**Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership
Policy Committee Meeting
January 24, 2022, 4-6 pm via zoom**

**MINUTES - DRAFT**

1. **The meeting was called to order by vice chair Chris Dubose at 4:02pm.**
* Policy Committee members in attendance:
	+ Anoka SWCD: Sharon LeMay
	+ Carnelian Marine St Croix WD: Wade Johnson
	+ Chisago County: Chris DuBose (Vice Chair), Dawn White (at large alt.), Mike Mergens
	+ Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD: Jackie Anderson
	+ Isanti County: Susan Morris (Secretary)
	+ Isanti SWCD: Jerry Schaubach
	+ Pine County: Steve Hallan
	+ Pine SWCD: Doug Odegard
	+ South Washington WD: Kevin ChapdeLaine
	+ Sunrise River JP WMO: Janet Hegland
	+ Washington SWCD: Diane Blake
* Policy Committee members not in attendance:
	+ Brown's Creek WD: Klayton Eckles
	+ Chisago SWCD: Jim Birkholz
	+ Middle St. Croix WMO: John Fellegy
	+ Washington County: Fran Miron (Chair)
	+ Valley Branch WD: Ed Marchan
* Also in attendance:
	+ Policy Committee alternates: Dave Medvecky (Isanti), Steve Schmaltz (CLFLWD)
	+ Local staff: Angie Hong, Jamie Schurbon, Barbara Heitkamp, Craig Mell Emily Heinz, Jay Riggs, Matt Moore, Susanna Wilson-Witkowski, Tiffany Determan, Jessica Collin-Pilarski
	+ Other: Barb Peichel and Michelle Jordan (BWSR), Gayle Prest (interested resident)
* Michelle Jordan, new BWSR board conservationist introduced herself to the group.
* Chis Dubose shared that Mike Robinson passed away unexpectedly over the weekend. He was a Chisago County commissioner and policy committee alternate who was involved in the early phase of Lower St. Croix 1w1p planning.
1. **Motion by Susan Morris, second by Mike Mergens to approve 1/24/22 agenda.** All members voting yes. Agenda approved.
2. **Motion by Steve Hallan, second by Diane Blake to approve 10/25/21 minutes.** Jackie Anderson noted that Pg. 2, item four, last word should be changes from sent to spent. Hallan and Blake re-iterated motions to approve the minutes with requested changes. All members voting yes. Minutes approved with suggested changes.
3. **2021 Summary and Highlights:** Angie Hong shared a short presentation highlighting progress on various components of the WBIF grant plan in 2021. She also shared impaired waters listings and de-listings within the Lower St. Croix watershed. Craig Mell provided a financial update. Hong reviewed the planned timeline for 2021 annual reporting and approval of the 2022 plan of work.
4. **Discussion: Joint-Powers Collaborative vs Entity:** Jaime Schurbon shared a short presentation highlighting differences in operations between a joint powers collaborative vs joint powers entity
	1. Chris Dubose – does anyone have concerns about the way things are currently operating?
		* Steve Hallan –big proponent of joint powers collaborative. We have trust in our staff and how they are operating.
		* Chris Dubose – it seems like things are operating well and that decisions aren’t too cumbersome. Would be comfortable moving to an entity but doesn’t think it is necessary
		* Janet Hegland – as a collaborative, we can’t submit our own projects and that will be a detriment in the long term. It’s working now because we don’t have many projects but that may change in the future.
		* Susan Morris – supported an entity from the beginning. Having a collaboration is cumbersome and sometimes wastes the time of local decision-making boards that have to review and approve annual plans they aren’t familiar with. What would be the additional cost for administration if we were an entity?
			1. Schurbon estimates $2000-4000 for insurance costs but that doesn’t include extra administration costs
		* Jackie Anderson – you get a more focused effort if you are an entity because the admin and board aren’t distracted by responsibilities for their own organizations. As a board, the policy committee would be much more familiar with projects if this was an entity. CLFLWD has always supported becoming an entity.
		* Janet Hegland – right now, the local entities are spending funds on admin for the JPC. If we became an entity, there wouldn’t be as much cost bourn at the local level. Chisago SWCD has taken the lion’s share of the work so far and it isn’t fair to make them do so much work on behalf of the partnership
		* Craig Mell – his Chisago SWCD board member is not here tonight but their board has been supportive of becoming an entity
		* Chris Dubose – is anyone against an eventual transition to a joint powers entity?
