



Sunrise River WMO

2241 – 221st Ave
Cedar, MN 55011

APPROVED MINUTES

Sunrise River Water Management Organization Meeting

Thursday June 1, 2023

Meeting was held in person at the East Bethel City Hall

1. Call to Order
Ms. Kantor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Roll Call
Present: Janet Hegland, Candice Kantor, John Olson, Troy Wolens, Leon Mager, Tim Melchoir

Audience: Jamie Schurbon, Anoka Conservation District (ACD)
Cameron Blake, Recording Secretary (attending remotely via Zoom)
Jack Davis, East Bethel Administrator
3. Approval of Agenda
Mr. Schurbon recommended adding item 10b, an invoice from the SRWMO attorney.
Mr. Melchior moved to approve the agenda with this addition and Mr. Mager seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.
4. Approval of Minutes for April 6, 2023
Mr. Mager moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Wolens seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.
5. Financial Reports
 - A. Treasurer's report
Ms. Hegland arrived to the meeting. Ms. Kantor reported a beginning balance of \$47,408.49 with an ending balance of \$33,998.16 after two debits.
Mr. Melchoir moved to accept the treasurer's report and Ms. Hegland seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.
 - B. Grants financial report
The report is broken up into cost share grants, clean water fund grants through the Anoka Conservation District (ACD), and project funds held at the ACD with some crossover based

on matching funds being used for projects. There is funding being accumulated for maintenance carp harvest. The cost share grant fund receives \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually and funds a project every few years.

6. Unfinished Business

A. Review of communities' ordinances for compliance with SRWMO minimums
Mr. Schurbon reported that Linwood, Ham Lake, and East Bethel are all completed. Ms. Hegland explained that Columbus recently had a public hearing and their community wide ordinance update had larger goals of consistency across watersheds. Some questions were raised at the public hearing that are being addressed by the city attorney. Then, city council approval is anticipated June 14. The ordinance will be shared with Mr. Schurbon.

Ms. Hegland explained that the ordinance update resulted, in part, from conflicts regarding drainage across property lines. Portions of the city outside the Rice Creek Waterhed District do not have as detailed of stormwater ordinances. When cabins on small lots were replaced with larger buildings it resulted in complaints that neighbors where flooded by the new runoff.

B. SRWMO JPA amendment process update

Mr. Olson arrived to the meeting. The board discussed a May 30th meeting of the SRWMO member communities, SRWMO JPA attorney, county, and BWSR. The board recognized that Linwood, Columbus, and East Bethel are taking action to exit the SRWMO with a required 90-days notice. This will effectively dissolve the SRWMO. Those communities anticipate immediately reforming the SRWMO. Ham Lake can choose whether to join that new JPA. The City of Ham Lake will be considering their options and can formally withdraw from the SRWMO, which is recognized as a simpler option because the other three communities could remain in the SRWMO and continue operations and agreed-upon JPA amendments.

The resolutions from three communities to withdraw and dissolve are anticipated to be received soon. The board directed Mr. Schurbon to submit notice to the county, BWSR, and member communities once two or more communities provide resolutions. The end of the 90-day notice period will likely be close to the SRWMO's next scheduled meeting on September 14th.

The legal water resource responsibility of Ham Lake's land area will revert to the county if Ham Lake withdraws from the SRWMO or does not join the new SRWMO. The Board of Soil and Water Resources has declined to comment on any hypothetical situations but as the actions of parties become certain the BWSR board will need to take actions on this issue.

Previously, a request was made by Columbus for the SRWMO member communities to contribute \$1,000 each additional for attorney and coordination time to complete the JPA edits. Columbus, Linwood, and East Bethel have done so; Ham Lake has not yet responded.

Mr. Wolens explained that he has made a data request to Mr. Schurbon asking for a breakdown of funding and projects by the SRWMO in each community from the last 5 years. Mr. Wolens said he was not wishing for this to take too much time or money.

The board discussed the potential complexity of this request due to the holistic nature of SRWMO programs and projects, and how grant funds are implemented. Questions arose about whether the analysis is to include just projects, or all expenses? Should it include just SRWMO funds, or also funds from grants and local partners? How should certain expenses that occur in multiple communities should be split? Ms. Hegland explained the purpose of the SRWMO is defined in the JPA and law as managing water across community boundaries, so attributing all benefit from any action to just one community is difficult. Ms. Hegland and Mr. Davis noted that they have few projects in their cities but do feel that they benefit from watershed projects. The board asked Mr. Wolens what he was hoping to understand from this request to better clarify what information he would find helpful.

