



**Steering Committee Meeting
Zoom
Wednesday, February 28th, 2024
1:00PM**

Attending: Craig Mell – Chisago SWCD, Jessica Collin-Pilarski – Washington County, Emily Heinz – CLFLWD, Michelle Jordan – BWSR, Becca Oldenburg-Downing – WCD, Kyle Axtell – SWWD, Laura Jester – Keystone Waters LLC, Mike Isensee – CMSCWD, Karen Kill – BCWD, Matt Oldenburg-Downing – MSCWMO, Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD, Jay Riggs– WCD, Scott Soderman – Isanti County, Mike Gainor – Pine County, Jamie Schurbon – ACD, Paul Swanson – Pine SWCD

Call to Order – 1:00PM

Becca Oldenburg-Downing started the meeting at 1:02PM.

Approval of Minutes

No changes were made to the January 17th, 2024 minutes. Kyle Axtell motioned to approve the January 17th minutes and Jay Riggs seconded. The motion passed with all those voting in favor (SWWD, WCD, CLFLWD, MSCWMO, CSWCD, Washington County, BCWD, ACD, Pine SWCD, and Isanti SWCD).

Administrative updates

Jay Riggs provided an updated about the Agronomist position, sharing that the A1 Subcommittee would be meeting March 1st. Craig Mell stated that all payments have been made.

FY21 WBIF Review

100% of this grant has been encumbered, with 90% spent. The remainder is pending the completion of South Washington Watershed District's (SWWD) Trout Brook project. All other payments have been made.

FY23 WBIF Review

The FY23 grant is 77% encumbered without the addition of the awarded supplemental funds. This grant is 25% spent.

Project Proposals & Reports

Emily Heinz shared some background on CLFLWD's Heath Ave IESF Feasibility project proposal. This study would utilize Emmons and Olivier Resources, Inc. to conduct a feasibility study. There is potential to subdivide and purchase land that is in the Sunrise River headwaters to help improve water quality through the installation of an iron enhanced sand filter. The feasibility study is needed in order to be able to purchase the property. This potential opportunity was just discovered and therefore CLFLWD has not yet applied for Clean Water Funds. Emily also discussed a memo she wrote as a way to adjust funds

Anoka Soil and Water Conservation District - Brown's Creek Watershed District - Chisago County
Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District - Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District - Isanti County - Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District
Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization - Pine County - Pine Soil and Water Conservation District
South Washington Watershed District - Valley Branch Watershed District - Washington County
Washington Conservation District

from the A1 category to A7 since there are not enough funds currently in the A7 category to cover this proposal. The A1 category provides funding for an Agronomist, which currently is a vacant position.

Karen Kill inquired if CLFLWD could cover this project without this funding because she does not support shifting funds from one activity category to another. Emily Heinz shared that CLFLWD would need clean water funds (CWF) to accomplish this feasibility study without watershed based implementation funding (WBIF) and suggested that the A7 category could be backfilled with awarded supplemental funds if needed. Matt Oldenburg-Downing agreed with Karen, and added that the A7 category was specifically added at the request of northern partners, and he wouldn't want the category to be used up if any of the northern partners have a project request coming. As he is not supportive of backfilling activities with the supplemental funding. Kyle Axtell said he too was hesitant to backfill categories. Jay Riggs also echoed this sentiment and recommended updating the work plan to shift funds appropriately. Craig Mell shared that in the supplemental funds request CLFLWD and CMSCWD both requested funding for the A7 category, making up about 10% of the request. Kyle asked if the study would be feasibility if CLFLWD was awarded \$27,000 since that is what remains in the A7 category or if the discussion could be postponed until March. Emily shared it would not be possible with \$27,000 and that the discussion could wait until March. Mike Isensee asked if this is the only project that was submitted for the <\$50,000 deadline. Craig inquired if that deadline applies to the A7 category or only to A1-A4. Becca Oldenburg-Downing answered that it was the only project submitted and that it was previously discussed that the deadline was applicable to all non-shared service categories. Matt questioned how much was in the A7 category and stated that following the work plan is important in order to not make this a competitive process. Emily responded saying being able to adapt to changing conditions allows for using the WBIF dollars before they expire. Matt commented that the funds are not immediately expiring. Craig Mell motioned to table this discussion until the March Steering Committee meeting, at which time there will be a discussion of the supplemental funds and project proposals greater than 50K, Kyle Axtell seconded this motion. All those voting, voted in favor (CLFLWD, CSWCD, SWWD, CMSCWD, WCD, BCWD, MSCWMO, Washington County, Isanti SWCD, and ACD). Kyle stated that he is supportive of adapting for projects that are ready. Karen responded that in this process should be equitable, making sure that other partners have the same opportunity so this doesn't become a money grab. Matt added that this category is intended for capacity building and that the CLFLWD project is a feasibility study not a project that is ready to go into the ground. Emily responded with some additional background that this is a challenging watershed and working to get landowners on board is an obstacle. This location is a good spot for a project, but if it comes down to local capacity funds CLFLWD would need CWF to move forward and that would delay being able to do this work if WBIF are not awarded.

