**Lower St. Croix One Watershed, One Plan**

**Policy Committee, Meeting 17**

**June 29, 2020 Board Minutes**

**approved 7-27-20**

## Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:00pm by Chair Fran Miron and introductions were made.

*Members Present:* Anoka SWCD – Sharon Lemay

Brown’s Creek WD – Craig Leiser

Carnelian Marine St Croix WD – Wade Johnson

Chisago County – Chris DuBose (arrived prior to plan comment discussion)

Chisago SWCD – Jim Birkholz

Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD – Jackie Anderson (alt.)

Isanti County – Susan Morris

Middle St. Croix WMO – John Fellegy

Pine SWCD – Doug Odegard

South Washington WD – Don Pereira

Sunrise River JP WMO - Janet Hegland (arrived after agenda/minutes approval)

Washington County – Fran Miron

Washington SWCD – Diane Blake

*Staff Present:* Mike Isensee – Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD

Angie Hong – EMWREP

Craig Mell – Chisago SWCD

Jamie Schurbon – Anoka SWCD

Maureen Hoffman – Washington County

Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD

Susanna Wilson Witkowski – Chisago County

Matt Downing – Middle St. Croix WMO

Emily Heinz – Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD

*Others attending:* Barb Peichel – BWSR

Dan Fabian – BWSR

Laura Jester – Keystone Waters

Jen Kader- Freshwater

## AGENDA ITEMS

#### Introductions and Zoom Meeting COVID-19 Statement

Fran Miron opened the meeting by stating that the Policy Committee Meeting is being held remotely due to COVID-19. All votes must be roll call. The meeting tonight also includes the public hearing for the draft LSCWD 1W1P Plan which has finished its public review period. The meeting is open for member of the public to enter and comment online. Angie Hong reported there was only one public comment received online prior to the meeting. The group introduced themselves.

#### Approve June 29, 2020 agenda

Craig Leiser motioned to approve the agenda. Wade Johnson seconded that motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all in favor.

#### Approve March 30, 2020 meeting minutes

Susan Morris motioned to approve the March 30th meeting minutes. John Fellegy seconded this motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all in favor. Janet Hegland of Sunrise River JP WMO joined the meeting.

#### Update on attorney conversation regarding Joint-Powers Agreement

Jamie Schurbon informed the group that the JPA should be ready for either the July or August PC meeting in which the committee will be able to decide on their recommendation for the governing body. The Chisago county attorney is taking the lead on working out the details of the JPA. Jamie shared that some of the details being worked out included: the Administrative Coordinator role, the work plan that would be adopted after the agreement, and how the Policy Committee would likely remain in their same roles. These roles would be named later in the plan and could either be reimbursed from the state or time could be donated. There are five attorney’s working on the JPA draft and the staff recommendation is not to release the draft for all the organizations’ attorneys to work on, as that would make the process unwieldy. Craig Leiser commented that he discussed the JPA with the Brown’s Creek WD Attorney who is one of the five working on the plan and he felt fully apprised of the agreement. Chris DuBose of Chisago county arrived to the meeting.

***Review Plan Comments***

Angie Hong reminded the group that the comments the PC will be reviewing at this meeting are the Steering Committee’s responses to the agency comments made on the draft plan during its review process. Laura Jester guided the group through the discussion. Laura told the PC that they would not be walking through every comment and response because there were so many. Prior to this meeting there were some additional discussions with BWSR staff, even since the meeting materials had been sent out. The Planning Committee discussed the comments in depth in order to formulate responses. John Fellegy acknowledged the number of comments and said he believed they would be relying largely on the staff recommendations. Laura Jester identified some of the comments/responses she believed the PC needed to review at this meeting, and then the floor will be open for any PC members to identify any other comments/responses they would like to discuss.

The first comment Laura presented was #29 from the Valley Brach Watershed District. The VBWD asked how the regionally significant lakes were selected and requested Lake Jane be added to the table of lakes to be protected, and Silver Lake to be added to the table of lakes requiring internal loading analysis and treatment. The internal loading analysis was completed for Silver Lake, with a need for internal treatment identified. The planning team agreed these Lakes met the standard for regionally significant and added them to those respective tables. Fran Miron said he was glad to see VBWD submitting comments and gave the PC some background information on VBWD. The VBWD was one of the organizations invited to join the 1W1P process, but were unable to mostly due to their size and staffing structure; there is no administrator and they have a limited budget. The VBWD has been dealing with many flooding issues and have been working on implementing flooding control. Craig Leiser informed the PC that he updated the VBWD board on the 1W1P process. Fran Miron said he was glad the VBWD was making substantive and quality changes to the plan at this part of the process.

Fran Miron asked the PC to review comment #32 from the VBWD. The comment was about groundwater quality which is impacted by well flooding; the VBWD asked the output measurement to be changed to include well casing raises, rather than just well sealing. The PC agreed to reword the output measurement to include flood proofing measures, which would include raising well casings, as well as well sealing.

