

**Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership – DRAFT MINUTES**

<p><b>Policy Committee</b> <b>Meeting #10</b></p>	<p><b>Vision</b> The St. Croix River, groundwater, lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and upland habitat in the Lower St. Croix watershed sustain healthy ecosystems, recreation, public health, tourism, agriculture, the economy, and quality of life in our communities.</p> <p><b>Mission</b> Guide protection and restoration of priority natural resources in the Lower St. Croix watershed over the next ten years through implementation of the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.</p>	
<p><b>January 23, 2023</b> 4:00-6:00 PM</p>		
<p><b>Wyoming Area Library</b> 26855 Forest Blvd, Wyoming, MN 55092</p> <p>Optional zoom call-in: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852941439?pwd=RzRlZmVsMG9GR2VVZkl2RVJlTjI4Zz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852941439?pwd=RzRlZmVsMG9GR2VVZkl2RVJlTjI4Zz09</a> Meeting ID: 868 5294 1439 Passcode: 935899</p>		
	<p><b>Facilitator:</b> Angie Hong</p>	<p><b>Note taker:</b> Barbara Heitkamp</p>
<p><b>Attending:</b></p>	<p>Anoka SWCD: Sharon LeMay Carnelian Marine St Croix WD: Kristin Tuenge (virtual) Chisago County: Dan Dahlberg, Lance Petersen (virtual) and Mike Mergens Chisago SWCD: Dave Tollberg (alternate) Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD: Jackie Anderson Isanti County: Kristi LaRowe Isanti SWCD: Tom Anderson Middle St. Croix WMO: Mike Runk Pine County: Steve Hallan (virtual – 4:10 pm) Pine SWCD: Doug Odegard South Washington WD: Kevin ChapdeLaine (virtual) Washington County: Fran Miron</p> <p>Staff: <u>In-person:</u> Angie Hong (EMWREP), Barbara Heitkamp (Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership), Jennifer Hahn (Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership), Craig Mell (Chisago SWCD), Tiffany Determan (Isanti SWCD), Todd Kulaf (Isanti SWCD) Barb Peichel (BWSR), Tom Dietrich (Washington County)</p> <p><u>Virtual:</u> Susanna Wilson-Witkowski (Chisago County), Emily Heinz (CLFLWD), Matt Moore (SWWD), Jamie Schurbon (Anoka CD), Rebecca Oldenburg (WCD)</p>	
<p><b>Absent:</b></p>	<p>Brown's Creek WD: Klay Eckles Sunrise River JP WMO: Janet Hegland Washington SWCD: Diane Blake Valley Branch WD: Ed Marchan</p>	

## **MINUTES:**

Meeting called to order at 4:04 pm by Chair Fran Miron.

### **1. Introductions – Welcome to new members!**

### **2. Election of New Officers**

- Three positions open – Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
- **Nominations:**
  - Chair: Dave Tollberg nominates Fran Miron (Washington County)
    1. Mike Runk motions to cast vote, Doug Odegard seconds. All in favor. Fran Miron will serve as 2023 Chair.
  - Vice-Chair: Dave Tollberg nominates Jim Burkholz (Chisago SWCD)
    1. Mike Mergens motions to cast vote, Tom Anderson seconds. All in favor. Jim will serve as 2023 Vice-Chair.
  - Secretary: Kristin Tuenge nominates herself.
    1. Mike Runk motions to cast vote, Dan Dahlberg seconds. All in favor. Kristin Tuenge will serve as 2023 Secretary.

### **3. Approve agenda:** Motion to approve agenda by Doug Odegard. Second by Jackie Andersen. All in favor. Agenda approved.

### **4. Approve meeting minutes from September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting**

- Motion to approve the 9-26 meeting minutes by Jackie Anderson, Mike Runk seconds. All in favor. Meeting minutes approved.

