

**Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, June 20, 2018, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
Country Inn and Suites, 591 W 78th St, Chanhassen MN 55317

**Board Members present:**

Ruth Schaefer, President – Middle Fork Crow River  
Craig Leiser, Treasurer – Brown's Creek  
Mary Texer, Secretary – Capitol Region  
Peter Fjestad – Buffalo Red River  
Tim Dritz – Yellow Medicine River  
Sherry Davis White, Co-Treasurer – Minnehaha Creek  
Duane Willenbring – Sauk River  
Gene Tiedemann – Red Lake River

*All board members and Executive Director Javens were in attendance except Linda Vavra (medical absence with prior notification). Duane Willenbring was late with prior notice.*

**Staff present:**

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

**Guests:**

Kevin Bigalke – MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)  
Glenn Skuta – MN Pollution Control Agency  
Pam Blixt – Clean Water Council  
Scott Henderson – MN Association of Watershed Administrators, Sauk River WD  
Margaret Johnson – MN Association of Watershed Administrators, Middle Fork Crow River WD  
Jill Crafton – BWSR Board, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD  
Jenny Gieseke – BWSR

**General Business:**

President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 12:56 p.m.

Dritz moved; Leiser seconded approval of the agenda. Passed unanimously.

Davis White moved; Fjestad seconded approval of the March 7, 2018 minutes. Passed unanimously.

Leiser presented the financial report. As of June, 42 watershed district members have paid their dues.

As of 6/20 balances are:

Savings	\$236,020.04
<u>Checking</u>	<u>\$ 35,514.83</u>
TOTAL	\$271,534.87

Leiser moved; Tiedemann seconded acceptance of the Treasurer's Report; passed unanimously.

### President's Report, Ruth Schaefer

President Schaefer thanked everyone for their work over the past 6 months. She reminded the board to mingle with all those attending the Summer Tour rather than stick with ourselves.

Javens reinforced this as a way to get people to sign up for MAWD committees. She also said that the legislative committee needs to start its work now in preparation for the 2019 session.

Javens said that we need to refine committee descriptions and roles, especially the Events Committee. This committee oversees and gives strategic direction to but does not plan the Annual Meeting, the Summer Tour and the Legislative Breakfast. Leiser suggested that the Finance Chair be on the Events committee so that the budget accurately reflects any changes. Dritz agreed.

Fjestad moved; Leiser seconded that the president can approve final committee assignments; passed unanimously.

Office Space: the lease with Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD expires in August. They are OK with a month to month agreement. Javens indicated that she needs to be in St. Paul January through May for the legislative session. To that end, when space is available she would like to office at the CRWD offices.

Leiser thinks a downtown St. Paul office is best. He also sees value in being housed with a watershed district. Meetings can be housed at any watershed district office.

CRWD's new building and office space will not be available until after the first of the year. Javens could either stay at RPBCWD or work out of her home until then. Mail could continue to be delivered to RPBCWD until the address officially changes. Ruth will assign people to help with this.

BWSR Board Membership: MAWD can submit 3 names for the Governor to appoint to BWSR. The following names were discussed: Dr. Jay Leitch, Jerome Deal, Harvey Kruger, Layton Gruis, and Wanda Holker.

Texer moved; Leiser seconded that MAWD submit the names of Dr. Jay Leitch, Harvey Kruger and Wanda Holker. Passed unanimously.

Watershed Visits: Board reviewed and made corrections to the list of watershed district board meetings with the goal of having board members visit as many watershed districts as possible starting with our own regions. If a MAWD board member can attend a meeting, please let Emily know. Be sure to write down any specific questions they may have so we can get back to them with answers. Please check with Emily or Ruth for any specific issues a given board may have prior to attending a board meeting.

Emily will be attending a Red River Watershed Management Board Meeting in later summer or early fall.

### Executive Director's Report, Emily Javens

Training has been a top priority recently. Accomplishments include getting watershed district staff into training originally set up exclusively for soil and water conservation districts. She has also formed a partnership with the MN Cities Insurance Trust and Association of MN Counties and our members will be invited to trainings they offer that could be applicable to our members. Finally, Emily is doing a survey to quantify member technical training needs to present to BWSR.

NOTE: we need to make sure administrators are distributing the various emails Emily sends. Some managers are not receiving them, so Emily is investigating directly emailing watershed managers through a subscription service like Mail Chimp.

Emily is tracking all training which includes BWSR Academy and has a running list of ideas for the annual meeting. The MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts would like to co-host a governance training with us next fall.

Emily recently became a trained facilitator for the Watershed Game. There are 4 versions of the game at a cost of \$250.00 each. Texer moved; Leiser seconded to buy all 4 games at \$250.00 each and make them available to other watershed districts upon request. Passed unanimously.

Emily has been meeting with developers of enviroDIY, a program to build your own water quality monitoring equipment. Next step will be to meet with the MPCA to see if there are any road blocks to using the equipment and having the data collected be accepted by the MPCA. Cost to build your own data loggers can be less than half the cost of buying the equipment out of the box. Some watershed districts are already using the equipment and having success with it.

