

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
January 8, 2016
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room**

Attending:

Paul Peterson	White Bear Township (WBT)
Jim Grisim	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mark Graham	Vadnais Heights (VH)
<i>Absent</i>	Lino Lakes (LL)
Jim Lindner	Gem Lake (GL)
Chris Mann	North Oaks (NO)

Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Justine Roe (SPRWS); Bob Larson, Diane Gorder (NO Natural Resource Commission)

I. Call to Order Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:31am.

II. Approval of Agenda

Stephanie requested the addition of VI.A.2. Approval of Landscape Level 1 and Maintenance Grant Applications.

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Mann to approve the January 8, 2016 agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Graham to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2015 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented.

Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Grisim had a question about the purchase of an automated sampler in the minutes. There were two options – one is about \$6000 and one is about \$16000. It was not reflected in the minutes which one was approved. The \$6000 one was the piece of equipment approved. Kristine adjusted the minutes to reflect that. Grisim also asked about the additional costs for analysis of the samples. Brian stated it is difficult to estimate how much it will add to the budget because it is based on storm events but each sample would cost about \$100 for analysis. Maintenance costs are also hard to estimate because you don't know if it will break down or what parts will break down. Stephanie stated that this year will be a bit of trial and error as we learn how to use them.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Water Plan

1. Draft Water Plan

Kristine has been working hard on getting a draft of the water plan ready. She had a copy of the document as it stands right now. There are many edits being done and still a lot to complete and add to the plan. A draft will be ready for the TEC to look at for the February meeting. At that time, the TEC will recommend the Board approve it for disbursement to stakeholders to receive comments.

2. Historical Map

Tyler found historical maps and created one for the VLAWMO area. We will include it with the Water Plan. It has sparked some great discussion among staff about the resources documented on the map and how things have changed over the years.

B. 2016 Budget

Stephanie provided a copy of the final budget for 2016 which reflects the carry over amounts approved by the Board at their last meeting. We have a

lot of carry over funds but it will be going towards projects that will be going in the ground as well as the cost for our consultant to work on the Water Plan.

V. Projects

A. Project Updates

1. Sucker Lake Channel Project

Kristine reported that VLAWMO did not receive either of the Clean Water Grants that were submitted to BWSR. RCD wrote an application for the Sucker Lake Channel project but it didn't score high enough for funding. Ann from RCD was going to submit a grant application to the DNR for their Conservation Partners Legacy Grant program. If additional funding isn't found, some parts of the project may need to be cut out. We still haven't gotten an agreement signed between Ramsey Parks, SPRWS and ourselves. Parks has been challenging to work with. Kristine has been consumed with work for the Water Plan but she will talk with Scott Yonke at Ramsey Parks soon to see if we can come to an agreement for the project.

VI. Programs

A. Grants

1. White Bear Montessori – Landscape Level 2 grant

WBMS hasn't submitted their application yet but Kristine has been working with them and plans to have the application up for consideration at the February meeting. She showed the plans for the project and discussed the high points. The project will redo a side of WBMS that currently is a playground. There are many water issues due to grading and water volume from storm events. This project is ambitious and will bring water away from the school and move it to 3 different raingardens on site with the overflow heading towards the existing raingarden in their parking lot. There will be a lot of education for the kids about raingardens and pollinators as a result of this project. WBMS has received a Community Blue Grant for the parking lot raingarden, a LL2 grant for their "Field of Dreams" project and a maintenance grant for their CB raingarden. They have been excellent partners and stewards of their projects. They will likely be asking for \$20,000 which will require the Board's final approval. Kristine wanted to present their plans at this meeting so that the TEC is prepared to make their recommendation to the Board at their February meeting.

2. Grant Considerations

There are two grants up for approval this month. 2016-01 is for Phase 2 of a natural restoration project in North Oaks. They completed Phase 1 last year. They are working with a well-respected design and install firm on this project and the homeowners have been to workshops and are eager to take good care of their new landscaping. Staff recommends approval of their \$2000 request.

