

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
June 10, 2026
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Tom Hoffman	Lino Lakes (LL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS), Ed Shapland (WAV)

I. Call to Order

Chair Ousky called the meeting to order at 8:14 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the June 10, 2026 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (May 13, 2026)

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the May 13, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. June Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the June financial statement as included in the TEC packet. He highlighted expenses from the previous month including lab costs from the return to water quality monitoring, payment from final presentations of the Watershed Management Plan, and consulting fees for the triennial staff salary market survey. Also noted were expenses from the Tamarack alum project and grant reimbursements. Administrator Belfiori recommended approval of the June financial report and payment of the bills.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the June financial report and authorize for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. June TEC Report to the Board

Administrator Belfiori presented an overview of the June TEC Report to the Board. He noted the adjusted Board meeting date of June 17th. He listed key items including the whole city Vadnais

Heights resiliency study, with projects recommended for further study looking ahead to 2027. He stated that the Board will be considering the 2027 budget at their June meeting. Staff recommended approval of the TEC Report to the Board for June 10, 2026.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Vice Chair Tessier to approve the June TEC Report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

V. Programs

A. Update on Rotary Field Day

Hugunin gave an update on the Rotary Field Day, which took place on May 22nd. She reminded the TEC that this field day marks ongoing partnership between the Rotary Club of White Bear Lake, the City of White Bear Lake, and VLAWMO. She noted that this year's event included 3rd through 5th graders. VLAWMO staff led the macroinvertebrate station and supported the Adopt-a-Drain station. Hugunin thanked the partners and volunteers who made this educational day possible.

B. Update on Neighborhood Garden Tours

Hugunin stated that the dates and locations are finalized for this summer's neighborhood garden tours, events featuring projects that have received funding through VLAWMO's grant programs. Tours will take place on June 30th and August 25th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm, with three sites featured per evening. She thanked the TEC and their communities for helping to spread the word about these events.

C. SHG 2026-03 Valdez & Smith Property Restoration Phase 3 Application

Sampedro presented an application for the third phase of a Soil Health Grant application for a large-scale native plant restoration in North Oaks. Sampedro stated that the first two phases of this project will be visible at June's neighborhood garden tour. The phase included in the current application will be the final phase that can be completed in consecutive years per the Soil Health Grant policy.

Sampedro presented photographs from the current project areas, noting where the homeowners are removing buckthorn and replacing it with native plants. She outlined this year's proposal, which will aim to restore 10,000 square feet of property with native plants. Sampedro shared key plant species that will improve habitat and help stormwater runoff soak into the ground. The total estimated cost is \$1368.94, and staff recommend approval of this grant application up to 75%. Staff recommended approval of SHG 2026-03 in the amount of \$1,000 for phase 3.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve SHG 2026-03 in the amount of \$1,000 for phase 3. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. SHG 2026-04 Koehler Turfgrass Replacement Application

Sampedro presented a Soil Health Grant application for a large-scale turfgrass replacement project in North Oaks. Sampedro shared the proposed project's location on approximately 3.5 acres in the direct drainage area of Gilfillan Lake, which is impaired for nutrients.

Sampedro explained that currently, the area has expansive turfgrass. The proposed project will involve removing approximately 16,000 square feet of turfgrass and replacing it with native plants for a prairie. A wide variety of native plants will be included to benefit pollinators and improve water quality. The total estimated project cost, excluding maintenance, is \$14,136. Staff recommended approval of SHG 2026-04 in the amount of \$1,000.

Commissioner Miller stated she has observed that geese have been a problem near this lake, due in large part to the expansive lawns near the lake. She remarked that this proposed project will be a great opportunity to reduce the turf and demonstrate this possibility to surrounding neighbors.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Vice Chair Tessier to approve SHG 2026-04 in the amount of \$1,000. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

E. LL2 2026-01 City of Vadnais Heights Greenhaven Dr. Stormwater BMPs Application

Sampedro presented an application for a Landscape Level 2 Grant on behalf of the City of Vadnais Heights (City) for stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) on Greenhaven Drive. She explained that this project would continue VLAWMO's partnership with the City to install water quality-benefitting BMPs during street reconstruction projects.

Sampedro outlined key elements of the project including seven tree trenches and four filtration swales. Sampedro noted that, while the City is required to provide water quality treatment, nine of the BMPs are providing water quality treatment beyond what is required. These "above and beyond" elements are the proposed grant project.

