

Rum River "One Watershed, One Plan"

Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

Coming together to identify shared goals.
Planning together to leverage unique capacity.
Working together to achieve results.

July 28th, 2022
5:00-7:00 PM

Vision Statement

- Clean, abundant water for consumption, recreation and habitat
- Collaborative partnership among communities working towards a common goal
- Community members and decision makers understand the challenges and opportunities facing the watershed
- Innovative strategies to meet our goals

In Person Meeting
 MLC Courthouse,
 lower level, Conf rm D, 635 2nd St SE,
 Milaca, MN 56353

Note taker: Lydia Godfrey, Isanti SWCD

Voting Members Present:

Colleen Werdien - Anoka Conservation District
 Bob Janzen Aitkin – SWCD (*virtual attendance-no voting*)
 Ed Popp – Benton County
 Wade Bastian – Benton SWCD - (*virtual attendance-no voting*)
 Jake Scherer – Benton SWCD, Alternate
 Greg Anderson – Isanti County
 Al Koczur – Isanti SWCD
 Kim Johnson – Kanabec SWCD
 Jake Janski – Mille Lacs SWCD
 Dale Scholl – Morrison SWCD
 Mike Wilson – Morrison County
 Lisa Fobbe – Sherburne County
 Kerry Saxton – Sherburne SWCD

Partners and Staff Present:

Steve Hughes – Aitkin SWCD - (*virtual attendance*)
 Jamie Schurbon – Anoka Conservation District
 Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD
 Lydia Godfrey- Isanti SWCD
 Deanna Pomije – Kanabec SWCD
 Susan Shaw – Mille Lacs SWCD
 Dan Cibulka – Sherburne SWCD
 Darren Mayers –BWSR

Voting Members Absent:

Laurie Westerlund – Aitkin County

1. Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm.
2. Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair

Fobbe nominated Janski for the Chair position. Popp seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.** Janski was elected Chair.

Janski nominated Fobbe for the position of Vice Chair. Popp seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.** Fobbe was elected Vice Chair.

3. Approve agenda

Motion by Fobbe to approve the agenda; second by Koczur. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

4. Approve April 28, 2022 Policy Committee Minutes

Motion by Saxton to approve the April 28th, 2022 outcomes as presented; second by Werdien. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

5. Resolution to Adopt Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Motion by Popp to adopt and implement the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan; second by Greg Anderson. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

6. 2022 Timeline Review

Determan provided an overview of the 2022 Timeline located on page 11 of the agenda packet. The Rum River Watershed Partnership Board is scheduled to meet three times for the rest of the year. The timeline of meetings is based on the current meeting schedule but is subject to change.

This meeting is the first item on the timeline. The goal of the three meetings, including this one, is to set up the Rum River Watershed Partnership to receive State Watershed Based Implementation funding early 2023. The meetings are necessary to help meet deadlines. The September meeting of the Rum River Watershed Partnership Board would be to review the draft work plan, which then must go into a 45-day courtesy review period to local boards. The board would want to meet in November to approve the work plan so it can be sent to BWSR for approval by March 2023. In the future, the board can meet quarterly.

The Implementation Planning Committee will convene via email to comment on the work plan in August.

Discussion

Question: Will the draft by-laws be approved at a future meeting?

It was discussed that the draft by-laws are an agenda item for today's meeting, and any action will be decided later during the agenda.

7. Appoint ex-officio Implementation Planning Committee Organizations

There is a memo of proposed ex-officio members on page 13 of the agenda packet. Determan explained ex-officio members' purpose. They are Federal, State, Local and non-profit agency members that would provide technical advice to help with plan implementation. These members provide advice but have no voting rights.

Anoka County is on the ex-officio list because they expressed that they would like a staff member to attend the meetings, even though they did not join the JPE. Any organization that did not sign the JPA but did adopt the plan could be considered to become an ex-officio member. The board decided that agencies that approved the plan but did not sign the JPA can be an ex-officio member.

Motion by Lisa Fobbe to approve list as included with the addition that any agency that has adopted the plan but not sign the JPA can be an ex-officio member. Kim Johnson seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

Discussion

There was discussion to clarify the role of ex-officio members and their involvement. Determan clarified that they would not be able to vote and would just provide advice, similar to what the agencies did during the planning process. Schurbon added that those that did not sign the JPA also would not be able to receive WBIF.

K. Johnson questioned if members could be added to the list as needed. Determan confirmed the list can be modified as the board desires.

K. Johnson and Koczur noted that agencies that have not signed the JPA should still be included in the conversation in case they decide to join in the future.

