



Sunrise River WMO

2241 – 221st Ave
Cedar, MN 55011

APPROVED MINUTES

Sunrise River Water Management Organization Meeting
Thursday January 7, 2021
Meeting was held remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. Call to Order

Vice-chair Mager called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Leon Mager, Matt Downing, Candice Kantor, Sandy Flaherty, Tim Harrington, Janet Hegland, Dan Babineau (arrived at 6:37pm), Tim Peterson

Audience: Jamie Schurbon, Anoka Conservation District (ACD)
Cameron Blake, Recording Secretary
Rick Kruger, Coon Lake Improvement Association

3. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Hegland moved to approve the agenda and Mr. Harrington seconded this motion. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for November 5, 2020

Ms. Flaherty asked for the minutes to be corrected to reflect that it was Ms. Logren rather than herself who created the motion passed under Item 10 C. on page 10. Mr. Schurbon and Mr. Blake will make those changes to the minutes.

Mr. Harrington moved and Ms. Hegland seconded to approve the November 5, 2020 minutes with that correction. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

5. Financial Reports

Mr. Babineau arrived at 6:37 pm and Mr. Mager dropped off the Zoom call at 6:39pm. Mr. Babineau took over as chair of the meeting.

A. Treasurer's report

Mr. Downing reported a beginning and ending balance of \$26,481.76 with no expenditures for the month of December. The total 2021 community contribution was received from East Bethel. Mr. Schurbon will invoice the other communities. Mr. Mager re-joined the meeting at 6:41pm but was still having some internet issues.

Ms. Flaherty moved and Ms. Hegland seconded to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Mager abstained. Motion carried.

B. Current grants financial report from ACD

Mr. Schurbon presented the current grants financial report. He pointed out that the cost share grant funds had been used for three projects for Coon Lake and the board decided to encumber another \$1,030.00 for the Linwood Elementary raingarden. This would leave \$1,390.67 left in the cost share budget for 2021. Ms. Hegland asked if this was the intended value to be shown in the total row of the cost share table, which was confirmed by Mr. Schurbon.

For State grants, Mr. Schurbon said the report is updated with staff time and expenses. He pointed out that shoreline stabilizations were added to the Martin and Coon Lake grant table to be considered as projects to use the last \$63,000 (expiring at the end of 2021). Mr. Schurbon lastly noted that some expenses from each funding source were spent on the carp management project.

C. Financial report approval for the 2019 WBIF grant

Mr. Schurbon explained that the 2019 WBIF grant funds have been spent at more than 50% which means it's time to submit the grant financial report to the State for approval. Upon approval the State will release the next 40% of the grant funds, with the final 10% released after final reporting. He presented the report which doesn't exactly match the ACD Current Grants Financial report due to the timing of when it was pulled together. He added a description of the expenditures and is asking for board approval of the report for Mr. Babineau's signature and submittal to the state.

Mr. Downing moved and Mr. Mager seconded to authorize Chair Babineau to sign the 2019 WBIF grant financial report. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

6. Unfinished Business**A. Jurisdictional boundary update with Rice Creek Watershed District**

This item was presented at the last board meeting in November. Discussion was tabled to allow for the information to be brought back to member communities to determine if the property shift would result in any unforeseen impacts. Since that time there was an amendment to the updated boundary, but those changes were outside of the SRWMO. Ms. Hegland explained that since the November meeting she had sent the report to the city engineer and other staff who were going to translate the parcel data into addresses to determine any impact on Columbus residents. She said she hasn't heard back yet, likely due to the holidays.

Ms. Hegland moved to table the RCWD Jurisdictional Boundary decision until the SRWMO's February meeting and Mr. Mager seconded this motion. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

B. Ham Lake local surface water management plan

Mr. Schurbon reported that they had received the 3rd draft of the Ham Lake LSWMP, and that he believes there are still too many unresolved issues to recommend approval by the WMO. He recommends the board resubmit unresolved comments and new comments that Mr. Schurbon outlined. The plan does now include direct reference to the SRWMO plan but organizational issues remain; specifically issues with formatting such as table and page numbers. The administrator for the Coon Creek WD has also expressed concerns with this plan. Mr. Schurbon said he hoped to set a meeting with the city next week and to have Mr. Downing and Ms. Flaherty attend as well.

Mr. Mager moved to resubmit the Ham Lake LSWMP with the unresolved and new comments, and to table further discussion on this topic until they are resolved. Ms. Hegland seconded this

motion. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

C. Review of communities' ordinances for compliance with SRWMO minimums

This is a recurring agenda item without action needed at this time. Mr. Schurbon has no new information and is hoping to bring this item up at the Ham Lake meeting. He asked if Mr. Harrington could assist in bringing up this item with East Bethel.