Sampedro explained that this application is the result of a feasibility study completed by the City of Vadnais Heights in partnership with VLAWMO to explore green streets with the Greenhaven Drive project. For this project, native plants will be added with the tree trenches to provide pollinator habitat and stormwater infiltration. Filtration swales will be seeded depending on homeowner preference.

Sampedro stated that the City received six bids for the project, with the lowest bid for the above-and-beyond project components totaling \$151,906.48. Staff recommended approval of a 90% grant level for the above-and-beyond BMPs up to \$136,715.83 to the Board of Directors at their June meeting.

Commissioner Miller stated that the project looks like a great way of providing shade and lessening heat. It also will offer a good example to surrounding communities.

Commissioner Philip inquired about how trees will be selected for the tree trenches to ensure they are protected from salt. Sampedro replied that three species have been included in the proposal for their salt tolerance and drought resistance. She stated that she can follow up with more information on their selection.

Commissioner Tessier said she noticed a mix of elms and Kentucky Coffee Tree listed on the plans in the packet.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve a 90% grant level for above-and-beyond BMPs up to \$136,715.83 to the Board of Directors at their June meeting. Tessier: aye; Hoffman: aye; Philip: aye; Ousky: abstained. Motion passed.

VI. Projects

A. City of Vadnais Heights LCCMR Proposal Status Update

Sampedro provided an update on the status of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. She stated that the City of Vadnais Heights (City) received word that their proposal for a large-scale project that will improve water quality in addition to reducing water quantity and providing recreation opportunities was approved as an appropriations bill by the Minnesota State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Walz. This will award over 2.8 million dollars for this project. Next steps will include the City's signing of a grant agreement, as well as the City and VLAWMO planning the community engagement campaign. In addition, coordination with potential partners will continue in efforts to generate the cash match needed to fund the full project. An agreement will be developed to clearly distinguish roles between the City and VLAWMO.

B. Consider Resolution to the Board Authorizing WMP

Tanner stated that at the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regular meeting on April 22, 2026, the VLAWMO Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was authorized. Following this authorization, the VLAWMO Board must adopt and implement the Plan within 120 days of the date of the Order, in accordance with MN Statutes 103B.231 Subd. 10. Staff requested that the TEC consider recommending that the Board implement the new WMP. After fully authorized, the completed WMP will be shared with partners.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Vice Chair Tessier to recommend to the Board to implement the WMP by adopting the "Resolution to Adopt the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization's (VLAWMO) Watershed Management Plan" and authorize staff to share the completed WMP with local and State agencies and partners. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Update on 319/Phase 2 Project: Easement Filing Complete

Tanner stated that an article introducing the Phase 2 project was included in a recent edition of the *North Oaks News*. The easement was accepted by the Ramsey County Recorder's Office. The recorded easement was received by VLAWMO staff in the mail and has been shared with project partners.

D. Update on Carp Removal Program: Minor Removals and Status

Tanner shared an update on the carp removal program. Approximately 1,500 pounds of carp (approximately 70 carp) were removed this spring. Staff have checked the barriers to ensure that

native Big-mouth buffalo weren't piling up at the barrier. Once carp spawning occurred and following no new detections of carp at the barrier, VLAWMO staff contacted Carp Solutions when large numbers of buffalo were found upstream at the barrier. CS opened the barrier to allow the buffalo to move back into Pleasant Lake from Deep Lake (above the barrier). Spring removals have been completed for 2026.

E. Consider Rotary Nature Preserve Restoration: Task Order 2

Tanner explained that staff have worked closely with Natural Shore Technologies (NST) to ensure the grant-funded portions of the project are completed within the time parameters of the DNR Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant. The cost for Task Order 2 will allow the project to continue without interruption through the end of the year. VLAWMO staff will request a new task order in the fall to begin in 2027, to facilitate continued adaptive management of the plant community. Staff requested a recommendation to the Board to authorize Task Order 2 with NST in the amount of \$15,299 to allow restoration work to proceed at the Rotary Nature Preserve wetland area through the end of 2026.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to recommend to the Board to authorize Task Order 2 with NST in the amount of \$15,299 to allow restoration work to proceed at the Rotary Nature Preserve wetland area through the end of 2026. All: aye. Motion passed.

VII. Commissioner Reports

None.

VIII. NOHOA

None.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD)

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC meeting: July 8, 2026 at 8:15 am; Board meeting: June 17, 2026.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.