The next comment was #53, in which VBWD requested the 1W1P include a broader perspective on water quality in relation to flooding; the basis of which is that often in times of flooding, lower quality landlocked basins are often pumped to the St. Croix, discharging lower quality water. Laura Jester suggested this broader perspective be addressed by plan amendments in the future. Fran Miron explained that the VBWD perspective was based on historical flooding issues, and current flooding issues with the high rainfall. Part of their longer term flooding strategies have explored different ways of moving water out of the floodplain areas including using Brown’s Creek or a pipe to the St. Croix. VBWD has also used the strategy of purchasing floodprone property and sealing wells/SSTS systems. He concluded by saying that he wanted this concern addressed in this plan because plan amendments will take time and their needs are immediate. Craig Leiser shared his historical knowledge of working with VBWD on the board of the Brown’s Creek Watershed District on these flooding issues, specifically Sunnybrook Lake, as far back as 1997. After exploring options, buying out existing property owners ended up being the solutions that made the most financial sense for the flooding at the time. Laura Jester agreed that there was no quick answer and explained that the Advisory Committee determined that flooding issues to be localized, which is why they were not addressed in this way in the watershed wide plan. The VBWD wants the flooding issues to be tied to water quality issues given the pumping of low quality lakes to the St. Croix. Laura said she would work with the advisory committee to come up with something for July. Joh Fellegy said he agrees that it should be addressed in the plan and asked what the timeline was looking like. Fran Miron reminded the PC that tonight’s meeting was approving the responses to the comments of the draft plan and that July’s meeting would be to approve the final 1W1P. He requested that Laura Jester adjust the response to VBWD’s comment #53 to reflect the conversation. Craig Leiser offered Laura the use of some localized flooding language the BCWD has developed in their own plan.

The next comment was #101 from BWSR regarding “Gatekeeper criteria 3” which was dealing with prioritization and analysis. They are still talking through this.

The next comment was #117 from BWSR regarding cost-benefit analysis, and there is a discrepancy among staff on how it should be done. The question is whether to use 30 years or the anticipated life of the project in the cost-benefit analysis. Dan Fabian and Jackie Anderson both shared their perspectives; Jackie said the CLFLWD uses the anticipated lifetime of the projects and advocated for using engineering standards for each project. Dan Fabian said he was fine with the revised response to this comment. He explained that BWSR just wants to see some standardization so that projects can be compared and gave an example of incorporating what it would cost to “refresh” a raingarden so its lifespan of 10 years could be standardized out to 30 years to compare with a 30 year IESF. Jackie Anderson agreed that the equalization process could be done, but it is a more complicated and subjective formula. The CLFLWD uses the actual cost/life span formula with each project and recommends using the actual cost/life span method for cost-benefit analysis for all LSC projects. She encouraged the LSC team to consult with a staff engineer for advice before settling on the method to be used.

The next comment was #119 from BWSR regarding the plan revision process and whether an amendment was needed if it was completed by a stakeholder. Dan Fabian said he believed the comment was responded to well.

Fran Miron opened up the conversation to addition comments about responses the PC would like to address. Chris DuBose noted that Chisago county help their public hearing for the 1W1P draft plan on June 17th and there was no public comment. Craig Leiser and Jim Birkholz both thought the planning committee and Laura did a good job at responding to the comments. Fran Miron asked for the motion to be given latitude in order for the steeping committee to make adjustments to the responses based on the conversation at the meeting.

Jim Birkholz motioned to approve the responses to the comments to reflect the discussion at this meeting and address the revisions raised by the PC, and to provide a copy of those changes to the PC. Craig Leiser seconded this motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all in favor.

Fran Miron asked if there were any other items of business to address before the public hearing. He asked PC members to get authorization from their respective boards to approve the final 1W1P ta the July 27th meeting. The group assumed this meeting would also be virtual. Tiffany Determan reminded the group that the boards could either authorize their Policy Committee representative, or they themselves could authorize the final plan. Laura Jester said she believed the final plan would be substantively ready by the end of the week; just without a few final items that are waiting on some additional information.

***Public Hearing on the draft Lower St. Croix One Watershed One Plan: 5pm***

Fran Miron announced that the public hearing was open. At 5pm there was no one from the public present at the meeting for the public hearing. Angie Hong presented the comment she received online from Ben Winnick, former Forest Lake mayor and councilman. Ben Winnick asked why Forest lake was not listed in the plan, which has been addressed. Fran Miron asked Angie Hong to respond to his comment personally. The PC discussed how long to keep the public hearing open and the group decided to wait until 5:15 to close the public hearing and adjourn the meeting.

***Adjournment***

Craig Leiser motioned to adjourn the public hearing and the PC meeting and John Fellegy seconded the motion.

The next PC meeting will be on July 27th. Laura Jester told the PC that the final plan with revisions should be ready by the end of the week and will be posted on the website with the link sent out. These revisions should include the responses to the comments made tonight.

Fran Miron thanked the AC, PC, Laura and Angie for all their work on the draft plan and incorporating the public comments. Fran Miron adjourned the meeting at 5:16pm.