Old Business

Becca Oldenburg-Downing shared a reminder for the 2023 reporting deadline for WBIF and Non-WBIF activities and accomplishments in the LSC. All activities should be reported by March 22nd. Laura Jester said she has received information from ACD, SWWD, and CSWCD.

The WBIF supplemental funding was discussed. Craig Mell shared that that an amendment to the FY23 Funding is needed to account for the additional supplemental funds. If a work plan amendment is done it would need to go to the Policy Committee meeting for consideration in April. Jay Riggs asked how the Metro Convening Group funds will be implemented. Craig stated that those will be in a different work plan, FY25. He also stated that a work plan revision is required for moving funding and then local Boards would need to approve that, likely at May Board meetings. He asked if all the partners who originally submitted for the supplemental funds will be submitting projects to the Steering Committee for consideration in March. Currently, SWWD, CMSWCD, CLFLWD, and MSCWMO all plan to submit project

proposals. Mike Isensee asked if those four entities can work together before submitting their requests and also inquired if any northern partners were going to be submitting projects. Craig Mell and Tiffany Determan said that their organizations will likely have projects proposals coming soon. SWWD, CMSCWD, CLFLWD, and MSCWMO agreed to collaborate before submitting their proposals in March. Craig requested that the FY23 Work Plan revision and supplemental funds be part on the agenda for the March Steering Committee meeting.

New Business

Information was provided on Minnesota open meeting law requirements. Craig Mell summarized some of the relevant information. Policy Committee members have to tell administrative staff (Angie Hong, Becca Oldenburg-Downing) if they are not participating in-person, as well as give the address they will be participating from and have audio and video for the entire meeting. Matt Oldenburg-Downing shared that he was also told to post digitally and post physically at least three days in advance of the meeting the locations where members will be participating from. Mike Isensee stated that watershed districts are required to have a physical board for posting this information. Craig Mell inquired if they CSWCD can post this information or the WCD, in addition to posting on the LSC WP website.

Michelle Jordan presented information on activities that are not completed under the LSC CWMP. She summarized that information needs to be tracked and why as the LSC WP is approaching a midpoint, 5-year evaluation/assessment. Michelle acknowledged that this process is a lift so BSWR developed grants to help for pay this process and that it can be done simultaneously as the performance review and assistance program (PRAP) reporting. The midpoint assessment occurs every 4-6 years while PRAP is every 10 years. The assessment looks at goals and partnership structure. A PRAP coordinator can provide recommendations. Assurance measures apply to WBIF and can be seen in eLINK and reviewed by Michelle and Julie Westerling. Grants to accomplish this work up to \$50,000 are available. Grant funding does not cover a tracking system, however WBIF can be used to pay for this. A midpoint assessment does have to be done because it's written in the LSC WP plan. Laura Jester inquired what constitutes a 'partner' whose work can be included in the assessment. Michelle Jordan stated that a partner could be an outside organization or partners that you work with normally but that aren't part of the LSC WP.

Kyle Axtell gave an update on the FY25 WBIF Grant from the Metro Convening Group (MCG). The MCG recognized that some local priorities are not part of the LSC plan could use some of this funding. A motion passed unanimously for projects focused on these local priorities to be submitted to the MCG for consideration. Kyle shared that more information and an RFP will be distributed soon and that the deadline for submittal is March 29th. The next MCG meeting will take place in April. A large portion of the funds available to the MCG are anticipated to still come back to the LSC WP. Jamie Schurbon asked that as partners receive this information that they make cities aware of it and serve as a liaison.

Other

There were no other items.

Adjourn

Becca Oldenburg-Downing called to adjourn at 2:18PM.