Mr. Wolens clarified that the focus of his request was to see a summary of the number of projects done in each SRWMO community. The request would not include other types of work like administration, grant writing, outreach, etc. Ms. Kantor suggested Mr. Schurbon provide the ACD interactive map of projects, which shows city lines and has links to details about each project. Mr. Wolens agreed that it sounded like it would meet his request. Mr. Schurbon was directed to provide that interactive map to Mr. Wolens.

C. 2024 budget ratifications timeline

The board asked Mr. Schurbon to again send the SRWMO 2024 draft budget to the communities for their budget planning purposes and wait on asking for ratification.

Mr. Mager asked to address the water quality monitoring line item in the 2024 budget. He is concerned that Coon Lake monitoring is every three years and articulated that more frequent monitoring may be desirable. Mr. Schurbon explained the monitoring cycle was based on the 10-year management plan and the regime was partly selected based on the stability of the lakes (more stable lakes are monitored less frequently for “surveillance monitoring”), location of projects (lakes with projects have more frequent “effectiveness monitoring”) and partly selected based on budgetary considerations (goal to keep the budget below \$50,000/yr total). He noted that all lakes have volunteer Secchi transparency monitoring in all years. Mr. Mager opposed the three year monitoring cycle; he does not feel like a three-year cycle provides what is needed for management decisions. Mr. Mager would like to return to a two-year cycle for all lakes. The board agreed to revisit this during 2024 work contracting and also 2025 budgeting, both of which occur in early 2024.

Mr. Mager asked why funds were budgeted for carp management when that was not currently happening. The SRWMO is not currently doing carp maintenance harvests but is planning to do so in 2024. The funds budgeted in 2023 and 2024, together, would be used in 2024.

D. Community events update

With Ms. Kantor's departure from the SRWMO, another volunteer is needed to staff half of the Linwood Family Fun day event. The board suggested the person who Linwood Township appoints to replace Candice might be able. If that doesn't work, Mr. Schurbon will see if anyone is willing to volunteer from the Martin or Linwood Lake Associations.

Mr. Schurbon and Mr. Melchior will connect regarding the Columbus Fall Fest.

7. New Business

A. SRWMO-Coon Creek Watershed District boundary update

Mr. Schurbon explained the City of Ham Lake has requested a review and adjustment of the boundary between the Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD) and SRWMO in their city. There are places of known inaccuracy. The CCWD has generously offered to do the technical and legal work, and asked Mr. Schurbon's light involvement. That work has begun. A hydrologic boundary is being determined based on elevations, infrastructure like culverts, and field visits. A jurisdictional boundary will be created that snaps the hydrologic boundary to parcel lines. A parcel will be in the watershed organization for which >50% of its land area is located, except that Coon Lakeshore parcels will be in the SRWMO. Two lakeshore parcels are exceptions, they will be located in CCWD because much more than 50% of their area is hydrologically in the Coon Creek watershed.

Mr. Schurbon explained there will be a letter of concurrence the SRWMO board will have to submit as part of this process. That will likely be requested at the September SRWMO board meeting. The update won't apply to taxes until 2025.

B. Consider policy update for funding of aquatic invasive species treatments

Mr. Mager explained his observations of lake group treatments for curly leaf pondweed (CLP). He shared some resources lake associations were using to guide their treatments, noting that shoreline homeowners pay most. He asked whether the SRWMO would consider awarding a water quality cost share grant to CLP treatments?

Mr. Mager described how he believed CLP treatments had a measurable positive impact on internal phosphorus levels, with supporting data from Coon Lake. Mr. Mager noted that he understood AIS herbicide treatments were a large, recurring investment but explained he felt a contribution by the SRWMO to lake groups for this work would result in positive exposure to the organization and were justified by the water quality benefit that results. Mr. Schurbon explained the current SRWMO policy was that CLP treatments on Coon Lake could be considered on a case by case basis if there was a demonstrated water quality benefit.

