



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 April 26, 2017

Attendance	
Dan Jones, Chair	City of White Bear Lake
Jim Lindner, Vice Chair	City of Gem Lake
Bob Kermes (<i>alternate</i>)	White Bear Township
Marty Long	City of North Oaks
Terry Nyblom	City of Vadnais Heights
Stephanie McNamara	Administrator
Kristine Jenson	Program Manager
Brian Corcoran	Water Resources Manager
Nick Voss	Education & Outreach Coordinator
Tyler Thompson	Water Resource Technician

Others in attendance: Chris Knopik, Liz Towne (Clifton Larson Allen LLP), Greg Wilson (Barr Engineering), Della Young (Young Environmental Consulting Group), Margaret Behrens & Lena Buggs (Ramsey Conservation District), Mark Graham (City of Vadnais Heights Engineer & TEC Chair); Mary Peterson (BWSR); Diane Gorder (NOHOA)

Absent: Rob Rafferty, City of Lino Lakes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm by Chair Jones. A quorum is present for the meeting.

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Long and seconded by Lindner to approve the agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from February 22, 2017

A motion was made by Lindner and seconded by Jones to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2017 Board of Directors Meeting. Vote: two aye (Jones, Linder); 3 abstain (Long, Kermes, Nyblom) Motion passed.

IV. Technical Commission Report to the Board

A. Activity Summary

Mark Graham presented the TEC Report to the Board and offered to answer any questions. Jones thanked Graham for stepping up to Chair the TEC.

B. April Financial Report

Report submitted to the Board by Stephanie. Projects are now starting to kick in so expenses are starting to show. Otherwise income and expenses are as expected.

V. New Business

A. 2016 Audit Report – Chris Knopik and Liz Towne, Clifton Larson Allen LLP

The auditors gave a presentation regarding the 2016 Audit Report. VLAWMO was given an “unmodified opinion” which is the best result for an audit. They provided comments on a few relatively minor issues that will be addressed:

- They also noted that the fund balance policy was out of compliance with the VLAWMO policy – it is lower than what is desired.
- Additionally, VLAWMO does not have an out-of-state travel policy. The travel policy will be discussed later in the meeting.
- The auditor also suggested that VLAWMO should be doing succession planning to ensure that the agency continues to operate well should someone retire or leave.

Jones stated that having the fund balance at 8% is a challenge but a few years ago we were at about 80% and were told to bring it down. Stephanie stated that one of the reasons for the increase in Storm Sewer Utilities fees was to be able to fund budget while also having the proper amount of funds in our reserves. We had been drawing from reserves for the last few years to bring it down and now it is time to find the right balance. It was moved by Linder and seconded by Long to accept the 2016 Audit Report. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

B. 2016 Annual Report – Nick Voss

Nick presented the annual report to the Board, summarizing the efforts made by VLAWMO in 2016. This report will be sent to the MN Board of Soil and Water Resources, as well as other municipal partners.

Jones asked the other Board members if they would be interested in having a VLAWMO staff member come to their respective municipalities to present our annual report and discuss current activities. Lindner and Long stated they felt it would be helpful. Jones said to ask staff about doing that.

Jones praised Nick on the report and the visuals used to convey the information.

It was moved by Linder and seconded by Long to accept the 2016 Annual Report. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

VI. 2017 Work Plan

A. Project Reports and action

1. Goose-Wilkinson study update – Greg Wilson, Barr Engineering and Della Young, Young Environmental Consulting Group

Greg Wilson and Della Young presented an update on the study they have been conducting to determine the next best steps for nutrient reduction in Wilkinson and Goose Lakes.

Greg reviewed the past studies that were done on the lakes and analyzed them with information obtained since the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study.

Della discussed the charrette exercise that was conducted earlier in the year which provided an opportunity for stakeholders and staff to talk about the lakes, the recreational use of Goose Lake, fish and aquatic plant concerns, and water quality standards. Another meeting was held with BWSR, DNR, and PCA to discuss concerns and options for the lakes.

Greg discussed gaps in data which has required more investigation and difficulty in getting meetings schedule which has pushed the schedule of this project back but they plan to have their report ready to present at the May TEC meeting.

