

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes  
July 9, 2025  
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers  
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

**Commission Members Present:**

Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Tom Hoffman	City of Lino Lakes (LL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

**Absent:** Nick Ousky, Vadnais Heights (VH).

**Others in attendance:** Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff); Ed Shapland (WAV), Jim Hauth (City of Vadnais Heights).

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the July 9, 2025 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (June 11, 2025)**

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the June 11, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

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

Administrator Belfiori summarized the July financial statement as included in the meeting materials. He noted income from interest and highlighted key expenditures including one of the final MPCA grant reimbursements for the Wilkinson deep-water wetland project in North Oaks. He highlighted expenses including payments to Carp Solutions for the Pleasant/Deep Lake carp project, a Soil Health Grant reimbursement, and he noted a relatively small amount of project expenses in the month of July. Staff recommended approval of the July financial report for payment.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Hoffman to approve the July financial report and authorize for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

#### B. Update on 2026 VLAWMO Budget

Administrator Belfiori provided an update on VLAWMO's 2026 budget, explaining that the VLAWMO Board approved the 2026 annual budget at its June 25, 2025 meeting. As approved, budgeted planned expenditures for 2026 will be \$2,687,245. Administrator Belfiori thanked Commissioner Huntrods for his involvement in the Board Subcommittee budget discussions.

Administrator Belfiori explained that Subcommittee approval of the 2026 budget was unanimous. He noted that the budget's project categories will evolve over time as they move through feasibility and design, then toward implementation. He highlighted some of the key approved projects in the 2026 budget, as included in the packet materials.

### V. Programs

#### A. SHG 2025-10 Shapland Turfgrass Replacement Application

Sampedro presented a grant application for a turfgrass replacement project in Vadnais Heights. Landowners Ceci and Ed Shapland submitted a Soil Health Grant application for replacing turfgrass with native plantings over an area of 568 square feet at their property. Sampedro highlighted an existing shade garden project that was the result of a previous grant project with VLAWMO. The proposed project will build on the momentum from the first grant project, by expanding the shade pollinator garden and removing the remaining turfgrass on one side of the house and replacing it with Pennsylvania Sedge.

This project will improve pollinator habitat, reduce runoff in an area that drains to an adjoining wetland, then directly to East Vadnais Lake, and provide a significant education and outreach opportunity. Sampedro shared that this project is located within an HOA, with the front yard being highly visible. Furthermore, the Shaplans will be a stop on the August neighborhood grant tours event. Sampedro noted that this proposed project is expected to be installed prior to the August tour.

Staff recommended approval of SHG 2025-10 in the amount of \$1,000.

Vice Chair Tessier noted that this project seems like a good opportunity. She thanked the Shaplans for their involvement with VLAWMO and their good stewardship actions in the watershed.

It was moved by Vice Chair Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the SHG 2025-10 grant application in the amount of \$1,000. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## B. Elmwood Park and White Bear Lake Curb Cut Rain Garden Update

Sampedro shared an update on two recently completed rain gardens as part of partnership efforts with the City of Vadnais Heights and the City of White Bear Lake. The City of Vadnais Heights had a curb cut rain garden project approved for 2024 funding through the Landscape Level 2 grant program and Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Watershed Based Implementation Funding program. The project was planted with native plants this spring. Sampedro noted that the summer newsletter from the City features a writeup on this partnership effort. She also described the City's incorporation of a "story walk" near the rain garden, where residents can learn about pollinators while discovering the rain garden itself.

The City of White Bear Lake's curb cut rain garden project, approved for 2024 VLAWMO funding through the Landscape Level 2 grant program and BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding program, was also completed this June. The five rain gardens are various sizes based on the space available for these projects.

Sampedro explained that the development of educational signage is underway for both locations to highlight the funding sources that made these projects possible, as well as to connect residents with VLAWMO and to provide background information on rain gardens and how they function.

Commissioner Miller asked which street the White Bear Lake curb cut rain gardens are located on. Sampedro responded 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Krech Avenue, and Birch Lake Avenue.

