



**Steering Committee Meeting
Zoom
Thursday, December 14th, 2023
1:00PM**

Attending: Craig Mell – Chisago SWCD, Jessica Collin-Pilarski – Washington County, Emily Heinz – CLFLWD, Michelle Jordan – BWSR, Becca Oldenburg-Downing – WCD, Matt Moore and Kyle Axtell – SWWD, Susanna Wilson-Witkowski – Chisago County, Laura Jester – Keystone Waters LLC, Mike Isensee – CMSCWD, Karen Kill – BCWD, Jamie Schurbon – ACD, John Hanson – VBWD, Matt Oldenburg-Downing – MSCWMO, Todd Kulaf – Isanti SWCD, Jay Riggs – WCD, Paul Swanson – Pine SWCD, Ben Elfelt – Chisago Lakes LID, Scott Soderman – Isanti County, Barbara Heitkamp – EMWREP/LSC

Call to Order – 1:00PM

Becca Oldenburg-Downing started the meeting at 1:02PM. Becca noted a correction to the Chisago SWCD WBIF supplemental funds and an updated WBIF supplemental funds request for CMSCWD. Additionally, Becca requested a change in the agenda to move the decision on the Keystone Waters 2024 Administrative Services Contract to take place after the 2023 Reporting WBIF and Non-WBIF agenda item, as to be efficient with Laura Jester's time.

Approval of Minutes

No changes were made to the October 25th, 2023 minutes.

Administrative updates

No administrative updates were given.

FY21 WBIF Review

CMSCWD's projects are in progress with both projects anticipated to be completed this quarter. The FY21 funds should be spent by the end of the year. Funds for A5 may be moved to A6 in the absence of having an agronomist.

FY23 WBIF Review

Updates on the FY23 WBIF were given by Craig Mell. A1 Rush and Goose Lake projects and Pine SWCD's project will begin in spring 2024. The Oak Street project for A2 is complete. A3 ACD project has been submitted for payment and Chisago SWCD's project is in progress. CLFLWD's A4 project is complete. An update on the A5 agronomist position will be given later on in the meeting. The shared educator position A6 has been working on several items includes MIDS. A7 has had \$10,000 encumbered from CMSCWD's project and \$3,000 from Pine SWCD's project. There were no reports for A8. A9 has had \$12,000 encumbered for the Goose Lake project. 77% of the total funds have been encumbered.

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

Project Proposals & Reports

There were no project proposals.

Old Business

Laura Jester provided an update on 2023 Reporting Deadline WBIF and Non-WBIF activities. All reporting will go to the April Policy Committee meeting. All the goals in each organization's comprehensive plan should be reported to Laura. All invoices should be submitted to Craig Mell by January 10th.

The amount the LSC would like to submit for consideration for the available WBIF Supplemental Funds was discussed. Craig Mell suggested narrowing down the application as it is likely the LSC WP won't get all the funds we apply for based on information received from BWSR representatives. He stated that the LSC could submit an application as is and then assess which projects the LSC will do based on the project matrix. Michelle Jordan said that all the potential projects proposed for the WBIF Supplemental Funds are good ones but focusing on how to handle the funds that LSC receives is important. Craig highlighted that projects with the new activity numbers that are in the 2024 work plan (A11-A15) probably shouldn't be included as they would require a work plan amendment. Matt Moore asked what organization's requests this would impact. Craig said the requests that include A11 activities. Craig asked if partners would be willing to send their updated projects and fund requests to himself and Becca Oldenburg-Downing in the next week. He and Becca will then work to submit the request by the January 8th deadline. Partners agreed to this plan.

New Business

A motion to approve the Keystone Waters 2024 Administrative Services Contract was made by Craig Mell and seconded by Emily Heinz. The motion passed with all members who voted voting in flavor (ACD, BCWD, CMSCWD, Chisago County, Chisago SWCD, CLFLWD, Isanti SWCD, MSCWMO, Pine SWCD, SWWD, VBWD, WCD, and Washington County). Craig will send a signed by Chisago SWCD to Laura Jester to add her signature to.

