



Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2018

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria, MN

Board Members present:

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

Staff Present:

Emily Javens, Executive Director
Ray Bohn, Lobbyist

Others Present:

Tracy Halstensgard, Roseau River WD
Dianne Rademacher, Upper Minnesota River WD
Matt Moore, South Washington WD
Scott Henderson, Sauk River WD
Michelle Overholser, Yellow Medicine River WD
Doug Thomas, BWSR
John Jaschke, BWSR
Glenn Skuta, MPCA

General Business

President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The proposed agenda was amended to add Glenn Skuta, MPCA to Partner Updates. Texer moved; Leiser seconded approval of the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Willenbring moved; Vavra seconded approval of the September 21st minutes. Motion carried. Leiser abstained as he was not in attendance.

Leiser presented a recap of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018. Revenues were \$5,000 over budget and expenses were \$47,000 less than budgeted due to the timing of some expenses.

As of this meeting, there was \$206,048.88 in the savings account and \$38,249.55 in the checking account. Expenses for the annual meeting are not included.

Redpath and Company, LTD., completed a review of MAWD Financial Procedures. Note, this is NOT an audit. It is a check to see if we are following our processes/procedures. Redpath found that we are following our processes/procedures. The only complicating factor is that when Redpath went to verify signatures by viewing checks on line, Wells Fargo redacted the signatures so they were not visible. Craig went to the bank and got hard copies of the checks with the signatures visible thus demonstrating to Redpath that we were in fact following processes/procedures.

Leiser moved; Dritz seconded approving the Treasurer's Report. Motion Carried.

Davis White reviewed the 2019 Budget. Expenses have been grouped to make it easier to identify where money was spent. This year Revenue is projected to increase by \$7,000 and Expenses are projected to be lower by \$8,650 for a total budget of \$339,500.

Expenses are lower for the Day at the Capitol (formerly the Legislative Breakfast) as there will only be an evening reception and no breakfast. Expenses are projected to be lower for the Summer Tour as the Executive Director and host communities will be handling all of the arrangements except processing registrations.

Going down the expense accounts, please note:

- The Executive Director's salary is divided between administration and lobbying per state statute
- The consultant's fee (Maddy) is lower by \$12,000
- Mileage and general expense are higher than last year's budget and match 2018 actual
- Board per diems are lower than last year and match 2018 actual

In summary, we have higher revenue due primarily to vendor sponsorships, and lower expenses with expenses adjusted to match actual experience during the first year of the Strategic Plan implementation and having an Executive Director who is an employee.

Fjestad moved; Vavra seconded approving the Budget for presentation at the annual meeting on 11/30. Motion Carried.

Reports and New Business

Javens reported that The Embassy Suites will be under renovation and not available for the MAWD Legislative Breakfast. This event has been moved to the Double Tree downtown St. Paul. Dates are February 20-21 with training for managers the afternoon of the 20th along with an evening reception. The 21st will be spent at the Capitol. There will be NO legislative breakfast. This event will be referred to as MAWD's Day at the Capitol. In the future we hope to move the reception to a room at the Capitol; Javens and Maddy Bohn are working on this for 2020.

Per the direction of the Board at the September meeting, Schaefer talked to Pam Blixt about retiring from the Clean Water Council. Blixt did not want to retire and wrote a letter to President Schaefer which she requested be shared with the Board. This letter was included in the Board packet for this meeting. Leiser believes a change in staff is good from time to time (Blixt has been on the Council since it was formed). There was some confusion as to when Blixt's current term ends, 2019, 2020 or 2021. Options discussed were:

- Wait until her term ends
- Blixt resigns
- The governor "unappoints" her

We need to check with the governor's office to get the official end date.

Texer moved; Fjestad seconded that Javens find out Blixt's real end date and that we discuss next steps at the January meeting. Motion passed.

Matt Moore spoke for MAWA regarding the MAWA resolution presented to the MAWD Board. MAWA reported that Clean Water dollars are going to agencies and not to on the ground projects. MAWA has also received four unsolicited comments about watersheds not being well represented on the Council and that other LGUs are represented by paid professionals. It is MAWA's belief that whomever represents watershed districts on the Clean Water council needs to meet the following criteria:

- Active in MAWD
- Loud strong voice for watershed districts
- Strong working knowledge of water law and policy
- Experienced

Leiser moved; Vavra seconded that the MAWD Board recommend this resolution to the MAWD membership. Motion passed.

Appointments to the BWSR Board. Jill Crafton would like to be reappointed. Wanda Holker, Upper Minnesota River Watershed District, has also been mentioned.

