

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes  
March 12, 2025  
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)
Tom Hoffman	City of Lino Lakes (LL)
Beth Artner	White Bear Township (WBT – alternate)

**Absent:** Jami Philip, White Bear Township (WBT); Terry Huntrods, City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

**Others in attendance:** Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff)

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the March 12, 2025 TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (February 12, 2025)**

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the February 12, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. March Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori summarized the March financial statement as included in the meeting materials. He highlighted income from interest received and noted a payment for a large portion of the audit, which will be presented at the April BOD meeting. Belfiori also noted the Storm Sewer Utility as the main source of local funding. The Watershed Management Plan (WMP) is the primary program expenditure this month, with staff currently reviewing a draft of Section 4 of the WMP. Staff recommended approval of the March financial report for payment.

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

**V. Programs**

## A. LL2 2025-01 Charley Lake Condo Association Smart Irrigation Application

Sampedro provided an overview of the first Landscape Level 2 (LL2) grant application of the season. Sampedro showed an aerial view of the proposed project in North Oaks, noting that the condo association previously applied for and was awarded a Soil Health grant also through VLAWMO in 2023 to convert turf grass areas into native prairie.

Sampedro explained that irrigation challenges, high water use, and costly water bills have been primary motivators for the project. As part of this application, the applicant hopes to upgrade their irrigation system to reduce their water usage. Sampedro presented the two bids received by the applicant, noting that the total estimated cost is based on the lowest bid. Staff recommended approval of LL2 2025-01.

Commissioner Miller asked whether VLAWMO had done outreach to HOAs within the watershed and asked how the applicant (an HOA) found out about this opportunity. Sampedro replied that information about these programs has primarily spread through word-of-mouth so far.

Commissioner Artner asked whether residents in North Oaks are being reached out to, as they are getting their water from White Bear Township. Sampedro answered that at this time, VLAWMO isn't reaching out to individual homeowners regarding smart irrigation controllers. She explained that this may be considered for the future, but VLAWMO is currently focused on larger-scale irrigators.

Commissioner Artner noted an interest in working together on this sort of issue and noted this may become more contentious in the future. Sampedro shared VLAWMO would be glad to partner.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve LL2 2025-01 in the amount of 90% of eligible project expenses, not to exceed \$17,887.50 in accordance with program guidelines. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## B. Grant Programs Evaluation Survey

Sampedro and Hugunin gave an update on the development of a survey for previous VLAWMO grantees. They highlighted noteworthy survey responses and explained how the data will be used to inform workshop and resource development for VLAWMO's grant programs moving forward.

Commissioner Hoffman asked how far back the grant program goes. Sampedro noted the program started in 2007. She also identified that the program averaged 10-15 recipients per year.

Overall the Commissioners congratulated staff for an excellent 88% satisfaction rating from survey respondents.

## VI. Projects

A. Update on BWSR Watershed-based Implementation Funding Grant Program

Sampedro shared an update on the BWSR WBIF grant program, sharing that the Board authorized the signing of a grant agreement between VLAWMO and BWSR. She highlighted a few projects that have been discussed as potential sites for receiving this funding, including the Sports Center bioswale project in White Bear Lake, a potential partnership project with the City of Lino Lakes and North Oaks Company, and the Green Streets project with the City of Vadnais Heights. Sampedro explained that VLAWMO will have until 2027 to utilize the funding, and staff is excited to have another funding source to supplement the Landscape Level 2 grant program.

B. Update on two LCCMR Application Proposals

Corcoran gave an update on two LCCMR grant applications, noting that VLAWMO is working with White Bear Township and Vadnais Heights on two separate application proposals. He explained that the White Bear Township application is for a surface water reuse project at Polar Lakes Park, while the application with the City of Vadnais Heights is for a water quality improvement project, trails, and educational features for the land behind the Vadnais Heights City Hall.

Corcoran showed an aerial view of both proposed project sites. He also explained that if the grant proposals are successful, staff will provide updates at a future TEC meeting.

C. Update on CR J WCA Replacement Plan

Corcoran shared an update on the WCA Replacement Plan for the County Road J area in Lino Lakes. He noted that safety improvement projects will have a wetland impact. A wetland replacement permit application was approved by the VLAWMO Board at their February meeting for the Interstate 35E and County Road J Interchange in Anoka and Ramsey Counties.

Commissioner Hoffman shared that the project was pushed back, as it was slated to begin in spring but has been moved to midsummer-early fall, going into next year.

Commissioner Miller asked for more information on banking credits and what they entail. Corcoran explained the concept, citing wetland impacts during development, approval processes, and alternatives for reducing or eliminating wetland impacts.

Commissioner Hoffman explained that banking efforts are highly regulated, with a 12-step process and follow-up processes are precise and in-depth.

Corcoran noted that there will be a project update in the future.

D. Update on Feasibility Study Partnership with City of Lino Lakes and North Oaks Company

Corcoran explained that staff representatives from NOC, VLAWMO, and the City of Lino Lakes have met to discuss the development of a feasibility study investigating BMPs to be located within the proposed NOC development site located in the City of Lino Lakes. NOC

hired ISG Engineering to be the engineers for the proposed development site. Corcoran highlighted VLA WMO and Lino Lakes staff have interest in exploring “over and above” regulatory standards water quality treatment practices to help reduce nutrient loading in Wilkinson Lake.

He shared the approximate proposed location for the BMP as part of the feasibility investigation and shared the three focus areas for BMPs: Regional BMP for stormwater, water reuse, and smart irrigation controllers technology.

#### E. Update on WMP and next TEC+ Meeting

Tanner gave an update on the development on the WMP, noting that staff and HEI continue work on sections 1-4, with intense focus on sections 3 and 4. Tanner shared that section 4 is anticipated to be the focus of an April 9, 2025 TEC+ meeting. The draft section and comment table will be provided at least a week in advance of the meeting. Completed comment tables are requested by April 16 (emailed to [dawn.tanner@vlawmo.org](mailto:dawn.tanner@vlawmo.org)).

### **VII. Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Hoffman shared that the City of Lino lakes is having an open house for the Amelia Lake ditch study done in 2021. Now that the study is done, the City will meet with homeowners/residents to discern whether there is potential for a project to reduce amounts of TSS and TPP that go into Amelia Lake and ultimately Wilkinson Lake.

Commissioner Hoffman also noted that Lino Lakes will be maintaining the west stormwater pond for the I-35E and County Road J interchange project and is looking at doing water reuse for the landscaping around the pond.

### **VIII. NOHOA**

None

### **IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division**

None

### **X. St. Paul Regional Water Services**

None

### **XI. Public Comment**

None

## **XII. Next Meetings**

TEC: April 9, 2025 at 8:15 a.m.; TEC+: April 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.; Board Meeting: April 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

## **XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.