



**Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**

Monday, January 7, 2019

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Capitol Region Watershed District Offices
595 Aldine, St. Paul, MN 55104

Board Members present:

Ruth Schaefer, President, Middle Fork Crow River WD
Duane Willenbring, Vice President, Sauk River WD
Mary Texer, Secretary, Capitol Region WD
Sherry Davis White, Treasurer, Minnehaha Creek WD
Jackie Anderson, Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD
Gene Tiedemann, Red Lake WD
Tim Dritz, Yellow Medicine River WD
Linda Vavra, Bois de Sioux WD (via phone)
Peter Fjestad, Buffalo Red WD (via phone)

Staff Present:

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

Others Present

Kevin Bigalke, BWSR
Jan Voit, Administrator, Heron Lake WD
Lisa Frenette, Lobbyist, Red River Watershed Management Board

[General Housekeeping](#)

President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 11:05.

Dritz moved and Willenbring seconded approval of the agenda. Motion carried.

Texer moved and Anderson seconded approval of the minutes for both the November 29, 2018 and December 1, 2018 Board meetings. Motion carried.

Davis White reported that there was \$28,340.81 in the checking account and \$176,058.85 in the savings account. All expenses for the annual meeting are in but have not yet been coded. Willenbring moved and Texer seconded acceptance of the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

[Reports and New Business](#)

Appointments and Committee Assignments

BWSR

One position on the BWSR is up for appointment. Three names were put up for recommendation to the Governor for appointment:

1. Jill Crafton (reappointment)
2. Wanda Holker
3. LeRoy Ose

Dritz moved and Davis White seconded submitting the above list in the order given. Motion carried. This list will be sent to the Governor who with his staff will decide who to appoint.

Drainage Workgroup

Harvey Kruger or Chris Skonard (Administrator/ Ditch Inspector and Engineer, North Fork Crow River)
Tim Dritz

Texer moved and Anderson seconded the above to serve on the Drainage Workgroup. Motion carried.

Jan Voit will let Harvey know that he can collect a per diem and mileage expenses for his 2018 attendance.

Local Government Roundtable

The following were nominated to sit on the Local Government Water Roundtable

1. Gene Tiedemann
2. Ruth Schaefer
3. Sherry Davis White

Dritz moved and Willenbring seconded the above list. Motion carried.

Willenbring informed the group that he would be available as a substitute/alternate. Davis White moved and Texer seconded that Willenbring serve as a member at large (alternate). Motion carried.

Advisory Group

The following were nominated to serve on the Advisory Group.

1. Myron Jesme
2. Scott Henderson
3. Mark Doneux
4. A WMO representative or Matt Moore if no WMO representative accepts

Willenbring moved and Dritz passed the above list. Motion carried.

Note: BWSR did invite WMOs to participate given watershed-based funding. Two candidates are:

1. Paul Moline, Manager, Carver County WMO
2. Laura Jester, Administrator, Basset Creek WMO

Emily will reach out to them.

MAWD Committees

Emily will work with MAWD committee chairs to get MAWD committees staffed.

Executive Director

Javens reported that the Lower Rum River WMO and Basset Creek Watershed Management Commission have joined at the \$500.00 rate for their first year.

The new DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen reached out to Javens at 4:00 after just accepting her position at noon. This means Javens and MAWD are on people's radar!

Javens requested a docking station and monitor that is the same as the CRWD staff. The cost would be approximately \$900.00. Dritz moved and Texer seconded allocating \$1500.00 to set up Javens' new office. Motion carried.

A technician at MPCA sent out emails concerning Round 2 WRAPS. The original goal was to not repeat or duplicate emails and efforts. Javens will follow up on this.

Rice Creek WD sent us a copy of the Advisory Opinion they received allowing interactive TV as a way to attend watershed board meetings. Tiedemann said that their attorney confirmed that watershed districts can only use interactive TV for remote meeting attendance and not just a phone. Interactive TV requires that all participants can see everyone's face. This requires specialized set-ups on both sides. Meetings must be open to the public.

Javens requested that between now and the next meeting all committee chairs develop goals and actions plans for this year and get these details to her.

MAWD Event Update

2018 Annual Meeting and Conference

- 475 Conference Attendees
- 158 Pre-Conference Workshop Attendees
- 75 Vendor Exhibitors
- 30 Speakers

\$99,485 in income before transaction fees.

Trade Show

\$43,700 in revenue this year which is \$20,000 over 2017.

This resulted in an ROI of \$27,600.

M. Bohn distributed survey results via a series of charts and graphs in the Board packet. General comments included:

- It was a little tight in the pre-conference rooms
- There were so many changes it was hard to take in

The Board discussed the survey results. Generally, people were happy with the event. The biggest issue was the time conflict between the trade show and movie night.

