

**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.

**September 22, 2022**  
**4:30PM – 6:30PM**

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> St SE,  
 Milaca, MN 56353

**Note taker:** Lydia Godfrey, Isanti SWCD

**Voting Members Present:**

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

**Alternates Present:**

- Barbara Burandt – Sherburne County - *(virtual attendance)*

**Partners and Staff Present:**

- Jamie Schurbon – Anoka Conservation District  
 Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD - *(virtual attendance)*  
 Lydia Godfrey- Isanti SWCD  
 Deanna Pomije – Kanabec SWCD - *(virtual attendance)*  
 Perry Bunting – Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe - *(virtual attendance)*  
 Susan Shaw – Mille Lacs SWCD  
 Francine Larson – Sherburne SWCD - *(virtual attendance)*  
 Barb Peichel –BWSR  
 Gerry Maciej – Benton SWCD

**Voting Members Absent:**

- Kelly Applegate-Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

1. Meeting called to order by Janski at 4:32 pm. Introductions led by Janski. Only members present in-person may vote.
2. Approve Agenda

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

3. Approve July 28, 2022 Rum River Watershed Partnership Board meeting minutes  
Werdien questioned if the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe was present at the last meeting since it is not reflected in the minutes. Shaw clarified that they were not a signed member yet, so they are not listed as an absent member.

**Motion by Saxton to approve the July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 outcomes as presented;** second by Koczur. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

4. Progress Report and Updates

Determan led the updates and progress report. The goal for 2022 is to stay on track to get the work plan approved by BWSR by March 2023. At this meeting, the goal is to move the work plan onto the 45-day courtesy review period. At the next board meeting, comments will be addressed, and the annual work plan will be approved for submittal to BWSR.

During the last board meeting it was decided any agency that has adopted the plan but has not signed the JPA can be an ex-officio member. Some of the invited non-voting members have not yet responded. Those that responded were sent the draft work plan. There were only two minor comments from state agencies. Otherwise, there was approval from all staff members that had signed into the JPE.

The Implementation Planning Committee met on September 19<sup>th</sup> and made some minor refinements to the annual work plan. BWSR gave the IPC training about grant administration for those using WBIF funds. Koczur was the JPE representative that sat in on the IPC meeting, and he stressed the BWSR training's message to keep all records and invoices.

The Mille Lacs band has signed onto the JPE.

**Comments:**

Janski noticed a typo on the timeline. The funding request to BWSR will go begin 12/1/2022 not 12/1/2023 and end 12/15/2022.

5. JPE Attorney Update

Schurbon walked the group through the attorney update summary starting on page 25 of the agenda. Schurbon sought two more proposals and got further details from the original attorney proposal. All three firms have experience working with watersheds. Each has different hourly rates. Each rate is based on the lead attorney's rate, but two of the firms have a lower rate for their other workers. Schurbon issued a reminder that the attorney will not be able to be paid using grant funds until the entity receives the grant.

**Motion by Bastian to accept the proposal from Kennedy and Graven** second by Fobbe. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

Discussion:

Bastian asked if Hannah Schacherl with Rinke Noonan would charge the same rate as their lead

attorney. Schurbon relayed that she would have a lower rate, and the group should expect the work to be done by a mix of the higher rate and the lower rates. Bastian questioned how many approximate hours the attorney would be needed. Schurbon estimated between 20 and 30 hours total.

Popp suggested the group reaches out to other watersheds to see what their legal fees are. Schurbon responded that \$200 an hour is common for watersheds.

Westerlund asked if a letter was sent out to county attorneys to see if they are interested. Schurbon responded that county attorneys were asked earlier in the process and were not interested. Janski reminded the group that at the last JPE board meeting members believed that hiring an outside firm was more equitable.

Janski reminded the group that the chosen firm can be changed in the future.

#### 6. JPE Insurance

Schurbon discussed insurance options for the JPE. Insurance will be needed for the entity but the funds to pay for it will not come until the grant is executed. However, the process will take a while so Schurbon has initiated the process. Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) represents many of the partners and are the only option right now.