The CMSCWD Oak St. Project Amendment Request was discussed. Mike Isensee clarified that the project cost less than originally anticipated and due to only the construction costs being included in the request and not the design and engineering, as such, he is asking for a reduction in match. Kyle Axtell asked if the match would be prorated since the project costs less, but still be a 25% match. Craig Mell shared that there is no current match minimum. Jamie Schurbon inquired why the match was reduced by the amount it was. Mike stated not having included the design and engineering in the request was the biggest reason for that. Karen Kill motioned to approve the requested amendment for the CMSCWD Oak St. Project with the match amount of \$5,757.56 and Kyle Axtell seconded. The motion passed with all members who voted voting in flavor (ACD, BCWD, CMSCWD, Chisago County, Chisago SWCD, CLFLWD, Isanti SWCD, MSCWMO, Pine SWCD, SWWD, VBWD, WCD, and Washington County).

The match requirements for activities A1, A2, A4, & A6 was brought forth by Craig Mell. Currently there is no minimum set, some partners are able to give more for projects and other projects less so. Matt Oldenburg-Downing inquired if staff time spent at meetings can be used as match. Karen Kill followed up by asking if a per diem is sent to officials attending LSC WP meetings. Kyle Axtell said he would be opposed to using staff time because it would be time consuming to track. Craig stated that using staff time would require an invoice submittal from all partners. Emily Heinz stated that match shows local buy in and Jay Riggs suggested 10% minimum even once the grant requirement is met. Mike Isensee shared that he is anticipating more match in 2024 CMSCWD projects. Matt Moore expressed that the match fulfillment isn't shared equally as some partners contribute more. Craig pointed out that with only

requiring 10% for all projects the LSC wouldn't hit the minimum, our current system allows for the avoidance of dues. Karen requested that the system stay the same with no minimum match requirement in place.

The LSC Metro WBF Convening Group was conferred about. Kyle Axtell stated that he was happy to lead the discussion and convene over zoom, but that he needs some more information about who was involved in the past. Jay Riggs asked about recruiting city representatives. Michelle Jordan suggested reaching out to all city representatives in the LSC area to be a part of the convening process. Up to two city representatives can be voting members. John Hanson shared that the city contacts are in the email he recently sent out regarding the VBWD plan amendment. Jamie Schurbon state that Sunrise WMO has expressed concerns about which representatives are selected and getting the sense that things were already predetermined at the last convening group. Jay brought up having one city representative who is located in Washington County and one from the rest of the LSC. He also requested the meeting take place in person because that may help with discussion facilitation and reducing the feelings of the meeting's outcomes being predetermined. John pointed out that the tribal entities should also be invited and shared contact information for tribal entities. Michelle shared that there is not a strict requirement for tribal entities to be present but that Kyle and Emily Heinz can reach out to BWSR for help to get in contact with tribal entities. Kyle plans to have a meeting scheduled for January.

Other

Craig Mell shared that the LSC WP reached the number of approvals from partners to have adopted the 2024 work plan.

Paul Swanson shared that Randy Hinze won outstanding conservationist. Other awards include Matt Moore for Watershed Administrator of the year, CMSCWD for Watershed of the year, and Trout Brook for project of the year.

Jay Riggs stated that the position announcement for the agronomist is posted.

Craig announced that there is \$58,000,000 available for SWCDs in soil health grants.

Matt Oldenburg-Downing inquired what makes tribes eligible for the convening process, if it was based off current landownership. Michelle Jordan said that there isn't a clear answer. Matt suggested including the Mdewakanton Sioux Community and Jay added that the Ho-Chunk Nation should be included as well. John Hanson shared that the three tribal entities that he shared contact information for where the ones he was guided by BWSR to include in the plan amendment communications.

Adjourn

Becca Oldenburg-Downing called to adjourn at 2:14PM.