Emily has called several Water Managements Organizations (WMOs) to discuss their interest in becoming members of MAWD. The preliminary feedback suggests they are not very interested unless they get voting rights in the organization.

### Legislative Update, Ray Bohn

See report submitted. Unfortunately, nothing got done this session. The Legislature ignored the Governor; the Governor did not work with the legislature and very few bills were passed as a result.

Minnesota is due to collect 550 million more in taxes this year due to non-conformity with the federal government. A special session could be called to address this issue after the elections this fall but the Department of Revenue can't react that quickly.

In the future, MAWD will need to more proactively engage our membership to tell our story to the legislature. Members should be advised of issues at the annual convention and not wait to hear about them at the Legislative Breakfast.

Next session we will support the drainage workgroup bill as currently written; the salt bill will be brought back. Flood hazard mitigation got \$20 million in the bonding bill that was not earmarked; they will continue in this approach.

The project levy bill was heard in the Senate, but not the House.

Electronic Meeting Attendance – the League of MN Cities already does this and asked us to withdraw our bill. Ray will work with the League's attorneys to get better clarification. BWSR will also work with the Attorney General's office to get an informal opinion. Leiser was asked what they did in Washington County. They had 7 WDs and 1 WMO. All effectively record and broadcast their meetings per county ordinance. Note: if you record a meeting it will be included in the freedom of information act.

Ray and Emily have reviewed the preliminary funding recommendations of the Clean Water Council and will continue to monitor.

### Events Report, Maddy Bohn

225 people are registered for the Summer Tour. Transportation will be provided by 3 Motor Coaches/Buses. Buses will leave for the river tour at 4:30 which will now depart from Harriet Island. Buses will depart for Thursday tours at 8:30. On Friday, the leadership session will be held at 9 Mile Creek. Parking is VERY limited so please take a shuttle. The technical session will be held at Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek, enough parking spaces available to drive your own vehicle. A survey will be distributed after the Summer Tour event to collect feedback.

The contract for the Annual Meeting at Arrowwood in Alexandria has been signed. Dates are November 29 – December 1. The committee will discuss Saturday workshops at its meeting to be held late summer. The abstract submittal invite will go out mid-July.

### MAWA Update, Scott Henderson

Administrators have signed up for the MAWD committees; Region 1 is limited in its participation.

MAWA is taking a technical training needs survey with input due July 3.

MAWA likes the idea of including WMOs as members and suggested that other groups might be included.

MAWA is gathering priorities from its membership including priorities for the MAWD strategic plan. Scott has developed an alternative dues structure that he will present to the Finance Committee. MAWA suggested developing a Managers Code of Conduct. They further suggested that watershed districts partner more closely with the SWCDs so that they know what each other is doing and funding.

### BWSR Update, Kevin Bigalke

Kevin reported on legislative efforts and outcomes. See report provided.

### MPCA Update, Glenn Skuta

The federal section 319 grant program is being revamped. A reporting input survey will be done asking what they should start, stop, or continue doing in terms of content, format and frequency. The new program will likely offer larger grants that can be renewed for more cycles in order to make significant gains in smaller watersheds.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS): half have been completed or are out for public comment. All must be done by 2023 for use in One Watershed One Plans. \$1 million less was allocated this year with three million less in the next biennium to account for a reduced anticipated workload.

Glenn reported Emily's testimony in front of the legislature was much appreciated during hearings on the coordinated watershed management bill.

### [BWSR, Jenny Gieseke, Performance Review and Assistance Program](#)

Jenny reviewed the general details about the Performance Review and Assistance Program that BWSR uses to determine if watershed districts are meeting minimum standards of operations. The results are reported annually. Please see handouts.

### [Clean Water Council Budget Recommendation, Pam Blixt](#)

The Clean Water Council recommends how approximately \$200 million should be spent from the Clean Water Fund each biennium. Pam reviewed the process and time table. The Council's recommendations are submitted to the Governor by Dec. 1. It is important to note that we are 10 years into this money.

Emily reviewed her interactions in this process. MAWA suggested that members of the Local Government Water Roundtable (LGWRT) review this together and get comments to Pam. Texer moved; Fjestad seconded that Emily work with LGWRT members to create a cover memo for Ruth to sign and submit regarding the budget recommendation. Passed unanimously.

Background on the Clean Water Council: Membership includes 7 non-voting agency members: MPCA, BWSR, Metropolitan Council, University of Minnesota, and the Departments of Health, Agriculture, and Natural Resources. The Senate and House majority and minority parties also hold non-voting seats. The Governor appoints 17 voting members from various constituencies. Per statute, these cannot be lobbyists. There has been high turnover on the Council. For the sake of stability, Ray recommended that the MAWD Board recommend the reappointment of Pam to represent watershed districts even though she no longer serves as a watershed district board manager. Her term expires in 2021.

### [Adjournment](#)

Leiser moved; Texer seconded to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Texer, Secretary