



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

June 24, 2015

ATTENDING:

Jim Lindner	Gem Lake
Rob Rafferty	Lino Lakes
Marty Long	North Oaks
Absent	Vadnais Heights
Dan Jones	White Bear Lake
Ed Prudhon	White Bear Township

Kristine Jenson	VLAWMO Program Manager
Brian Corcoran	VLAWMO Water Resources Manager
Vanessa Strong	VLAWMO Communications & Education Programs Manager
Tyler Thompson	VLAWMO Intern

Also in attendance: Tom Peterson, TEC Representative; Rebecca Carlson, Wenck

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:59 pm by Vice Chair Jones. Quorum is here for the meeting.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

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

**III. Approval of Minutes from April 22, 2015**

A motion was made by Prudhon and seconded by Rafferty to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting. Vote: 3 aye; 1 abstain (Gem Lake). Motion passed.

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

**A. Activity Summary**

Peterson reviewed activities that have occurred since April's Board meeting. Items included:

1. CIP – Sediment cores on Goose had to be rescheduled due to weather. Fall 2015 installation plans for Deep Lk channel are proceeding as is the JPA with partners on Sucker channel (2016).
2. Monitoring – Enhanced chloride monitoring on Birch in partnership with BLID. Spring chloride monitoring;
3. Planning – Annual Report has been distributed with more copies for Water Planning work this year. Water Plan kick off for internal stakeholders more public & agency input coming.
4. Outreach & Education – Raingarden & dragonfly workshops were held as well as 3 community events. New Community Blue educ. Grant has two worthy applicants for BOD consideration in June.
5. We approved 4 Cost Share grants last month and if the two that will be considered in July are approved, all cost share funds will be used up for the year.

**B. June financial report**

The Board reviewed the June Financial Report. Stephanie stated that we are at 26% expended at this point and we will be spending CIP funds later in the year.

Rafferty asked what our rules were for reimbursable items. He thinks we should have a policy for how we handle employee reimbursable items so that we stay on top of our bookkeeping. Kristine stated that staff is good about handing in reimbursement reports monthly. Rafferty said he doesn't see anything unusual but that it would be good to have a policy set.

## V. New Business

### A. Water Plan Update

#### 1. Changes to State Water Plan Rule effective June 2015

#### 2. Timeline for Update

Stephanie said our water plan and JPA will expire in December 2016 and we will need new ones approved by then. Stephanie hopes to have the JPA approved next summer and just roll it into the new water plan.

#### 3. Concurrent JPA update

Our legal description and map don't line up correctly and that will be addressed in the new update. Additionally, old language for how we were funded before is in the JPA which can be updated to accurately reflect our funding structure. Prudhon asked if legal representatives review it. Stephanie said she drafts something and has the Board and communities look at it and they can direct us to have our lawyer review it.

Jones said that he has the utmost respect with Stephanie and hopes that she will pass along her institutional knowledge to the staff and our updated water plan.

### B. Community Blue Grant Request

Vanessa presented two Community Blue grant applications to be considered by the Board. The Technical Commission recommends approval of these two applications.

Application **CB-2015-01 is for the Heritage Outdoor Learning Center**. Heritage Estates Countryside Homeowners Association has an established raingarden with an area to conduct workshops and gatherings. They would like to share, in an educational way, the benefits and information for the development of watershed friendly living through community outreach with neighbors and community organizations. They hope to encourage continued educational opportunities with the focus on the environmental impact of clean water, importance of saving the bees, butterflies, birds and native plants. Deliverables:

- Participatory events/group engagement and involvement = "Raingarden on the Rocks", "Art on the Rocks", and "Reading on the Rocks"
- Educational tools/self-directed learning = Little Free Library, plant signage, garden map
- Publicity & Messaging = promote and advertise grant activities, flyers, t-shirts

Total project cost is \$7250. **Total grant request is for \$4950.**

Application **CB-2015-02 is for Under the Boardwalk: Creating Access and Opportunity to help Improve Tamarack Lake Water Quality**. Tamarack Nature Center would like to build upon VLAWMO's 2013 Floating Treatment Wetland (FTW) project. "Although it is too soon to know the impact of the FTW on improving Tamarack Lake's water quality, the mere presence of the floating island has made a great difference in visitor's awareness and curiosity about the lake itself. This has resulted in more requests for educational programs about the lake, its properties and the life it supports. It also creates an excellent opportunity for students and visitors to participate in long-term monitoring of the lake; collecting, recording, analyzing, reporting, comparing before and after data sets and results."