The SRWMO contributes annually to its cost share budget and it is currently at a balance of \$6,000. Mr. Schurbon noted that the cost share budget has been used for raingardens and shoreline projects and those projects range in costs depending on the project from \$3,000 to \$25,000 so the board should keep that in mind when awarding costs share funds.

Mr. Mager felt a small contribution from the SRWMO's cost share budget could go a long way and be an appropriate partnership on lake management. The Coon Lake Improvement District annually provides to their members of list of all funding sources received for AIS treatment. The SRWMO board agreed to consider a funding request.

Mr. Mager stated the timing of the funds was not critical to lake groups, so it could be considered at a future SRWMO meeting. While requests for cost share grant funds often go through the Anoka Conservation District (where the funds are housed) due to time sensitivity of projects, the SRWMO board wishes this request to go directly to the SRWMO board at their next meeting.

Mr. Mager stated he would reach out to the Linwood Lake Improvement Association, the other lake group in the SRWMO known to be doing CLP treatments, to find out if they also have an interest in applying. Then, Mr. Mager and Mr. Schurbon will work together to provide funding requests to the SRWMO board at the next meeting.

C. Contracted administrative assistance – funds remaining

Mr. Schurbon explained that the 2023 SRWMO-ACD contract includes 103 hours for on-call administrative assistance and so far this year, 73 hours have been consumed. Of those 17 were directly related to JPA issues, and some others were tangential to the JPA work. While no action is needed now, there may be a need to add additional hours to complete pressing tasks. For the rest of the year, anticipated activity includes: Three SRWMO meetings, 6-10 hours of participation for the CCWD-led boundary update, and work related to the JPA amendments. Ms. Hegland suggested the 17 hours be charged back to the JPA process which was intended to pay for Mr. Schurbon and the attorney's time. The board agreed that they wanted to see this time covered and Mr. Schurbon said the board can check back in later this year.

D. Candice Kantor resignation

Ms. Kantor explained she was moving outside of the watershed boundary and so would be will be resigning from the SRWMO board. The board thanked her for her work on the board and service as chairperson.

Ms. Hegland moved to accept the Ms. Kantor's resignation and Mr. Melchior seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Schurbon explained that Tim Harrington is also resigning from the SRWMO board but the board cannot officially accept this resignation until his resignation as mayor has been approved by East Bethel. Mr. Davis commented that he will offer to city council to take Mr. Harrington's place for the purpose of continuity as the ongoing JPA issues are resolved.

Ms. Hegland moved to remove Ms. Kantor and Mr. Harrington as authorized signers on the SRWMO checking account effective June 2, 2023 and Mr. Melchior seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Melchoir moved to add Ms. Hegland and Mr. Olson as authorized signers on the SRWMO checking account effective June 2nd and Mr. Mager seconded this motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

E. Election of new chairperson

The board decided to defer the election of chairperson and treasurer until September. In this way new member(s) are able to be considered.

8. Mail

There was no mail.

10. Other

A. Legislative updates

Mr. Schurbon explained there were some changes to the open meeting law that would take effect on August 1st. Essentially, it allows remote participation from a non-public or undisclosed location up to three times a year if advised by a healthcare professional and this no longer applies just to state of emergency. The board discussed some different interpretations of the open meeting law they have encountered by different organizations. Mr. Schurbon explained there was another change regarding economic interest statements and disclosing of spousal assets but that this will not impact the WMO board members.

B. St. Croix River Workshops on the Water

Mr. Schurbon said he could help any board members register for the events if they are interested. Mr. Mager stated he has attended them in the past and found them informative.

11. Invoice(s) approval

A. Recording Secretary services for April 2023 meeting (\$200)

Ms. Hegland moved to and Mr. Melchoir seconded to pay the invoice #40623 for \$200. The motion carried with all in favor.

B. Kennedy & Graven Attorney Invoice (\$273)

Ms. Hegland moved to and Mr. Melchoir seconded to pay the attorney's invoice for \$273. The motion carried with all in favor.

12. Adjourn

Ms. Hegland moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Melchoir seconded this. The motion carried unanimously and Ms. Kantor adjourned the meeting at 8:29PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: September 14, November 9, Jan 4 (2024), Feb 1 (2024)

Submitted by:

Cameron Blake