## C. Update on Recent Outreach Activities

Huginin provided an overview of outreach activities that occurred in June, including the first neighborhood garden tours of the season. She highlighted that the June tour was a big success and featured four homeowners. This event was an opportunity to share grant programs with residents. Huginin thanked volunteers Ed and Ceci Shapland for their work planning the tour. The tour highlighted several project types including rain gardens, turfgrass replacement projects, and wetland buffers. The homeowners shared their experience with the grant programs and their projects.

Huginin discussed the Vadnais Heights Ice Cream Social that occurred in June, noting unexpectedly high attendance despite heavy rain before the event. Staff had a lot of conversations with Vadnais Heights residents and made good connections on grant programs and other educational opportunities.

She highlighted a Ramsey County Master Gardeners presentation that highlighted VLAWMO's grant programs. Staff presented to about 70 Master Gardenervolunteers, then the recording of their presentation was shared with the rest of the 400 Ramsey County Master Gardeners. Staff learned they are always looking for more educational opportunities.

Huginin gave an overview of upcoming outreach events, including a North Oaks Garden Club tour date on July 23, White Bear Lake's Marketfest, Vadnais Heights Kids' Day, and the August 19<sup>th</sup> date for neighborhood garden tours.

#### D. SPRWS Wellhead Protection Plan Story Map

Corcoran gave an overview of a new story map and brochure from the St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS), which currently uses the Mississippi River as its primary source water. He explained that SPRWS also operates ten groundwater wells as a secondary source of drinking water. In order to protect their groundwater supply, SPRWS has developed a Wellhead Protection Plan (WHPP).

Corcoran explained that the SPRWS runs a surface water treatment plant on Rice Street that then pumps water through the VLAWMO watershed. He noted that the featured resources are part of larger efforts to inform residents about the need to protect drinking water, and VLAWMO is an important part of spreading the word on this initiative.

Corcoran presented the Story Map, that is available to share with the public, noting key information categories including drinking water sources, groundwater sources, wellhead protection, Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) vulnerability, active wells, unused wells, Class V Wells and links to educational material.

Commissioner Miller asked how often the water utility has to rely on groundwater. Corcoran answered that they used to rely on the groundwater wells more often in the summertime. His understanding is that this process has slowed down, but he believes that they are used occasionally during the year. The wells are located just south of the Vadnais Lakes.

## VI. Projects

#### A. WMP 60-Day Review Update

Tanner provided an update on the continued development of the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan (WMP). The draft plan was successfully sent out, with the 60-day review period set to close on August 25. She thanked the TEC for their work with this process.

#### B. 319 Update: Remaining Scope for Phase 1 Status

Tanner shared that the Board authorized remaining scope of work items to complete the phase 1 project/Wilkinson deep-water wetland.

Tanner noted Natural Shore Technologies (NST) completed a native plant enhancement in the deep-water wetland and Stantec will soon meet with North Oaks Company to continue coordinating a savanna and wetland restoration adjacent to the deep-water wetland. Seed mixes and plant enhancements used at the deep-water wetland have been shared with Stantec so they

can support native plants coming up and work to add similar species where possible. There is also an upcoming meeting to continue investigating what lies ahead for phase 2. All these updates are part of efforts to improve water quality in Wilkinson Lake, which is impaired for nutrients.

#### **C. Rotary Nature Preserve Restoration Contract and First Scope Update**

Tanner shared that the Board authorized and signed the contract for the project and task order 1 at their June meeting. NST is now authorized to conduct work included in task order 1. Efforts this fall will be focused on treating invasives.

VLAWMO staff was invited to give a presentation to the Rotary Club of White Bear Lake in June to give an overview of the project, and attendees were engaged and very supportive of the project.

#### **D. Tamarack Alum Phase 3 Update**

Tanner described the Board's authorization and signing of the amendment for phase 3 of the project, as well as the engineering oversight, monitoring, and inspection scope for phases 3 and 4 at the June Board meeting. Lake Restorations, Inc. (LRI) has shared that their anticipated timeline for the beginning of phase 3 is mid-October. That tentative timeframe has been shared with project partners.

### **VII. Commissioner Reports**

None.

### **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 Meeting: August 13, 2025 at 8:15 a.m.; Board Meeting: August 27, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

## **XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.