The vendors were OK with the increased pricing.

The committee will review feedback prior to planning the 2019 event.

The Board agreed to the dates of December 4-7, 2019 at Arrowwood. M. Bohn will block the entire resort. We will keep the same general schedule as this year: MAWA will meet on December 4th and there will be no sessions on Saturday.

Day at the Capitol

Registration went live before Christmas; 10 have signed up to date. Rooms are blocked at a reduced rate through January 27th. M. Bohn will send another email out this week. The schedule of events follows. Vavra noted that the Red River Watershed Management Board meets on February 20th.

February 20

- 9:30 – 1:00 MAWA at Capitol Region Watershed District
- 11:00 – 1:00 MAWD Board Meeting
- 2:00 – 4:30 Legislative Briefing and Training
- 5:00 – 7:00 Legislative Reception

February 21

- Individual Managers and Administrators meet with legislators

There will be no formal breakfast.

Summer Tour

The Summer Tour will be held in Northwest Minnesota and will be a 5-entity event. Javens will solidify details soon.

The meeting paused between 12:30 and 1:00 for lunch.

Legislative Committee Recommendations

The committee met on December 21st tightly focusing on initiatives. The goal is to have 3-4 A priorities and 3-4 B priorities. R. Bohn assisted the committee based on his experiences. The committee is really tightening this effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness for the Day at the Capitol. R. Bohn will

tighten up language. The goal is to have materials out by the end of the month to allow people to be prepared for the afternoon briefing. Materials will include white papers and talking points for each item in green on the chart below.

A top priority is to protect the integrity of the Clean Water Funds.

Green listed items are top priority. Yellow items involve coalition building. Pink items will be watched and the MAWD Board will be notified if they become “hot” and need action. Blue items can be handled administratively.

An example of a blue item – BWSR has an administrative release to deal with increased manager compensation by having each district rewrite their bylaws to allow for a board meeting prep day. This item was moved to blue.

Bills should be jacketed by February 20th.

There are two tax issues that will be worked on this session: raising the general administrative levy and modifying the project tax levy to apply to all types of grants, not just Clean Water Partnership grants.

Bob Meier, DNR Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Governmental Relations is pulling a group together to discuss 2018-08. If legislation is needed, MAWD will get this drafted and introduced.

The carp issue is being studied by DNR Eco Services. The language at this point is to exempt local governments from the harvesting monopoly when dealing with invasive species. We would have to carry this. We are working with Bob Meier to get authors.

Lambert Bill – Developer Mark Lambert, his lobbyist and bill author did NOT contact us to discuss their bill from last year that proposed fairly significant changes to watershed district powers and authorities. R. Bohn sent a letter to their lobbyist saying that since they did not contact us, we are assuming all is OK. They are still active however and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Stormwater Reuse – R. Bohn is working with Mark Doneux and Phil Belfiori on this. We are hoping the Department of Health will follow through with bringing local governments into discussions about stormwater reuse standards that are being developed. If not, we may need to address the issue with the Legislature.

Bonding Requests – It would help if R. Bohn knew if bonding requests were coming in for flood/disaster projects. A request for this information along with other Capital Investment Requests will go out in the Legislative mailing.

Note: a possible session at the Annual Meeting would be on financing and funding.

Anderson moved and Texer seconded to accept the Legislative Committee recommendations with the changes noted in **Red** below. Motion carried.

Legislative Committee Recommendations to MAWD Board of Directors (12/21/18)

TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2019 LEGISLATIVE ACTION		
2016-04	Amend MN Statute 103D.905 Subd. 9 to Allow a Project Tax for All Types of Grants	HF2456 and SF3077 (90th Legislature)
2017-01	State Watershed Program Coordination with Local Watershed Implementation	HF3908 and SF3647 (90th Legislature)
2018-02	Increase or Remove the \$250k General Fund Tax Levy Limit	Top Priority for Regions 1 and 2
2018-05	Adjust Watershed District Statutory Borrowing Limit	Top Priority for Regions 1 and 2
2018-08	Reinforce Existing Rights to Maintain/Repair 103E Drainage Systems	HF2687 and SF2419 (90th Legislature)
2018-01	Allow an Increase to Manager Compensation (move to blue section below)	Legislative Committee Recommendation
TOP RESOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT (WILL BE LED BY OTHERS)		
2016-08	Bonding Bill, Flood Hazard Mitigation	FY2020 Bonding Bill
2017-04	Limited Liability for Certified Commercial Salt Applicators	HF3577 and SF3199 (90th Legislature)
2018-07	Remove impediments to Common Carp Removal in Lakes	DNR writing bill for 91st Legislature
DWG-01	Drainage Work Group - Repair Cost Apportionment Option	DWG writing bill for 91st Legislature
DWG-02	Drainage Work Group - Bois de Sioux Pilot Option	DWG writing bill for 91st Legislature
DWG-03	Drainage Work Group - Accelerated Buffer Strip Compensation	DWG writing bill for 91st Legislature
TOP Concerns when Playing Defense		
DEF-01	Protect Clean Water Funds from Being Raided (move to green)	Ex: \$22M for SWCDs, buffer tax credit
DEF-02	Protect Integrity of WD Rule-Making Authority (Mark Lambert)	Developer keeps working on this
DEF-03	Steve Green Bill	Might pop up in Senate
DEF-04	Watch for Bills Aimed Against WDs	Things ALWAYS come up.
Resolutions to Handle Administratively		
2014-02A	Common Carp Removal while Electrofishing (goes to parking lot per Prior Lake)	Discussions ongoing with DNR
2016-05	WD Manager Meeting Participation via Electronic Means Outside WD Limits	DOA currently writing advisory opinion
2017-07	Creation of a Stormwater Reuse Task Force	See stormwater reuse work plan
2018-04	Require Watershed District Permits for the DNR	Review problem extent, discuss w/DNR
2018-06	Ensure Timely Updates to Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Plans	Review problem extent, discuss w/DNR
2015-07	Review Commitment to Clean Water Council Recommendations (move to green)	LGWRT Advisory Group working on this
2018-09	Clean Water Council Appointments by WD Managers or Administrators	MAWD Board will address

BWSR Update – Kevin Bigalke

BWSR is in a holding pattern until Gov. Walz decides on his priorities. This includes:

- 114D/103B Coordinated Watershed Management bill
- CREP dollars
- Budgets
- Clean Water Fund and Council

Regarding 114D/103B, BWSR and the MPCA are writing a letter to the Clean Water Council to highlight where they have been and are now going.

It is better if all are in lock step for all watershed efforts; to improve the process and work more effectively together.

Metro Watershed District funding – in the Metro and statewide based.

- Pilot was last year
- They are revamping the Metro approach more than statewide
- Redoing some of the allocation formulas

Funding through NRCS

- Conservation Planners will be through local governments
- Technical training is being provided to staff in place
- The easement section manager has been filled
- Al Kean is retiring; his position is being split into at least two section manager positions
- Megan Lennon, training coordinator, took a new position; not sure if her vacated position will be filled.

Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB)

The RRWMB has the same top priorities as MAWD. Their lobbyist, Lisa Frenette, will carry the Flood Hazard Mitigation Bill. They will be asking for around \$25 million dollars to fund projects within the Red River Valley and other flood prone areas in Minnesota.

They will also be working on bills to fund the River Watch Program and funding to continue to support the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group.

Vavra invited everyone up to the Red River Basin to see what is happening there.

Lower Minnesota River

Dredging is now done twice per year. They would like to be part of the Minnesota Transportation System and be able to tax producers to help off-set the cost of dredging which is currently \$275,000 per year.

Legislative Water Commission

Javens provided a letter from the Commission detailing their legislative priorities. R. Bohn will watch bills put forth and keep Javens apprised, who in turn will keep the Board and membership apprised.

The Minnesota Water Bill

See blog post by Trevor Russell, Water Program Director, Friends of the Mississippi, included in the Board packet.

Drainage Work Group

Legislation has been drafted giving drainage authorities an alternate option for apportioning costs of ditch repair projects. The bill also includes updates to drainage law that would accelerate compensation for buffer strips. There is also legislation for a pilot program just for the Bois de Sioux Watershed District for updating Bois de Sioux needs the pilot for 10 years. Senator Westrom wrote it for 5 years but is willing to go 8.

Strategic Plan

Texer reviewed the results of the membership survey and distributed suggestions from the members. The results of the survey will be posted on the MAWD website and incorporated into the new Strategic Plan which will be written this year. The goal is to have the new plan before the Board at the June meeting and to the membership for a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Metro Watershed Based Funding – Mark Doneux

Doneux reviewed the BWSR program from the MAWA perspective. The next meeting on this topic will be January 18th.

- Goal is to move away from competitive based funding
- Need a way to provide stable funding but not cover big ticket items
- Funding should be watershed based and not county based
- Stable funding for SWCDs is important, but this doesn't seem to be the place to do it

Getting Clear Water Legacy funding renewed is up to us; we need to support these efforts.

Clean Water Council Representative

R. Bohn will talk to Pam Blixt regarding her appointment and get back to us at the February meeting. Bohn contends we don't want to upset the apple cart at this point as she is needed at the Capitol.

Anderson suggested that MAWD hire someone to sit on the council as this is a very time intensive and technically complicated position. MAWD would have to ask the watershed districts if they want to fund this position. The Strategic Planning Committee will discuss this and incorporate it in the plan as appropriate.

Anderson moved and Willenbring seconded to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.