D. Carp management project update

Mr. Schurbon informed the board that he is working on writing contracts for 2021. The plan may involve winter seining at Martin Lake and winter and spring seining at Linwood. There could be a small seine effort at some of the structures where migration is known to occur and box netting at Typo Lake. The winter seine efforts will require the ice to be thick enough. The Anoka Conservation District will be doing radio tracking of carp to aid the nettings.

7. New Business

A. 2022 budget

Mr. Schurbon presented the draft 2022 budget which follows the SRWMO Watershed Management Plan. Items are categorized as Operating or Non-Operating as was agreed during discussions with Ham Lake in 2019-2020, and consistent with the 2021 budget. This budget relies upon spending down some undesignated reserve funds in order to have a \$50,000 budget per the watershed plan. The SRWMO plan anticipated spending down \$1,609 in reserves in 2022. There is another \$2,149 in undesignated reserve spend down to cover costs that are higher than anticipated in your watershed plan. This is due to budgeting for more on-call administrative help to match actual expenses in recent years. The operating expenses are still mostly the same. Seven other line items have costs that are higher or lower than the plan but they end up being net zero.

The usual timeline is board review of first draft in January, with a review of the second draft at the next board meeting. The draft budget is then approved for submittal to member communities who consider ratification. The SRWMO board needs to adopt the final 2022 budget by May.

Mr. Schurbon walked through the budget line items and explained that a few of the items may go down in cost due to 1W1P shared positions, although he does not know the exact amount at this time. One of those items may be line 16, Ag Conservation Planning Outreach. But overall the items in the budget are from the SRWMO plan. As for Outreach and Education he explained that the plan included ramping up the outreach coordinator position in 2022 (line 23). There are efforts being done to use watershed based funding which may lower some of these costs, such as the Lakeshore Restoration Guidance Materials (line 24).

Ms. Hegland asked for more information on the potential for some of the line items to go down. She asked if the 1W1P shared agronomist position would cover item 16, Ag conservation Planning Outreach. Mr. Schurbon explained that the outreach efforts would identify the landowners who the 1W1P agronomist position would then assist. Mr. Schurbon then explained the \$4,450 cost for the outreach coordinator position (line 23) was split among different tasks/accomplishments, and that some of these tasks could be covered by 1W1P outreach. Ms. Hegland asked if this would be known before the SRWMO budget needed to be finalized and Mr. Schurbon said he wasn't sure but maybe by March.

Ms. Hegland explained that she was anticipating pushback on ratifying the 2022 SRWMO budget from the City of Columbus for a few reasons. One was that Columbus wanted a different calculation of land area for their contribution to the budget due to the current calculation not subtracting

public lands. A large percentage of the land Columbus has in the SRWMO is public land such as the Carlos Avery state wildlife management area. This places a higher burden on a smaller number of taxpayers in Columbus. This change would require the JPA to be amended which has not occurred yet. This issue is also why Ms. Hegland and the City of Columbus are looking into the RCWD/SRWMO property line change. The other reason she expects pushback from is where proposed SRWMO activities will take place. She recalls there being a lack of enthusiasm from the city on the budget due to a high number of activities taking place in lakes outside of Columbus. She acknowledged a previous conversation in which the argument was made that Columbus citizens benefit from recreating in lakes outside but near their city's boundaries. She acknowledged that the community contribution and JPA topic was a separate issue than the budget but wanted to bring up the issues she knew her community would raise upon budget ratification.

Mr. Petersen echoed this concern and asked how Linwood would benefit from the activities proposed in the budget- specifically the outreach coordinator role. Mr. Schurbon said the 2022 planned topics involved lakes and SSTS. They are involved in producing newsletters and workshops, and prior to COVID, they had a booth for Linwood's Family Fun Day.

The board discussed and clarified that the budget being levied was a consistent \$50,000 as planned, with the amount over \$50,000 coming from the reserve funds which the board is spending down. Mr. Mager said it would be helpful to see an extra column in the budget table showing 2021 vs. 2022 line items. Mr. Downing stated that as the budget and levy remained the same he didn't think the communities would care about the line items proposed, but Ms. Hegland disagreed. She said Columbus viewed some of the line items, such as monitoring, as a shared expense but viewed other items such as the specific lake workshops as not serving Columbus citizens equally. The issue she identified was the perception that their levy was being used to fund projects outside the Columbus boundary. Mr. Downing argued that this logic would apply to Ham Lake residents as well. Ms. Hegland asked how the community chose to levy its residents, explaining that Columbus only levied the residents inside the SRWMO boundary vs. adding the SRWMO levy to the total city levy. The board agreed that the approach probably differed by community. Mr. Mager asked if Columbus residents within the SRWMO boundary were paying more than other WMO levy's outside of the boundary and Ms. Hegland said she wasn't sure as it was also based on property values.