Grant 2016-02 is a maintenance grant for the "Field of Dreams" project at White Bear Montessori. They have been diligently working on recreating a prairie on a portion of their school grounds and plan to spend \$5000 this year on maintenance work. The maximum amount for a maintenance grant is \$500. Staff recommends approval.

It was moved & seconded by Lindner & Mann to approve Grant 2016-01 for \$2000 and 2016-02 for \$500. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Education

1. Clean Water MN

A subgroup of Watershed Partners is working on a campaign effort to create water quality messaging that can be used by the Partners. This includes radio ads, web and social media content, high quality pictures depicting water quality improvement behaviors, among other resources. This work dovetails well with the new Education and Communication Plan that is part of the updated Water Plan. They are working with the excellent water resource communications consultant, Eric Eckls from Water Words That Work, LLC to help produce the messages and materials. Partners are asked to help in the funding of this initiative. It will be three years of effort at a cost of about \$100,000 a year. VLAWMO planned and budgeted for \$1000 in 2016 for this year's needs. The money is available in the education budget.

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Mann to provide \$1000 to the Clean Water MN initiative in 2016 for these efforts. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

2. Winter Newsletter

Tyler said the newsletter is ready to be sent but he is trying to reconcile the subscriber list due to our transfer from Constant Contact to Mail Chimp for this service. He hopes to have it resolved today and have it sent out.

C. Monitoring

Brian discussed the 2015 monitoring results for Amelia, Birch and Black Lakes.

Amelia: has been below TP standards for the last 7 years. ChIA had a little spike this year but otherwise has been relatively stable for the last 7 years. In July, all sample sites had a spike in nutrients which could be tied to all the rain we got that month. Chloride levels were below standards.

Black Lake: it is the most isolated lake and it is well below standards for nutrients. It is one of our healthiest lakes. Chloride levels are very low.

Birch Lake: Nutrients are well below the standards and the overall trend shows it going down. Increased chloride sampling for this lake due to the request and funding from the BLID. Results from this year show there isn't a lot of fluctuation for this indicator and it showed a downward trend towards the end of September. Birch Lake levels were higher this year and it continuously discharged to the north so water was moving most of the year. It is well below state standards. Lake levels are tracked for Birch and this year, levels rose a foot higher than when the gauge was calibrated in the spring. Staff also went out in the winter to measure temp, conductivity, and DO levels in 3 spots of the lake due to a fish kill the previous year. DO levels this winter were good and there was no fish kill. The previous winter was relatively mild compared to the year before that. Conductivity levels were higher in the winter versus the summer which could be correlated to lower water temperature and/or the fact that the water isn't flushing out with rain events. Average rainfall for the year was 1 inch above historical levels.

D. GIS Mapping

Tyler gave a summary on his GIS efforts. He is making maps for the water plan and random map requests for various things like the monitoring report. He has also been editing shapefiles and updating information.

VII. Reports

A. Financial Report for January 2016 & Authorization for Payment

It was moved & seconded by Lindner & Grisim to approve the treasurer's report and January payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

Graham stated that in looking at the calendar for 2016, the November TEC meeting falls on Veteran’s Day so we will need to pick an alternative date for that month.

Mann stated the City of North Oaks has asked her to continue her TEC representation on their behalf even though she now lives outside the watershed

IX. St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) Report

Justine reported that they performed maintenance to their filter media at the water plant which will increase their ability to capture contaminants.

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

They will have their first meeting of the year on January 11 and she hopes to be assigned to VLAWMO again this year.

XI. Public Comment

Diane Gorder stated at the NOHOA Board approved a new committee called the Natural Environment Stewardship Committee to assist with the Natural Resources Commission’s work.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: February 12, 2016; Board: February 24, 2016

XIV. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Grisim to adjourn at 8:37am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.