Deliverables:

- Kickoff event promoting the project across the community and to local partners
- Citizen, youth, and partner engagement in the design and planning
- Boardwalk schematic design, budget, and installation plan developed by environmental education and interpretive design specialist/consultant

- Public informal and formal macroinvertebrate program design (consistent with VLAWMO goals and state education standards)

Total project cost is \$9200. **Total grant request is for \$5000.**

Funding for these grants would come from two areas in the budget. \$5000 is available (and has already been designated for Community Blue grants) in Budget Line 6.4.9. We are requesting that the other grant be awarded with funding available under Budget Line 6.4.5.2 – Project Research and Development. We believe that there is excess funds in that line item which could be used to fund the other application.

**Discussion:** Prudhon asked where the Heritage Outdoor Center is – she explained it is in Vadnais Heights and is part of a townhome situation. Lindner stated that at the TEC felt the funding sources made sense. ***Jones said he would like this to be as a resolution because we are taking money from a different pot. Stephanie said we could create Resolution 03-2015 and include the language as described in the staff memo.***

**It was moved by Long and seconded by Lindner to approve RESOLUTION 03-2015 grants CB-2015-01 and CB-2015-02 with funding to come from line items 6.4.9 and 6.4.5.2. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.**

**Resolution 03-2015  
of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Approving Community Blue Grants CB 01-2015 & CB 02-2105**

**Whereas**, the Board of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization has established the Community Blue Education Grant program in 2015 with \$5000 CIP funding (6.4.9 SLMP/Pilot projects) from the 2014 budget and another \$5000 is available in the Project Research and Development (6.4.5.2), and

**Whereas**, two worthy Community Blue project applications have been submitted and are recommended for approval by the Technical Commission and staff,

**Therefore** be it resolved that the Board authorizes both CB 2015-01 Heritage Outdoor Learning Center development for \$4950 and CB 2015-02, Under the Boardwalk: Creating Access and Opportunity to help Improve Tamarack Lake Water Quality for \$5000 utilizing the above mentioned funds.

Motion made by Long, seconded by Lindner

Vote: Aye: All; Nay: none; Abstain: none.

**C. De Minimis Wetland Conservation Act Exemption Request**

Brian explained that Peter Petrulo, homeowner at 33 Pheasant Lane in north Oaks, has applied for a De Minimis exemption on a type 2 (PEMB/Ax) seasonal flooded basin. This is a 2003sq ft wetland all within his parcel. Wetland has a liner present, installed by previous homeowner prior to 1992, and Mr. Petrulo would like to fill and restore up to 1000 sq. ft. of the wetland. Aerials prior to 1992 show that current wetland had been dug out and deepened to create a pond. TEP visited the site and also reviewed the delineation and agrees on the De Minimis exemption. The Technical Commission discussed the exemption at their last meeting and recommend approval, as do staff.

**Discussion:** Rafferty asked if we have allowed this in the past or is this something that will be coming up more in the future. Brian said we have given this sort of exemption in the past but this person is asking to bring the wetland BACK to what it should be so it is a benefit. Stephanie said the way WCA works is

that if they meet the minimum conditions (which this does), they are eligible for De Minimis exemption so if we denied it, they could appeal to the State. Jones, Prudhon, and Rafferty feel we should inspect the site when they are done to ensure it has been done.

A motion was made by Prudhon and seconded by Lindner to approve the De Minimis exemption to fill and restore up to 1000sq ft of wetland at 33 Pheasant Lane North Oaks MN, with the condition that staff certify that it has been done correctly. Vote: all aye. Motion passed

#### **D. Consideration of the 2016 Budget**

Attached is the 2016 budget reviewed by the Finance Committee. Also attached are the 2016 Budget Footnotes and 2014 Accomplishment highlights. You already have the new and improved Annual Report. The Accomplishment highlights are more of a summary for Board and TEC use. Last year's budget and actual figures are available on the budget spreadsheet. This budget is essentially the same as was presented to the Board at its April meeting.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends approval of the 2016 VLAWMO Budget as submitted. We will need to fund some of the Water Plan efforts out of next year's budget.