There was also discussion about whether Anoka County should be included on the list since they did not adopt the plan. Colleen Werdien was in favor of including Anoka County.

Greg Anderson questioned if the board was to approve a designated person from each agency or just the agency. Determan answered that each agency would designate its representative, so that way each individual would not need to be approved by the board.

8. JPE Attorney Selection

There was a proposal from a private law office to serve as the watershed's attorney. Schurbon provided more details. The attorney has experience serving other watersheds, so he is well versed in watershed law. Schurbon noted that there would be funds to pay for the attorney after the grant is executed.

Popp moved to table item until the next meeting. The item was tabled.

Discussion:

Saxton inquired why this attorney was chosen over county attorneys. Schurbon relayed that every county attorney turned the role down. G. Anderson questioned if there was a call out for a proposal and if an RFP is needed. The attorney proposal is from Schurbon directly reaching out to the attorney. Mayers will explore the legal requirements for selecting an attorney.

There was a discussion about the number of hours the attorney would be utilized. Schurbon

estimates that they will be needed more the first year and then less over the years. Janski noted the group would want an attorney they could stick with over the years. Schurbon clarified that if desired the group could change lawyers in the future.

9. Draft Bylaws Review

Determan reviewed the bylaws and their changes. The attorney group assessed the bylaws and accepted recommended changes. The attorney group advised against the executive committee that was originally included. Determan recommended that the entity's attorney look over the bylaws before the entity approves them, or else the entity can approve them now if they feel confident in them. The bylaws can also be amended in the future.

Janski sought clarification about the Chair and Vice Chair election. Determan clarified the board will not necessarily meet at the beginning of the year every year. Janski proposed language is added that Chair and Vice Chair would be elected at the first meeting of the year.

Motion by M. Wilson to approve bylaws with the amendment that the new Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected at the first Rum River Watershed Partnership Board meeting each calendar year. Koczur seconded. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

Discussion:

Janski asked for clarification on Article 3 Section 6 regarding conflict of interest, and how it would apply to a county commissioner that approved a project on land owned by the county they represent. It was determined that since the commissioner would not benefit financially, it was not a conflict of interest.

K. Johnson proposed language could be added to remove a representative from a group for reasons beyond missing multiple meetings in a row. Examples discussed included a board member publicly making statements on behalf of the board when not authorized or otherwise acting in ways contrary to board-approved decisions. Schurbon relayed the attorney group was hesitant of allowing the JPE board to remove board members, preferring instead that each Party to the JPE selects its own representatives and determines whether they should be removed. K. Johnson and Wilson expressed unease that it is possible for members to miss multiple meetings with little repercussions.

10. Initial DRAFT Annual Work Plan Review

Determan reviewed the draft annual work plan that began on page 29 of the agenda packet. There are 4 sections to the work plan based on what was called for in the comprehensive plan: Operating Budget, Partnership Funded Programs, All Funding Sources Program, and Implementation Tracking. Determan noted that staff had already reviewed the work plan, so there should be few changes going forward. Members should take time on their own to review the tables in the Partnership Funded Programs section. There will be a revised version of the Annual Work Plan at the next meeting.

Discussion

Janski questioned if the Annual Work Plan would be publicly available, and Shaw confirmed it will be.

Saxton asked if a landowner could do a project that wasn't in the plan. Determan explained that the work plan lists groups of project types, not specific projects. Additionally, the staff is developing a system to rank projects, so if a project had a high ranking but was not in the work plan the board could make an amendment to do the project. Otherwise, landowners can work exclusively with their

SWCD to implement projects.

Saxton stressed that landowners may demand the watershed work quickly to implement projects, and the entity should be prepared for that. A discussion followed about the protocols currently in place, and other members were in favor of not expediting the process for special cases. Determan clarified the plan dictates project types and priorities, and not specific projects, so after ranking there is a potentially speedy process to implement projects.

11. Consideration of board liaisons to subcommittees

The board was in favor of having liaisons attend subcommittee meetings. The liaison role will rotate in the future, but for the next few meetings, a volunteer will be chosen. Werdien volunteered to attend the next Implementation Planning Committee meeting taking place on October 17th.

12. Establish Meeting Dates, times, format, and locations for 2022

Meetings will continue to be on the fourth Thursday of the month. The start time will be moved up to 4:30 pm. There was a discussion about moving the meeting space throughout the watershed, but for the rest of the year they can be held at the Mille Lacs Courthouse.

Virtual meetings will not work due to open meeting laws. However, staff and alternates could view meetings virtually, but not participate.

13. **Next Meeting Date:**

September 22, 2022 at 4:30 pm

14. Janski called to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 pm.