



**Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting  
MINUTES – APPROVED**

**Wednesday, March 7, 2018  
2 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Embassy Suites by Hilton St. Paul Downtown  
175 10th Street East, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101**

Board Members in attendance:

Ruth Schaefer, President - Middle Fork Crow River WD  
Duane Willenbring, Vice President - Sauk River WD  
Mary Texer, Secretary - Capitol Region WD  
Craig Leiser, Treasurer - Brown's Creek WD  
Sherry Davis White, Co-Treasurer - Minnehaha Creek WD  
Tim Dritz - Yellow Medicine River WD  
Peter Fjestad - Buffalo Red River WD  
Linda Vavra - Bois de Sioux WD

Board Members Absent: Gene Tiedemann - Red Lake River WD

Staff Present:

Emily Javens, Executive Director  
Ray Bohn, Lobbyist  
Maddy Bohn, Program Manager

Guests Present:

Jill Crafton - BWSR Board Member, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD  
Kevin Bigalke - BWSR Liaison  
Glenn Skuta - MPCA Liaison  
Scott Henderson - MAWA Liaison, Sauk River WD Administrator  
Jackie Anderson - Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD Manager  
Tera Guetter - Pelican River WD Administrator  
Margaret Johnson - Middle Fork Crow River WD Administrator

### Call to Order

President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Willenbring moved, Texer seconded to accept the agenda. Passed unanimously.

Davis White moved, Fjestad seconded to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Passed unanimously.

### Treasurer's Report

Leiser reported that the bank account was successfully moved from Wells Fargo to Bremer Bank. Four people have check signing authority: Schaefer, Willenbring, Leiser and Davis White. Javens and the accountant have online view-only access.

Balances as of March 6:

Savings	\$131,003.50
Checking	\$ 48,325.00

Dues notices have gone out. Historically, most dues are paid by April 1. A handful typically need to be re-invoiced. There are currently 5-6 checks to be deposited between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

Javens requested the office phone bill be set up on autopay using the MAWD credit card. She is currently paying this on her personal credit card and submitting the expense for reimbursement. The amount is about \$32 per month.

Leiser moved, Vavra seconded to authorize setting up this phone bill on monthly autopay. Motion passed unanimously.

Willenbring suggested that we create a policy to set up all regular bills on autopay. No action was taken.

MAWD has gotten a request for a refund for the Legislative Breakfast from a Manager whose son is in the hospital. Our policy is to not authorize refunds within 3 days of the event. There were no other managers available from his watershed to attend so the registration could not be transferred.

Willenbring moved, Dritz seconded to authorize the refund given the extenuating circumstances. Motion passed unanimously.

### President's Report

Schaefer updated the Board on some items that were discussed at the MAWA meeting she attended earlier that day.

### Executive Director's Report

Javens updated the board on several items including the creation of a training work plan, meetings she has attended, and efforts to increase communication with districts. She is currently sending out newsworthy items to administrators and asking them to share with their boards when they see fit. She asked if the MAWD board members would like to be copied on the emails and they thought that would be a good idea.

### Program Manager Report

Maddy Bohn gave the following updates on MAWD events.

Legislative Briefing and Breakfast – The final registration count was at 80 attendees. 76 registered at the pre-registration rate of \$100 and 4 registered at the higher fee charge at \$125 per attendee. The cutoff

for early registration was March 1<sup>st</sup>. A shuttle will be available to take people to and from the Capitol tomorrow. A survey will go out next week to collect feedback on the event.

Summer Tour – The planning committee (M. Bohn, Javens, Claire Bleser from Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD, and Linda Loomis from Lower MN WD) has met three times to work on the agenda and logistics for the event. A “save the date” flyer will be in each folder handed out during the legislative gathering. There will be a MN River barge tour on Wednesday evening, a bus tour on Thursday and educational events on Friday.

Annual Convention – A contract with Arrowwood has been signed to block off the maximum number of rooms available. They agreed to make recycling available at the event after we received complaints about this. We will also ask for staff to be present when using the microphone in the tennis center since it tends to be problematic every year.

### Lobbyist Report

Ray Bohn provided a written and verbal update for this year’s legislative activities.

Leiser moved, Willenbring seconded to support the Clean Water Council’s recommendations on how to spend surplus and returned Clean Water Funds. Motion passed unanimously.

Texer moved, Leiser seconded to support legislation currently underway to streamline watershed planning, implementation and coordination (HF3908/SF3647). Motion passed unanimously.

### 2018 Priorities

Javens presented the feedback she received from the board when asked the question, “what are the three most important actions MAWD must take this year to show our members that the increased dues were worth it?” The board reviewed the list and agreed the top 3 on the list should be what guides the organization this year, in addition to the services already being provided. The top 3 actions were to (1) increase training opportunities, (2) increase communication to membership, and (3) increase visibility and coordination with state agencies and other partners.

