

REGULAR MEETING
Minutes
June 15, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER. A regular meeting of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order by Chair Joe Baker at 6:02 p.m., Thursday, June 15, 2023, at Maple Plain City Hall, 5050 Independence Street, Maple Plain, MN.

Present: Mark Workcuff, Greenfield; Joe Baker, Independence; Brenda Daniels, Loretto; Pat Wulff, Medina; Peter Vickery, Minnetrista; Roz Davis and Kris Guentzel, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Andrew Vistad, Hakanson-Anderson; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

Not represented: Maple Plain.

2. AGENDA. Motion by Daniels, second Wulff by to approve the agenda* as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

3. CONSENT AGENDA. Motion by Vickery, second by Daniels to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

a. May 18, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.*

b. June Treasurer's Report/Monthly Claims * totaling \$195,132.36.

4. OPEN FORUM.

5. ACTION ITEMS.

a. 2024 Operating Budget and Member Assessments.* According to the Joint Powers Agreement, the Commission must, on or before July 1 of each year, adopt a budget for the coming year. The budget must be transmitted along with notice of the apportionment of costs to each city by July 1. Member cities then have until August 15 to comment on or raise objections to the budget. If no objections are submitted, the budget proceeds as adopted. If objections are submitted in writing, the Commission must hold a public hearing to consider modifying the budget or proceeding with no change.

The proposed budget was initially reviewed at the May 18, 2023, meeting, with a decision held over to this meeting. A budget subcommittee meeting consisting of Andrew Burak - Maple Plain Commissioner, Vickery and Juntunen was held on June 2 via Zoom to review the budget. It is reformatted from what has been presented in previous years in that it separates out the operating expenses from the capital and other non-operating expenses and revenues. This allows the reader to more clearly determine if the assessments and project review fees are adequately funding operating expenses, or whether the Commission is operating a deficit or surplus. It is analogous to a General Fund budget rather than an all-funds, balance sheet style presented in previous years.

The 2024 budget as proposed is a continuation of the programs and activities undertaken in 2022, with some slight modifications. The overall proposed budget is about a \$4,000 increase over the 2023 budget

to allow for the increased cost of water quality monitoring and Hennepin County Outreach.

The 2024 budget as proposed includes no increase in city assessments, which have held steady at a total of \$131,800 since 2020.

Motion by Daniels, second by Vickery to approve the 2024 budget and member assessments as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

b. 2022 Audit Report.* The Auditor reported no issues identified during the audit process, no deficiencies in the Commission's internal controls over financial reporting considered to be material weakness, and no findings of non-compliance with Minnesota Laws and Regulations. Motion by Workcuff, second by Daniels to accept the 2022 Audit Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously. It will be forwarded to the State Auditor and to the Board of Water and Soil Resources by the June 30, 2023, deadline.

c. GS68 Assurance Letter.* The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) requires an assurance letter for stabilization projects to ensure that, if the stabilization fails or does not meet standards, the grantee has funding available to maintain, repair or replace the project to ensure it meets its designed life effectiveness. In this letter, the Commission agrees to set aside 40% of the project cost for future maintenance and repairs as needed. Staff suggested that the Commission add this as an ongoing line item to the CIP and pass a resolution to assign current unrestricted/unassigned funds to a new project maintenance fund for this purpose. The amount will not decrease as the project ages and the funds can be unassigned by future resolution at the end of the project lifespan or assigned to maintenance of other projects. The Commission currently has an unrestricted/unassigned fund balance of \$347,879.

Motion by Daniels, second by Wulff to approve the assurance letter as written and authorize signature by the Chair. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Motion by Daniels, second by Vickery to create an assigned fund for BWSR Assurance/Project Maintenance and assign \$15,000 from current unrestricted/unassigned funds to this account. *Motion carried unanimously.*

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS.

Hennepin County Opportunity Grant.* Hennepin County hosted an Opportunity Grant workshop today with about 20 attendees. Opportunity Grants are provided by the County to fund projects or be used as match funds for larger grants for water protection projects or habitat protection and restoration projects. Brian Vlach will apply for an Opportunity Grant as a match for Whaletail alum treatment projects, for which the Commission was awarded a BWSR Clean Water Fund grant in late 2022.