The report will describe existing BMPs and discuss operations and maintenance of BMPs with a map identifying them, as well as outfall areas that could use stormwater treatment. Jones stated that he wonders if Goose can be repaired and at what cost, and then if we don't address it, what sort of "punishment" we would face.

Greg summarized some of the scientific findings he has found thus far. They used modeling to confirm that about 80% of the phosphorus source in East Goose in 2016 was internal loading and 20% stormwater inputs. They then analyzed how the installation of BMPs in the subwatershed would affect the phosphorus. If the load from the subwatershed was reduced 50%, the levels of phosphorus would be nearly the same. When analyzing if we could make an 80% reduction in internal load, it made a large effect on phosphorus. An alum treatment would technically give you the 80% reduction. Thus East Goose Lake shows that it is very dependent on internal load input. West Goose Lake is fed by East Goose Lake and the modeling is showing that 1/3 is internal, 1/3 is stormwater input, and 1/3 is East Goose input. Therefore addressing the internal input at East Goose would have a positive effect on West Goose but there would still need to be treatment for West Goose.

For Wilkinson, he feels the TMDL didn't account for some of the subwatershed inputs and he will continue to look at the inputs to the north of the lake.

At this point, he foresees recommending chemical treatment to East Goose and address untreated runoff during redevelopment. For West Goose, a lot of it hinges on the East Goose input and to analyze untreated stormwater corner of the lake. For Wilkinson, he would like to further assess sources from the subwatershed and to assess the efficacy of the fish barrier to keep the rough fish out.

Jones thanked Greg and Della for taking the time to come out and make the presentation.

2. Sucker Channel restoration project JPA consideration – Kristine Jenson

Kristine has been working with Ramsey County Parks (Parks) for the last few years to pull together a project to restore the deteriorating channel entering Sucker Lake. This project has 4 partners: VLAWMO, Parks, St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS), and Ramsey Conservation District (RCD). After many iterations, we have arrived at a plan and joint powers agreement (JPA) that all parties support. VLAWMO has budgeted \$65,000 to this project. A portion of this was spent in the feasibility and early designs of the project. The rest of VLAWMO's funds will go towards the native buffer installation along the channel, a match necessary for the Clean Water Fund Grant received by RCD, educational signage, and 4 years of buffer maintenance. Parks is paying costs upfront and will bill VLAWMO for our portion. The project is expected to begin this fall and the planting portion may have to wait until spring 2018.

Staff recommends approval of this proposal.

It was moved by Linder and seconded by Long to approve the Sucker Channel JPA and authorizes the Board Chair and the VLAWMO Administrator to sign the documents. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

3. Lambert Creek Koehler restoration project – Brian Corcoran

Brian reported that the Koehler restoration project along Lambert Creek is nearing completion. This project included streambank stabilization, erosion repair and protection, and the installation of a drop structure. The final activities this spring include some grading work, additional erosion blanket, and plantings.

4. Whitaker Treatment Wetlands – Brian Corcoran

The Bacterial Treatment Wetland Pilot Project is moving forward quickly and construction is scheduled to begin the first week of October. The engineers will be sending 85% complete plans and spec sheets for the project on May 5th for staff and Township review along with bid documents and 100% plans ready to go out May 19th. Staff is asking for authorization to proceed with the RFP for the project construction on May 19th so the Board will be able to choose a construction contractor at the June 28th Board meeting.

Jones stated that when this project is completed, we need to make sure that we give a lot of praise to White Bear Township for their partnership on this project.

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Kermes to authorize staff to proceed with and RFP for project construction. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

5. Pennington Place Delineation – Brian Corcoran

With the back-to-back significant storm events that we have been experiencing lately, Lambert Creek/Ditch 14 has been flooding residents' backyards near Pennington Place in Vadnais Heights. The section in question is just upstream from Edgerton St. in Vadnais Heights, in the Lower Lambert Lake area. This section of ditch is wetland and was historically a lake. Fill was most likely brought in to construct the housing development. The houses are not flooding, but backyards along the Creek are. Residents believe that this section of ditch is silting up and the down trees in the ditch and culvert/storm water drains are aiding the problem.