		* Diane Blake – she isn’t but Fran Miron who isn’t in attendance tonight was. She’d like to hear his opinion before moving forward.
		* Jackie Anderson – Fran Miron did say he was open to eventually becoming an entity
		* Jerry Schaubach – has always thought that an entity was the way to go
	2. Chris Dubose – requested that the planning team look into this more and come back to the Policy Committee for a vote at the April meeting.
		* Craig Mell – current budget is $100k for administration. $83k has been encumbered so far.
		* Angie Hong – noted that the $100k is for the lifetime of the WBIF grant, not the annual cost for program administration.
		* Susan Morris – we should talk with MCIS. They strongly support becoming an entity.
5. **Updated WBIF Project Request Process Flow Chart with Guidelines for “Fast Track” Projects** – Emily Heinz
* Heinz explained how the work flow has been updated to explain the way that “fast track” projects will be dealt with
* Jackie Anderson – she requested and was expecting a policy statement for consideration at this meeting. This would be an official policy update that would then be sent to the local governing bodies for approval.
* Craig Mell – does the current JPC lay out a process for changing, adding, or approving policy statements?
* Jamie Schurbon – the language in the JPC is silent on this issue.
* Chris Dubose – the emergency project itself would not be subject approval to by local entities, but the policy for how they are approved should be.
* Craig Mell – our JPC has language related to annual work plans but not changes to WBID grant work plans.
* Jackie Anderson – need to provide some transparency to the process so that the same group of staff aren’t making decisions at every step in the decision-making process.
* Craig Mell – the current WBIF grant work plan states that subcommittees will develop policies to bring to the steering committee for recommendation to Chisago SWCD board.
* Jackie Anderson – we still need a policy statement to be approved by local governing boards for emergency projects
* Chris Dubose – it makes sense to bring a policy statement to the local governing boards at the same time we ask them to consider moving toward a joint-powers entity
* Matt Moore – last year’s SWWD project was not an emergency. Minnesota State Statute grants watershed districts with special powers for official emergencies.
* Emily Heinz – the main issue last year was just that we were early in the implementation process and didn’t have policies in place yet at the time the group decided to move forward with the McQuade project
1. **Memo: Prioritization and Targeting** – Emily Heinz explained the memo and steering committee process for reviewing and prioritizing projects.
2. **Subcommittee updates –**
	1. A1 - Agronomy Outreach – Jay Riggs
		* WCD and U of MN have fully executed all contracts needed to allow our new agronomist Jennifer Hahn to begin in February.
		* Barbara Heitkamp sent out an announcement last week and shared some background info about Hahn. She will begin Feb. 28.
		* Let Barbara and Angie know if you didn’t get the email via MailChimp last week.
	2. A2, 4, 5 ,9 - Urban and Agricultural Projects – Craig Mell
		* The urban and ag subcommittee is awaiting more project proposals
	3. A3 - Watershed Education – Angie Hong and Barbara Heitkamp
		* Heitkamp – she and Hong will be forming small groups to begin planning a workshop on the water and workshop in the vineyard for local elected officials this coming summer. She is making a new guidebook and education materials for lake associations. New video on natural environment lakes, featuring Isanti Co. Barbara will also be starting a blog to focus on northern communities.
		* Hong - There is a lot of overlap between EMWREP and Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership. Heitkamp and Hong met with local partners during Dec. and Jan. and developed a 2022 education plan for EMWREP and LSC. The two programs are reaching different audiences but in the same geographical region and toward the same ultimate goals.
	4. A6 - Wetland Restoration – no updates
	5. A7 - Internal Analyses – Susanna Wilson-Witkowski
		* The subcommittee reviewed a proposal for an internal analysis study on Forest Lake and will be sending it to the steering committee for review on Wednesday, Jan. 26
		* The subcommittee will continue discussing seven other applications they received.
	6. A8 - Targeting Analyses – Jay Riggs
		* Urban and rural subwatershed assessment protocols are under development
		* Pine County and Sunrise River subwatershed analysis is underway
		* Tree canopy protocol for enhanced street sweeping is in development
3. **Topics for the next meeting:**
* Next round of WBIF funding
* 2021 annual plan and 2022 annual plan of work (for everything, not just WBIF funds)
* Continued conversation about moving from a JPC to a JPE
1. **Jackie Anderson motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Steve Hallan.** All members voting yes. Meeting adjourned at 5:18pm.