

Rum River Watershed Partnership

**Rum River Watershed Partnership
JPE Board Meeting Minutes**

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

**June 22, 2023
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 2nd St SE,
 Milaca, MN 56353

Note taker: Lydia Godfrey, Isanti SWCD

**Voting
Members
Present:**

Laurie Westerlund – Aitkin County
 Colleen Werdien - Anoka Conservation District
 Wade Bastian – Benton SWCD – *(virtual attendance, no voting)*
 Al Koczur – Isanti SWCD
 Kim Johnson – Kanabec SWCD
 Jake Janski – Mille Lacs SWCD
 Kelly Applegate - Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
 Bobby Kasper – Morrison County
 Dale Scholl – Morrison SWCD
 Chris Jurek – Sherburne SWCD – *(virtual attendance)*

**Alternates
Present:**

**Partners and
Staff Present:**

Jamie Schurbon - Anoka Conservation District
 Gerry Maciej – Benton SWCD
 Emily Forbord – Benton SWCD - *(virtual attendance)*
 Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD
 Lydia Godfrey- Isanti SWCD
 Perry Bunting – Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe - *(virtual attendance)*
 Susan Shaw – Mille Lacs SWCD
 Dan Cibulka – Sherburne SWCD - *(virtual attendance)*
 Michelle Jordan – BWSR – *(virtual attendance)*

**Voting
Members
Absent:**

Bob Janzen – Aitkin SWCD
 Ed Popp – Benton County
 Alan Duff – Isanti County
 Lisa Fobbe – Sherburne County

1. Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm by Janski. Voting must be done by roll call since one voting member is attending virtually.

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Westerlund to approve the agenda; second by Koczur. Roll call vote. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

3. Approve March 23, 2023 Rum River Watershed Partnership Board meeting minutes

Motion by Werdien to approve the March 23rd, 2023, outcomes; second by K. Johnson. Roll call vote. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

4. Quarterly Information Discussion

Planning members asked how the board wanted to be updated about progress and what they hoped to get out of the meetings. Project updates will be provided at the staff's discretion when issues arise, or a project is completed. Information will be provided in board packets so members can review it ahead of time and bring questions they have to the meeting. Financial and outreach updates will be provided quarterly. The financial updates will include bank statements to accompany the financial report. Draft meeting notes will also be sent out within a week of the meeting to help inform those that did not attend the meeting.

Discussion

Board members discussed the level and format they would like to be updated about progress made in the watershed. Members want to remain informed about successes and failures to adapt how the board is managed to ensure success. However multiple members noted they did not want to create extra work for staff members to provide regular updates. Janski noted the board could rely on staff to draw attention to what is important. Determan confirmed project updates could be provided upon project completion or setbacks. Westerlund reminded the group verbal updates would greatly increase meeting agendas and Koczur voiced support information should be provided non-verbally in agenda packets. Scholl and Werdien noted the RRWP is a public entity that others may draw advice from so it is important to remain informed and involved.

5. Administrative Reports/ Updates

Schurbon provided a financial report in the agenda. There are two bank statements corresponding to two bank accounts. The partnership put funds into a CD that matures in October. So far, \$220 has been made in interest which is displayed in the "unrestricted" column since this is funding that can be used for anything.

Motion by Koczur to approve the financial report; second by Westerlund. Roll call vote. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

Janski commented that he attended both IPC meetings and other board members attended as well. He noted that there was lots of deliberation at the meetings, and it appears staff is thoroughly vetting project proposals.

Determan informed the group the statute typo in the Master Agreements has been resolved, and the Statements of Work have been condensed to be easier to follow.

An outreach update was given to the board. Many board members had positive comments for the watershed logo. An orientation fact sheet about the RRWP was created for staff and board members and

it is also available online for the public. The hiring of the watershed outreach and forestry position has been delayed due to the loss of other staff at Mille Lacs SWCD. Godfrey added staff and board members will remain updated about outreach accomplishments through monthly emails.

Motion by Scholl to approve the watershed logo; second by Kasper. Roll call vote. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

Discussion

K. Johnson asked how the delayed hiring of the watershed outreach and forestry position would impact the watershed. Shaw replied there should be no impact except some of the funds set aside for the position may be moved to another category.

6. 2nd Q Project Approvals

There are four funding requests, three of which are recommended for funding currently. The Morrison SWCD project will be rediscussed if it is brought forward again with additional details. Determan added that if the three projects are approved there will be about \$180,000 in grant funds remaining which puts the RRWP ahead of schedule once those are spent.

Motion by Westerlund to approve the recommended 2nd Quarter Funding Requests including Master Agreements and Statements of Work; second by Scholl. Roll call vote. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

7. Updates

Since there was time remaining in the meeting, Janski asked staff if there were updates they wanted to share. Shaw mentioned at Mille Lacs SWCD her staff has been working with two landowners that will install stormwater gully erosion projects on Mille Lacs Lake and they have recently heard from two other interested parties.

The project updates sparked a discussion about putting signs at projects. Schurbon noted there is a grant requirement to put Clean Water Land and Legacy logo signs at applicable projects. It is possible that if the RRWP is printing and buying signs they may add their logo and Michelle confirmed signs were eligible under the grant. Staff will look into sign cost estimates.

Determan shared that the partnership is already exceeding most of the six initial grant goals.

There were questions about voting remotely. Members may vote remotely up to three times a year for medical or safety reasons, but the address they are voting from must be posted. If members need to vote remotely, they should contact their staff person.

Discussion

When discussing providing signs about the watershed at project sites Shaw emphasized staff should determine if there is a desire for signs from landowners. Janski added that the partnership could see if there is remaining funding from this grant before purchasing signs. Koczur cautioned that through his work with Pheasants Forever some people felt entitled to have access to the areas where there were signs. Other ideas for signage were also proposed such as stickers, yard signs for non-structural projects, QR codes, and flip boxes.

K. Johnson asked if projects are in competition to be an individual district project or a partnership project. Determan replied that if the project qualifies in the implementation table or the work plan the partnership would work to fund it, so if it is a low priority it would be a district project. She also noted

that for implementation tracking the partnership is including anything done that works towards watershed goals not just what is funded by the partnership. Maciej agreed that the work of individual districts and the partnership is complimentary and not in competition with each other.

Janski noted the partnership needs to demonstrate to the public the progress being made and the funding source especially since the funding is not guaranteed forever.

8. **Next Meeting Date:**

September 28, 2023, at 4:30 pm at the Mille Lacs County Courthouse.

9. **Janski called the meeting to adjourn at 5:32pm.**