Ray Bohn and John Jaschke reviewed the process for appointment and reminded us that geographic balance is required. Current watershed representatives are Jill Crafton (Metro, 2019), Joe Collins (Metro, 2020) and Harvey Krueger (Greater Minnesota, 2021).

Dritz moved; Leiser seconded that this item be tabled until Saturday's meeting. Motion carried.

Texer reviewed the proposed Resolution Sunset Policy. Texer moved; Fjestad seconded approval of the Sunset Policy. Motion carried.

Partner Updates

Glenn Skuta, MPCA

Glenn thanked MAWD for our help in revising Section 3A of the Clean Water Act. The first slate of 10 watershed districts were chosen (40 over 4 years) to receive 4 consecutive 4 year grants. The total allotment is 2.5 million per year.

40% of WRAPs and TMDLs are complete.

The Clean Water Council Administrator position is posted and closes next week (week of December 3rd). This position reports to the Assistant Commissioner of Water. This position is like the MAWD Executive Director and represents the Clean Water Council at hearings, etc.

Staffing changes:

- PCA Commissioner is exiting
- Department Commissioner is exiting
- Reed Larson, Manager is retiring

- This position is NOT being filled; the work is being divided among other managers.
- Supervisors and units are staying the same

The agencies and the Clean Water Council worked together on budget recommendations with the goal of putting more money into project implementation.

Scott Henderson, MAWA

MAWA met this past September in St. Cloud and 11/29 in Alexandria. The main topic of discussion was different funding mechanisms for projects. Other topics included:

- Sales Tax
- Bonding
- Project funding through 103D 95

John Jaschke, BWSR

Referenced the Drainage workshops which discussed policy and technology.

Al Kean, chief engineer is retiring Spring, 2019. They are exploring splitting his job into two – one focusing on engineering and one focusing on policy.

Buffers – there is some coordination between drainage authorities with watersheds taking care of buffers and ditches.

With the new governor and half of the Legislature there is no real appetite to repeal buffers.

Doug Thomas, BWSR

BWSR is moving the Watershed based funding program from pilot to program. The BWSR Board kicked the pilot off this fall to start with stakeholders getting back to the Board. The final decision will come in August 2019.

\$29 million is in the program. 44% have a plan.

The Metro area includes cities, counties, SWCDs and WDs. Three listening sessions have been held. Two members from each constituency have been tasked to come up with a funding solution.

Local Government Water Round Table has a 12-person work group made up of staff to solve the issues they are facing.

There is a new office for soil health. As of January 1, Anna Kates will come on staff. She is a PhD who has worked in Wisconsin.

Doug requested any help we could give to have the SWCDs funded out of the general fund and not the Clean Water fund.

Doug also reported that Pam Blixt's end date is January 4, 2021. She was appointed to a 4-year term. Ray Bohn is willing to talk to Pam about stepping down should MAWD choose to go in that direction. Fjestad moved; Leiser seconded that as a Board we ask Pam for her resignation. Motion carried. Ruth and Ray will talk to Pam.

Ray Bohn, MAWD Lobbyist

The House is now DFL controlled which should make it harder for those interested in weakening the powers of watershed districts.

The MAWD Legislative Committee will meet in December with the Board acting on their recommendations at the January meeting. Per Ray we need to have a prioritized legislative agenda with 5 or 6 items at most.

Ray recommended we only move forward on the drainage work group bill if producer and environmental groups show active support and agree to work on it.

Electronic meeting attendance will soon no longer be an issue. Rice Creek has asked for an advisory opinion that will clarify concerns WDs have voiced. Each watershed district can decide what to do and should document their decision into their Policy and Procedures manuals.

The \$50/acre Buffer Tax Credit proposal is dead for now. We will have to decide what to do with it if it comes up again, especially if legislators intend to take the money out of the Clean Water Fund.

Details for tonight and at the annual meeting

Schaefer and Texer will hand out voting tickets for Thursday Night at the Movies.

Regional Meeting Conveners

1. Peter Fjestad
2. Tim Dritz
3. Craig Leiser

Board member willing to serve another term

1. Gene Tiedemann – yes
2. Duane Willenbring – yes
3. Craig Leiser – no

Willenbring will serve as the parliamentarian for the annual meeting. There will be two microphones, one on each side of the room, one marked “For” the other “Against”. Each speaker will be allowed 2 minutes. Leiser will be the time keeper.

Delegates will be issued voting cards. Dritz and Vavra will distribute. Fjestad will serve as teller.

There will be a “Last Chance Networking Breakfast” Saturday morning from 7-9. Board members are expected to be there.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Texer, Secretary