#### **2016 Budget Highlights:**

- **Revenue.** The *estimated* Storm Sewer Utility (SSU) should stay under \$30 for a single family residential (est. increase of about \$1.13 / yr. or \$0.09/ mo.).
- **Program and operations** budget is higher than last year, largely due to the Water Plan required update (\$45,000) and we are will finish absorbing the market rate salary adjustment approved last year. The increase for Operations & Program is \$79,255 or 13.8 %. A number of items have been trimmed, but it's still a still a significant increase. However, with transfers from reserves the SSU increase is only \$19,255 or 4 %.
- The **biggest single one-time increase is to fund the Water Plan update** which could need up to \$40,000 in 2016. We have \$10k currently saved for this effort. Total Water Plan budget: \$50,000. If we were hiring a consultant to do most of the work it would cost \$80,000 - \$100,000. I have discussed this with the staff and we feel we can significantly decrease that expense by doing large portions in-house. Staff will be working very hard with our consultants to facilitate our stakeholder process, identify priority issues, & rewrite major portions of our current plan. We are using the consulting help in a targeted way. As a result, we are cutting the costs in half. However, the Board should be aware that some other projects may be delayed as staff focuses on Water Plan efforts.
- The **two new grant programs** are funded at a slightly more substantial level in 2016 given early response in 2015. Community Blue education grants (\$20,000) and Landscape Level 2 (greater than \$10K) at \$30,000. This anticipates roughly 2 partners receiving grants in each program. These programs are highly visible, engage the community, leverage other funding & in-kind work and put the money right back to work in the watershed community. We are seeing a lot of excitement growing over this type of program.
- The **Sucker channel project** will roll over funds from this year as well as receive funds from the two partners, the St. Paul Regional Water Service and Ramsey Co. Parks. It is anticipated we may roll over the **Impaired Waters funding** (6.4.6) to fund a larger project, possibly on Goose Lake.

**Discussion:** Rafferty stated that Stephanie has tried to keep the increase in budget and the SSU fee to a minimum by moving some funds from different areas. Jones stated that costs will continue to creep up and that is to be expected. Jones stated that we continue to charge our residents significantly less than other watersheds. Our residents pay about \$30 per single family residential and the closest he could find was Rice Creek charges approximately \$55-\$60. Jones said that to retain staff, they must be paid accordingly and other costs increase for rent, insurance and other costs. Rafferty agrees that retaining staff is very important. Lindner said that if we try to keep things at a 0% increase, there's a cost to that in regards to not being able to do as much and it isn't always good to hold at 0% and then suddenly have a large jump. A smaller, more consistent increase is

better to digest. Jones stated that VLAWMO is run conservatively and we need to continue to reflect that. Long stated that this team does a good job and we have room before we get close to neighboring watershed. Jones said he's thinking in 2017 we will see a bigger increase because we were taking from our reserves to offset the pay increases given to staff to get them in the appropriate pay ranges. Dan stated that the Finance Committee was unanimous to support the budget as presented tonight.

**Resolution 02-2015  
of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Approving the 2016 Budget**

**Whereas**, the Board of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization has considered the 2016 draft Budget as recommended by the Finance Committee, the Technical Commission and the attendant information. The 2016 budget and footnotes are attached to this Resolution, and

**Whereas**, the income and expenses of the for the 2014 budget, exclusive of grant funding received will be \$694,955.

**Therefore** be it resolved that the 2016 Budget, dated 6-24-2015 is approved.

Motion made by \_\_Linder\_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_Long\_\_\_\_\_

Vote:

Aye: 4

Nay: 0

Abstain:

**VI. Report from the Chair** Jones thanked staff and Rebecca for the Water Plan workshop.

**VII. Administrator's Report** None

**VIII. Director's Report** None

**IX. Next Meeting – August 26, 2015**

**X. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Long and seconded by Rafferty to adjourn at 8:39pm. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.