Guentzel and Davis have been working on outreach for the **Dance Hall Creek subwatershed assessment** and would like to apply for both an Opportunity grant and a Clean Water Fund grant for projects identified in the assessment. The Clean Water Fund grand deadline is in mid-August. Since the information for the grants would be similar, writing the Clean Water Fund grant would also cover most of the cost of writing the Opportunity grant. Funding for grant writing has been included, but rarely used, in the general operating budget since 2017. The unused funds make up a portion of the total unrestricted/unassigned fund balance.

Motion by Daniels, second by Wulff to authorize Staff to contact Diane Spector at Stantec regarding writing both an Opportunity and Clean Water Fund grant for the Dance Hall Creek BMP analysis project. *Motion carried unanimously.*

8. EDUCATION.

9. STAFF REPORTS.

a. Engineer's Report.* The staff report details ongoing project reviews and was included in the meeting packet for review. The Greenfield city engineer informed Vistad that **Greenfield Road** has been allocated funds to upgrade and reconstruct the roadway. The Dance Hall Creek outlet structure that flows under Highway 55 has been a barrier to adjusting the grade of Greenfield Road. This project would be a good opportunity to address the elevation to make accommodation for future watershed projects. The Greenfield Road project will also address some erosion occurring along the roadway.

The bid process for the **GS68 gully stabilization project** has not yet begun. Quotes have been requested for testing sediment in the pond to determine how the dredged material will need to be disposed of. Vistad will arrange to survey the project area and prepare plans and specs for approval by the Commission. Once approval is granted, the construction bid process will begin. A wetland specialist will need to visit the site to determine whether a wetland delineation is necessary.

b. HCEE Report.*

Buffer inspections will be occurring late July through early August in the northernmost one-third of the County, including areas of Greenfield. Letters will be sent to affected citizens in early July.

Staff have been following up on the 2022 postcard mailing. The **Vinland National Center** just north of Camp Iduhapi on Lake Independence showed interest. A staff visit identified several areas for potential projects to better manage runoff from paved surfaces across the campus. County staff recommend installing raingardens in and around the parking lot to control stormwater as phase one. Phase two would include addressing ravine erosion near the back lot which drains the most stormwater from the property directly to a wetland adjacent to Lake Independence.

County staff will seek Commissioner and engineer guidance on the permitting process and project implementation for the **Anderson wildlife pond and habitat improvement project** on Fogelman Road in Independence. The project will include restoration of a wetland adjacent to CSAH 90. The project mainly has a habitat focus, but the restoration will provide water quality value and is within the Lake Independence subwatershed.

Kevin Ellis at HCEE has been working on the **Shriners project**. The project has been adjusted to use above-ground piping for the waterers, which greatly reduces the cost of the project and lessens concerns about trampling the pipes. NRCS has not finalized and approved the revised plans yet. The waterers will likely not be installed until 2024.

One Dance Hall Creek landowner was interested in gutters for their barn and protection for a heavy-use area. The owner has installed the gutters on their own and performing wetland

enhancements on the property. They may be interested in a project for the heavy-use area at a later time.

HCEE will be launching a monthly newsletter in July called **Conservation Connection**. Commissioners will be subscribed automatically.

The deadline for the next round of **Lawns to Legumes** funding is June 30.

The **Olsen manure bunker** project is on hold until a concrete contractor can be found to do the project.

c. **TRPD Report.** The first round of the Whaletail alum treatment was completed over three days in late May. Photos will be available at the July meeting.

d. **JASS Report.** Juntunen presented the 2023-2024 insurance binder for signature.

10. COMMISSIONER REPORTS.

a. **Baker** reported that the Lake Sarah curly leaf pondweed treatment has occurred. The treatment area was reduced to nine acres after the spring survey, down from the original treatment area of 180 acres ten years ago. The Commission and TRPD typically share in the treatment cost.

A second nesting loon with two chicks has been found on the lake.

b. **Daniels** shared that there was a water main break in Loretto yesterday leaving half the city without water. The break has been repaired.

11. OTHER BUSINESS.

The **next regular meeting** is scheduled for July 20, 2023 at Maple Plain City Hall.

12. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, motion by Daniels, second by Workcuff to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Juntunen
Administrator
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