The board agreed that the JPA and community contribution percentage by land area was a separate area of conversation which was too big to address in this meeting. Ms. Hegland reiterated that she was bringing this topic up because she wanted to avoid the possibility of Columbus denying the budget ratification. Mr. Babineau asked Mr. Schurbon if BWSR would offer any guidance on the matter. Mr. Schurbon believes BWSR wouldn't get involved at this level. The requirement BWSR cares about is that the WMO has a JPA and if following its watershed management plan, and the details are left up to the communities. Mr. Downing noted that this issue may be why there are not as many WMO's left compared to watershed districts who have their own ability to collect taxes.

Mr. Schurbon said he hoped that the budget cap \$50,000 and spending down of reserves was enough of a demonstration that the SRWMO is working within realistic confines. He hoped this made the 2022 budget justifiable to the communities' councils. Mr. Downing reminded the board that the SRWMO laid this budget plan out in its recently-approved 10-year plan and offered multiple opportunities for the communities to comment and they didn't choose to. Mr. Schurbon asked if Columbus received any payment in lieu of taxes for the amount of public land they had and Ms. Hegland said they did but it wasn't worth the lost tax value. Ms. Hegland said there were two new city council members and that she found Mr. Downing's comments to be helpful. She personally had concerns about the 1W1P adding cost to the budget after the communities were told it wouldn't. Due to

the difficult economic conditions cities have made efforts to cut costs wherever they can to lower tax impacts on residents and she would like to be able to say the SRWMO has as well. For Columbus the percent of uncollected taxes raised by 3% in 2020 and was expected to go up higher this year.

Mr. Schurbon said that because he expected the 1W1P implementation to include some amount of costs savings, the board could cut line items that had the potential for other funding sources such as: ag outreach, lakeshore restoration guidance materials, and the workshops promotion. If the board doesn't want to speculate they could keep them in the budget.

The board discussed whether the line items related to outreach would be expected to go forward, the potential for virtual events, the limits of virtual events, and whether there were any savings from events that didn't occur in 2021. Mr. Babineau reminded the board this was the budget for 2022 in which outreach might be able to take place as normal. Mr. Schurbon said any money saved from event cancellation in 2021 would be in the reserves, and that the cancelled 2020 project tour was already paid for, and was rescheduled for 2021. Mr. Babineau thinks the lakeshore guidance materials are going to be important as many people work on their properties when they are home, which may still be common place in 2021.

Mr. Peterson asked what amount of budget was allocated for septic system assistance and explained that this issue was very relevant for Linwood constituents. Mr. Schurbon explained that the SRWMO's role for septic systems is in education and outreach to connect residents with resources/programs from the state/county that are targeted for repairs and replacement SSTS. The amount of money for SSTS repair and replacement is too high a burden for WMO's to take on and is already served by these other programs. Mr. Peterson asked why he doesn't have an answer for his constituents who ask how much money the SRWMO commits to their SSTS activities. Mr. Schurbon said the Anoka Conservation District presently has \$25,447 in grants available to landowners for fixing failing septic systems. He showed the SRWMO's 10-year outreach and education plan that includes SSTS outreach.

Mr. Downing said the SRWMO created watershed management plan for the budget to be levied to the communities at a cap of \$50,000 so that communities would have a flat levy that they could plan for. He questioned why the SRWMO would put so much effort into developing and scrutinizing this plan and then -rescrutinize the line items in the budget process He said he believes the SRWMO went through the 10 year planning process for a reason and if the 2022 budget items are consistent with that plan then they should follow that plan.

Mr. Schurbon explained that this was the budgeting stage and that as 2021 reaches the stage when they actually acquire the services there could be opportunities for costs savings or for tasks to be cut, but that this wasn't known yet. Mr. Downing suggested if the SRWMO wanted to further alleviate the burden to the communities due to the pandemic that they should look at spending down more of the reserve rather than cutting promised activities that were in the plan.

Ms. Hegland thanked Mr. Downing for this suggestion. Ms. Hegland suggested cutting requests to communities by using more undesignated reserve funds. She wants to use more reserves than the \$3,758 originally planned for 2022 to make a \$50,000 request to the communities happen. The board discussed the current reserve level as being \$22,713 with the goal of spending that down to about 30% of the average budget (over 5 years). Mr. Downing suggested spending an additional \$5,000 from the reserves for the 2022 budget which would leave the reserve at \$17,000. The board agreed on not spending it down all the way down in one go due to the uncertain economic times. Mr. Mager confirmed that this would achieve over \$50,000 worth of planned activities, but approximately \$8,000 would be coming from the reserves.