### **5. Administrative Updates**

- Budget and timeline updates for FY21 and FY 23 grants
  - Craig – 2021 workplan amendments were submitted and approved by BWSR.
  - FY21 funds have all been encumbered and allocated toward projects
  - FY23 workplan has been approved by all partners
  - CLFLWD contract finalized for FY23 at this time - those funds are encumbered
    1. Matt Moore – took bids today on Trout Brook project – construction engineering.
- 2022 WBIF Grant Annual Report
  - Reference Powerpoint given by Angie Hong - no discussion or questions raised by PC members

- Sunrise River WMO departure
  - Memo shared in the packet – will more thoroughly discuss their points of concern during the discussion surrounding project approval and evaluation process
  - Immediate questions?
    1. Fran – does this have any impact on funding structure or amount of funds allocated?
    2. Barb Peichel (BWSR) – metro entities are optional to join, the area is still covered by partner Anoka CD, so there is no impact to funding structure or amounts
- Welcome Laura Jester and Becca Oldenburg
  - Both joining us to help in administrative capacity for the Partnership
  - Laura Jester (contractor) helped with the formation of the original comprehensive watershed plan – will be joining to take over Emily’s grant and progress reporting duties
  - Becca Oldenburg (WCD) will be taking over the Planning/Steering Committee duties from Angie

## 6. Review and consider endorsing policies for project evaluation and approval

- Over the past two years, trying to identify the best way forward in capturing, evaluating, and approving project requests utilizing WBIF funding.
- This document, accompanying calendar and process graphics all serve to lay out our proposed process moving forward. This document has been reviewed and received feedback from both the planning and steering committees.
- This is a LIVE document – will be subject to annual review and updated.
- Hopefully addresses several of the concerns that partners/PC members have had in the past about the funding request process, and also addresses the concerns of the Sunrise River WMO in their memo.
- **Feedback and Discussion:**
  - 4 major concerns brought forth in Sunrise River memo
    1. JPC vs JPE – overall discomfort with the JPC model.
      - Fran: We have committed to an annual review of this topic, at this time the JPC model seems to be working among partners.
    2. Uncomfortable with the decision to allocate funds from a future year for a proposed project
      - Tom: setting a schedule and calendar of deadlines will mean all partners will know when to submit materials and plan ahead for their projects and funding requests
      - Jackie: We need to make sure those deadlines are highlighted strongly
      - Angie: The calendar and deadlines has been shared with staff from all of the member organizations. In her administrative capacity, Becca highlight these deadlines in an annual call for proposals and send out reminders during the year as deadlines are approaching
    3. Conflict of interest – concern that PC members did not abstain from voting approval for their own projects

- Tom: Our proposed policy copies the verbatim BWSR policy, which indicates that as long as the voting individual doesn't not benefit personally from the project, there is no conflict of interest
  - Jackie: I think it would be unfair to not be allowed to vote on the very projects our organization brings forward
  - Angie: Doesn't work either if we have multiple partners on a funding request. The goal of the program is to work collaboratively and they can't all recuse themselves
4. Concerns about liability
- Jackie: This has been a repeated concern of Sunrise River WMO – what more can we do limit liability to the project partner versus all partners in the partnership?
  - Craig: As Chisago SWCD is the fiscal agent and grant holder for BWSR, we would be held liable. We already have legal verbiage that limits our liability and places it on the offending project partner
  - Fran: People are free to sue whoever they want, so can't guarantee outcomes in any case.
- Other points of discussion
1. Steve Hallen – if a project cost is \$150,000 but you are only requesting \$25,000 WBIF funding, does it have to go through the review process for projects above \$50K?
    - Tom: No – it would be considered a less than \$50K grant request and would only need approval by the Steering Committee
  2. Craig: Given that Barbara and Jenn's time charges to the grant and is over \$50K, do we need to bring that funding request through the PC?
    - General group consensus: No, already stated in the workplan, create verbiage that limits policy to projects versus staff time
  3. Jackie: Concern about the Steering Committee criteria re: not planning future allocations and considering projects with funds on cusp of expiration could bump out consideration of larger projects
    - Tom: These criteria are only suggested recommendations to keep in mind when we are thinking about scoring projects
    - Craig: I think having the schedule and a clearer policy process as presented will help partners make sure they stay on track with their funding requests.
7. Meeting schedule for this year:
- April 24<sup>th</sup>, July 24<sup>th</sup>, and October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4-6 pm, presumably at Wyoming Public Library
8. Fran Miron adjourns the meeting at 5:50 pm.