At the October 26, 2016 Board meeting staff were directed to conduct a delineation of the wetlands along Pennington Place at a cost not to exceed \$5000. Staff sent an RFP out to 4 delineators and posted the RFP on the website. Four proposals were received for delineation services:

Midwest Natural Resources - \$1500

Kjolhaug - \$1950

Sambatek - \$1300

Earth Science - \$3536

The delineation would both address jurisdiction of wetland, along with knowing the exact boundary of the wetland into residents' yards. This information is crucial to moving forward on what can be done, if anything, to address the residents' concerns. Once this preliminary step is completed, we hope to have a better idea on what the next steps could be. A feasibility study on this section of creek could be undertaken to determine possible options and costs that may keep the yards more dry. Some possibilities may include dredging this section of the creek, building a berm, including drain tile behind the berm, raising residents back yards, and meandering creek/ditch through wetland.

TEC and Staff recommend the Board accept the proposal from Sambatek to perform the delineation.

Nyblom asked if the elevation of Lambert Creek is high or if it is just a perception. Corcoran said we haven't done elevation studies. He also stated that the creek could have silt within it however all the culverts are flowing well whenever staff has checked on them. Brian stated the neighborhood was built in a floodplain/wetland so the issues are not a surprise. Their homes aren't getting water in them but the backyards are wet. The homeowners would like to put more fill in their backyards to raise them up and thus the delineation would determine what activities could occur and where. Stephanie mentioned the installation of the weir to create Lambert Lake in 2004 was meant to slow the flow of water which also allows for more particles to deposit.

It was moved by Nyblom and seconded by Lindner to approve the bid from Sambatek to complete the wetland delineation at Pennington Place for an amount not to exceed \$1300.

Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Program Activity

1. Monitoring & Analysis – Brian Corcoran & Tyler Thompson

Year 4 of Bacteria Sampling

We will be doing our last year of the Bacterial Sourcing Study. We will concentrate on the Goose Lake and Whitaker subwatershed during wet weather conditions. This will complete our E. coli sourcing study and the results of the 4-year study will be presented in the winter of 2018.

Automated Sampler Location

Tyler discussed the plan for the automated sampler in 2017. In concert with VLAWMO's efforts to identify projects in the Birch Lake subwatershed, staff will be installing the automated sampler to monitor storm flow into Birch Lake. The sampler, new in 2016, will be installed at the intersection of 4th St and Otter Lake Rd to take storm samples from the wetland on the northeast corner of the intersection. This wetland takes stormwater input from further east down 4th St, and north from Otter Lake Rd, and eventually outlets into a storm sewer under this intersection and flows into Birch Lake, one of VLAWMO's top water quality lakes.

The 4th and Otter wetland is the most likely location for a retrofit project. Installing the automated storm sampler in this location will give a baseline for nutrients and flow exiting the system to Birch Lake during storm conditions, and could be used for future project design.

2. Education and Outreach – Nick Voss

A Community Blue Grant request has been received for the White Bear Water Symposium via the White Bear Lake area school district. This even is planned by the City of White Bear Lake and the school district. They are requesting \$700 to be used towards an educational theater

presentation. Funds would be used for the direct costs of the presentation as well as for the cost of food. They have matching funds which exceed the grant requirements. Staff recommends approval of this grant.

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Kermes to approve the Community Blue Grant in the amount of \$700 for the White Bear Lake School District. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Nick invited the Board to help staff the VLAWMO booth at upcoming community events.

Information regarding the events were included with the staff memo.

3. Landscape Grant Program update – Kristine Jenson

The 2017 season of the Landscape Grant 1 program is off to a great start. As of the April Technical Commission meeting, we have approved 5 grants for homeowner projects and one rainbarrel grant. Four grants were considered in April alone! As of right now, there is about \$10,000 left in the program and there is a lot of interest from homeowners to apply, especially after our successful raingarden workshop on April 12. The native plant workshop on May 10 will likely produce more interested applicants.

