water levels and record precipitation. Farrell supported a strategy that strives for a sustainable, consistent approach to flood and drainage management, including efforts conducted in dry years.

It was motioned by Huntrods and seconded by Farrell to recommend to the VLAWMO Board /Board Subcommittee that the attached draft table generally captures a high-level plan for partnership projects for the VLAWMO. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

C. Annual Report Highlights

Voss presented a summary of the 2021 Annual report to the TEC. He noted this is a requirement to submit annually to State agencies. He summarized the highlights to 2021 cost share program, 2021's project partnerships, Lambert Creek maintenance from the fall of 2021, MS4 support provided by VLAWMO to its member communities, and the letter to the public from the Administrator.

It was motioned by Tessier to approve and seconded by Larson to approve the draft 2021 annual report. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

D. Water Monitoring Report Highlights

Brian Corcoran provided a presentation of highlights of the report including identifying that he monitors 15 lakes and 6 streams each year. He summarized which type of samples he collects and which pollutants are tested. He also does some project specific sampling such as the recent spent lime demonstration project. He presented the TSI data and explained the purpose and which lakes are of highest and lowest quality waterbodies. He noted little noticeable change year to year in which lakes are higher and lower quality. Farrell identified that most lakes TP data appears to be slightly improving from 2016 to 2021. Corcoran noted that 5 years is a short-term trend. Voss then presented summary graphs for the public related to the big four pollutants.

E. Update on VLAWMO Board of Directors officers for 2022

Belfiori updated the TEC on the Board of Director appointments that resulted from the February 2022 Board meeting.

V. Programs

A. Education & Outreach

1. 2022 WAV and education program outline

Voss provided a presentation on the 2022 public education work plan. He summarized the topics of guest speaker presentations planned this year. He also highlighted a partnership planned with RCWD and RWMWD related to raingarden maintenance. He also discussed workshop from Blue Thumb. New this year is Watershed Care Calendar, which he noted is part of the MS4 program.

VI. Projects

A. proposed 319/Wilkinson BMP update

Belfiori outlined the 319/Wilkinson Lake actions approved by the Board in February, 2022. These include pursuing site investigation with consultants, project access and maintenance agreement with the landowner and a grant agreement with the MPCA, among others.

B. Sucker/East Vadnais Lake SLMR

Belfiori outland the draft East Vadnais SLMR, outlining watershed features, in-lake features, and possible best management practices identified in the report. Staff recommends approval of the SLMR report.

It was motioned by Duxbury and seconded by Huntrods to approve the draft Sucker/East Vadnais Lake SLMR. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

C. Lino Lakes Lake Amelia study update

Belfiori explained the VLAWMO is partnering with the City on a study of possible future restoration opportunities in the area upstream of Lake Amelia.

D. Biochar and BWSR amendment update

Belfiori explained that the proposal is to create a biochar bench at Whitaker Pond. Two grants are proposed to be incorporated into some of the project funding including the 319 grant and the BWSR WBF grant.

E. Aquatic Plant Management Board position update

Belfiori provided an update from the January, 2022 Board of Directors meeting concerning the Board's position on aquatic plant management. These were provided in the TEC packet, and read as follows:

- Lead or partner to conduct aquatic plant monitoring and/or education

- Lead or partner for in-lake treatment/removal of Curly-leaf pondweed for water quality benefits as they align with the priorities of the VLAWMO Capital Improvements and Programs Plan.
- Technical support and/or partner for management of other aquatic invasive species (AIS) besides Curly-leaf pondweed
- Lead in-lake treatment/removal of other AIS to support ecological health and/or water quality on a project-by-project basis
- Lead or partner on native-plant introduction to support a desirable native-plant community as determined by best available science

This role precludes APM for recreation benefit and assumes that financial participation will be decided based on available budgets.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Vadnais Heights: Farrell introduced a new City staff member, Nick Ouski, who will be working with the City's engineering department. One of the new potentials based on Nick's experience is to include drone visuals to enhance communications.

Belfiori announced that VLAWMO's vacant position has been filled and the new staff member will be present at the next VLAWMO TEC meeting.

VIII. NOHOA

None

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None

XI. Public Comment

None

XII. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting April 13th, Next BOD meeting April 27th.

XIII. XII. Adjourn

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Larson to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.