The board reviewed the exposure survey and decided if workers' compensation should be included. Workers' compensation would cover something that would happen to board members at, or on the way to, a meeting.

**Motion by Wilson to waive workers' compensation coverage** second by Popp. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

At the next meeting, there should be a complete insurance quote that includes more options. Schurbon will ask for a high and low quote from MCIT.

**Motion by Bastian to submit exposure survey to MCIT** second by Fobbe. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

#### **Discussion:**

If workers' compensation is desired MCIT will want the board to get a taxpayer identification number. However, as an entity, a taxpayer identification number may not be wanted since it implies the entity has staff. Fobbe and Popp added that they already covered through their work, and it likely would cover them for these meetings as well. Therefore, they would not need workers' compensation from the entity.

Werdien asked if someone doing grant work for the entity would also be covered. Schurbon informed the group that if someone works on a project using grant funds there will be wording to pass liability onto them. However, he warned that lawsuits could still be possible.

#### 7. DRAFT Annual Work Plan Review

Determan reviewed the annual work plan. There are few changes from last time. Board members should be familiar enough to explain the plan to their boards.

The operating budget will be paid for using WBIF. There will be a lot of staff time required to administer the grant which will not be completely covered under the current budget. The total operating budget sum will not change, however, some of the funding may shift between the categories. A shift of 10% or less within the categories will not require board approval.

The partnership-funded programs section will include any money the partnership would administer. Money was allocated to tasks in the plan by asking partners what projects are planned in the priority areas to ensure goals will be achieved and WBIF will be used. There will always be overlapping sources of funding.

Determan reviewed Table 1 of the work plan. There is a 10% grant match requirement that will be pulled from certain project categories. IPC partners provided input on the match they had available, so there is confidence where the grant match will come from. Money is being targeted to surface water restoration, protection, and outreach, and education since those are the tier 1 items in the work plan. There will be a small board of staff to create a watershed-wide outreach and engagement, and they will ask for a board liaison to participate. Projects will be targeted in tier 1 areas but will move on to tier 2 areas if needed.

Figure 2 of the work plan is to provide a visual for actions that will be taken and their funding sources within each management zone. The final section is implementation tracking which will be added to as the plan is acted on.

Members should take the plan back to their board and check if they have comments. Staff will put together a summary that members can send to their respective boards. All comments can be sent to Determan as a memo or an email. Those comments will be summarized and presented at the next meeting. If there are questions members should first consult their staff representative and then Determan.

**Motion by Bastian to approve work plan to move into 45-day courtesy review period**  
second by Fobbe. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

### **Discussion**

Janski asked if the operating budget was an annual budget. The budget covers fiscal year 2023 so it is not annual. Determan is going to add text to the table to clarify. Westerlund asked where funding will come from after the grant ends and Schurbon clarified there will be another round of grants in the future.

There was a discussion highlighting the importance of using WBIF to do projects. Anderson informed the group he recently attended a presentation by a BWSR representative, and the presenter commented that the majority of WBIF should go to projects. There was concern that legislators may be dissatisfied with funding statistics if they look to reevaluate 1W1P funding. Janski added it will be important to highlight the work that has been done when the Clean Water Land and Legacy Act is up for reelection. Peichel assured that the work to set up projects and lay the foundation is also very important. Determan affirmed that the projects in the work plan are goals that can confidently be achieved.

Janski asked if categories in the annual plan were able to deviate by 10% without board approval. Determan confirmed that is correct since a deviation between the categories of more than 10% would require BWSR to approve.

Due to open meeting laws, members should not reply all to the group emails.

### 8. Next Steps

The board should expect a summary packet of the annual work plan in about a week. They should then send the annual work plan to their boards and see if they have comments while it is in its 45-day review period.

9. **Next Meeting Date:**

November 30, 2022 at 4:30 pm.

10. Janski called to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 pm.