C. Operations and Administration – Stephanie McNamara

1. Landscape Level 2 policy update

Given the growing interest and the potential for substantial water quality improvements for the grant program funding the committee is recommending that the funding continue in at least the current level for 2018. They would direct staff to continue with the current Landscape 2 guidance for 2017 and spread the available funding (\$30,000) to generate the most effective projects possible. This could mean partial funding of more than one project. They would further direct staff to develop a prioritization screening and available funding matrix for consideration by the Board later this year, to be available for use on the 2018 projects. The screening should considered multiple parameters including connectivity to water bodies, contributing drainage area characteristics, volume reduction, erosion & sediment control, wildlife habitat and public outreach.

Jones stated that a few years ago it was decided that VLAWMO needed to start implementing high quality projects and that the low cost SSU fees are likely not going to be possible in order to get these installations in the ground. So putting our money in the ground is what is important and should be supported.

2. Out of State travel policy

The 2016 audit has one legal finding regarding the lack of an out of state travel policy. No one from VLAWMO has traveled out of state on VLAWMO business but to ensure we have a policy should that occur in the future, it is wise to have it already prepared and approved. Minnesota Statute Ch. 471.661 has the following language:

471.661 OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

The governing body of each statutory or home rule charter city, county, school district, regional agency, or other political subdivision, except a town, must have on record a policy that controls travel outside the state of Minnesota for the applicable elected officials of the relevant unit of government. The policy must be approved by a recorded vote and specify:

- (1) when travel outside the state is appropriate;
- (2) applicable expense limits;
- (3) procedures for approval of the travel.

The policy must be made available for public inspection upon request. Subsequent changes to the policy must be approved by a recorded vote.

The Policy and Personnel Committee considered this issue at their 4/24/17 meeting and have a policy prepared for Board consideration. See below:

Out of State Travel Policy

Adopted by the Board of Directors date: April 26, 2017

Voting record:

*Jones yea, Lindner yea, Rafferty absent, Long yea, Nyblom yea, Kermes yea,
Out of State travel paid for the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
(VLAWMO) will be limited and any VLAWMO funds will be used only if approved
before the proposed travel with a record of approval and all expenses kept on file as
per the records retention policy. The Administrator will approve or disapprove travel
by the staff and the Board will approve or disapprove travel expenses for the
Administrator and members of the Board. Expenditures beyond the budgeted
amount will require Board approval.*

- 1. The approval must specify why the travel is appropriate to the purposes of VLAWMO;*
- 2. Any applicable expense limits; and*
- 3. Any other procedures used in this approval.*

This policy will be available for public inspection upon enactment. Any changes to the policy will be made with a recorded vote.

Jones stated that this policy is for Board of Directors only and that staff will work on a policy for employees.

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Kermes to adopt the out of state travel policy as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

3. Preliminary Budget 2018

Stephanie reviewed the preliminary numbers for the 2018 budget. Assumptions have to be made in regards to some costs and that partners would need to be brought in, along with grants to help pay for capital improvement projects. Jones said that special assessments by the watershed should be investigated further. Stephanie said it is legally possible for us to impose special assessments but we haven't done it before so it would be a new thing to do. Jones asked if we would have any better ideas as to possible grants and funding from partners for some of our projects. Outside funding sources wouldn't be known in time for approving the 2018 budget but we would hopefully have a better idea of the costs for some of planned projects.

Jones stated that other watersheds charge more overall than VLAWMO does. An average homeowner in White Bear Lake that is within one of the other three watershed districts of the area pay between \$70-\$90 per home.

We have been using reserves for about 5 years to help cover our increasing costs and now the SSU fees need to be reflect our goals and plans for the watershed.

VII. Report from the Chair

Jones said he wants to remove the Report from the Chair or from the Directors. Nyblom asked about moving Public Comment up in the agenda. Jones said he didn't have a problem with that but would want them to speak on items relating to the agenda and they would have to sign up. Long said we can put it at the beginning of the meeting and limit them to 3 minutes. Jones said lets table this topic and readdress it at the next meeting. He thinks we could just add "Discussion Item" rather than reports from the Chair, directors or Administrator.

VIII. Administrator's Report

IX. Director's Reports

X. Next Regular Meeting – June 28, 2017

XI. Public Comment

XII. Adjourn

A motion was made by Lindner and seconded by Kermes to adjourn at 9:11 pm. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.