Before the meeting, Javens shared details of this effort at the MAWA meeting. Those present thought it would be a worthwhile activity to repeat with their individual boards. They would collect feedback and provide it to the board at a future meeting.

### Committee Next Steps

At the January meeting, chairs were selected for 11 committees. Since that time, it was determined that fewer committees may be more efficient and effective. Javens recommended the board consider holding a workshop in April to look at combining committees and defining the objectives of each one. The board agreed and tentatively set a meeting date of April 6<sup>th</sup> to be held at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud.

### Manual of Policy and Procedures

After the January Board Meeting, Leiser updated the MOPP as directed.

Leiser moved, Vavra seconded to adopt the MOPP with the January 19<sup>th</sup> updates. Motion passed unanimously.

### Sauk River Watershed District Partial Dues Payment

A letter from Scott Henderson on behalf of the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) Board was included in the meeting packet explaining why they decided not to pay their full dues. Per comments from Henderson, the SRWD Board would evaluate the value they received from MAWD in the upcoming months and decide in December whether to pay the balance. They also had issues with how dues were calculated.

Both Dritz and Vavra shared that their boards had discussed the issue of value and decided that they had to give MAWD a chance – probably 2 years before deciding. That to move forward they needed to make an investment and see what the return would be.

Leiser gave a bit of the history of the changes that have taken place. The effort to change MAWD began three years ago when Ray first started talking about retiring. A Strategic Planning Committee was formed comprised of Manager and Administrators. Two surveys were done: one conducted by the Strategic Planning Committee; the other conducted by Cliff Aichinger through MAWD. The Strategic Planning Committee looked at the costs of Administration, Communications, etc., and how to pay for what needed to be done per the Strategic Plan.

The current dues formula was developed by four administrators as the most equitable. Both Leiser and Schaefer reminded Henderson that MAWD is open to ideas and input on the dues structure. The task of revisiting dues should be assigned to a committee during the April 6<sup>th</sup> workshop. Henderson stated that he will take this message back to the Sauk River Watershed District Board.

In addition to the history, Leiser reminded all that anyone who does not pay their dues in full by April 30 is not a member in good standing and as such cannot vote and cannot serve on the MAWD board.

Leiser and Schaefer volunteered to hear the concerns of the SRWD board at a future meeting or workshop. Henderson said the SRWD Board could meet the third Tuesday of next month at 5:00 p.m.

### Salary Survey

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District inquired whether a salary survey could be completed that would include information about benefits. Javens pointed out there was an item in the budget for a salary survey of \$1500, but that would probably not cover the cost of the request. The board agreed this topic should be assigned to a committee for further analysis.

### Partner Update: MN Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA)

Scott Henderson, MAWA President, said he had no further updates beyond what had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

### Partner Update: MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

Kevin Bigalke, BWSR Central Regional Manager, gave an update of activities underway at BWSR. He reported that BWSR and the MPCA have been talking and meeting since last fall on how to better coordinate Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies, Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies

(WRAPS), and One Watershed One Plans (1W1Ps). The next group of recipients of 1W1P planning grants has been selected, to be approved at the March 28<sup>th</sup> BWSR board meeting. They are in the process of accepting work plans for the recipients of the pilot performance-based watershed grants, commonly referred to as “Fund the Plan” grants. There has been significant concern about how funds were distributed in the 7-county metro area, but he emphasized this is a pilot program and parameters of the program can be changed.

#### Partner Update: MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)

Glenn Skuta addressed the board and thanked them for inviting him. The MPCA is interested in having a stronger partnership with watershed districts and welcomes enhanced coordination with MAWD. Javens and he have started meeting regularly to discuss watershed district issues.

He reiterated that MPCA is committed to eliminating or at least minimizing the overlap between TMDL, WRAPS, and 1W1P programs as previously discussed in the meeting. He mentioned that Rebecca Flood, Assistant Commissioner has retired and Shannon Lotthammer, a former watershed district administrator, is now the Assistant Commissioner for Water. Lastly, he mentioned they are currently seeking feedback on the future of Clean Water Act Section 319 grant program. This is a federally funded program through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that focuses on nonpoint source water pollution reduction projects. The EPA is switching the focus to smaller watersheds and there is some flexibility on where funds will be distributed. Grants will be for longer periods of time with less burdensome reporting.

#### Partner Update: Clean Water Council

Pam Blixt, Vice Chair of the Clean Water Council and watershed district representative, distributed the Fiscal Year 18-19 Clean Water Fund and Policy Recommendations Report. The Council is in the process of making funding recommendations for Fiscal Years 20-21 and will be seeking stakeholder input. Ray Bohn and Javens plan to attend stakeholder meetings and will keep watershed districts updated on opportunities to provide input to the Council.

#### Adjournment

Leiser moved, Texer seconded that the meeting adjourn. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.