Mr. Babineau asked how the use of additional undesignated reserve funds would affect operating vs. projects costs. Mr. Schurbon said 73% of the costs are non-operating so he suggested 73% of the money from the reserve would be used for non-operating costs. 27% would be applied toward operating costs.

Ms. Hegland requested that in addition the SRWMO still scale back line items that Mr. Schurbon believed could come from the 1W1P funding. She asked if the Lakeshore Restoration Guidance Materials existed somewhere in a cheaper format than whatever was planned to create them. Mr. Downing and Ms. Kantor both said they hadn't seen those type of guidance materials in a cohesive, quality fashion. Mr. Schurbon said he was 50% confident that the 1W1P will cover the ag conservation outreach line item and Ms. Hegland asked for this cut to occur in the SRWMO budget. Mr. Babineau noted that the watershed was transitioning from ag land to residential area.

Ms. Hegland suggested the Ag Conservation Planning Outreach (line 16) be reduced from \$1,120 to \$0 due to the fact that 1W1P funding can likely cover this amount. There was support from other board members.

Mr. Petersen asked for the saved \$1,120 from cutting the ag conservation outreach be spent towards helping three residents with their septic systems. Mr. Babineau explained that this wouldn't be enough funds to cover any repairs or replacements, and that programs to assist with those activities existed with state, county, and ACD funds. He recalled there being different considerations for properties affecting water quality. Mr. Mager recalled financial programs up to \$20,000 available for drain field locations.

Ms. Hegland moved for Mr. Schurbon to make the proposed changes to the budget and bring back the second draft at the February board meeting. The proposed changes are to cut line item 16 and apply an additional \$5,000 from reserves with 73% going to non-operating costs and 23% going to operating costs. Mr. Harrington seconded this motion. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Babineau asked Mr. Petersen to share his thoughts on the budget and Mr. Petersen said he wanted there to be funding for fixing SSTS systems. Mr. Schurbon said to send residents with those issues to him and he will help them access the other programs available to help with that.

B. Recording secretary agreement renewal

In September 2020 the SRWMO came to agreement with Cameron Blake for recording secretary services. Mr. Blake provided the cost estimate through January 8, 2021. The board and Mr. Blake need to discuss extending or modifying the terms. Mr. Blake agreed with extending the contract through the year of 2021 with the same terms.

Mr. Harrington moved to renew the recording secretary contract and Ms. Hegland seconded this motion. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

C. Lincoln Estates preliminary plan in Linwood Township

Mr. Schurbon explained that he and Becky Wozney of the ACD have received the preliminary plat for Lincoln Estates and reviewed it on behalf of the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization. Their review places emphasis on water quality, stormwater treatment, runoff rates and volumes, and natural environment features. These comments are not binding on the township's decisions but they hope the board finds them informative. There is no action needed, Mr. Schurbon just wanted the board to have the opportunity to add any additional thoughts before passing it along to the township. He can present more of the reviews in the future if the board wishes.

Mr. Babineau asked if there were size limits. Mr. Schurbon explained that due to the amount of shoreland zone there were limits on impervious surface, and that the proposed plans were already under those limits. Part of their review included exploring whether they could reduce the impervious surface even lower. This included suggesting an option of joining a long set of parallel driveways. The board discussed some of the practicalities of that suggestion and of the conditions of the landscape for this plat. Mr. Schurbon explained that the ACD had limited comments and that this plat was par for the course if not better for splitting up the lots. Ms. Kantor asked if wetland buffers were part of the consideration for the review and Mr. Schurbon said they could be.

8. Mail

The SRWMO received a certificate of excellence from their insurer. There was a reminder from the MN Campaign Finance Board for board members to submit their forms by the end of January.

9. Other

10. Invoice(s) approval

A. Recording Secretary services for Nov 2020 meeting (\$200)

Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Downing seconded to pay the invoice #110620, payment for \$200. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Insurance renewal

Mr. Schurbon explained that they had not received the official invoice for the year of 2021 from the insurer yet, but had received an estimate of \$17,36. The invoice is typically received in December. He believes they should receive the invoice before the February meeting but said the board could make a motion to pay up to \$18,50 to cover the cost. He will check in about the mail.

Mr. Downing moved and Mr. Mager seconded to pay up to \$18,50 to the insurer to cover 2021 insurance for the SRWMO. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Adjourn

Mr. Mager moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Hegland yes, Harrington yes, Mager yes, Downing yes, Flaherty yes, Babineau yes, Kantor yes. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: February 4

Submitted by:
Cameron Blake