

Snake Watershed Partnership Meeting Outcomes –January 22, 2024 10:30am-12:30pm

Location: Kanabec Co. Courthouse or Remote Google Meeting

Board: Travis Leiviska (Aitkin Co); *Kurt Beckstrom (left early), Bob Hoefert (left ~11:50 am) (Mille Lacs SWCD); Kevin Belkholm, (Kanabec SWCD); Tom Roeschlein (Kanabec Co); Terry Lovgren (Pine Co); Michael Cummins (Pine SWCD)

*remote attendees

Staff:

Kanabec SWCD: Deanna Pomije, *Emily Larsen; Pine SWCD: Mara Jade; Pine Co: Erin Hoxie, Mike Gainor, David Minke; Aitkin SWCD: *Janet Smude; Mille Lacs SWCD: Willow Dean; BWSR: *Barb Peichel, Zach Guttormson

Items in italics have been clarified after our 1/24 meeting.

Purpose for the meeting

Approve Service Contracts. Seek comments on project vetting and project policies.

10:32 Roll Call – Belkholm chairing

Belkholm led the group in a round robin with everyone introducing themselves by answering an ice breaker question on their potato preferences.

*Approval of Agenda

Motion by Lovgren, second by Cummins to approve the agenda as presented

Affirmative: Hoefert, Roeschlein, Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

*Approval of the 11/27/23 Outcomes

Motion by Leiviska, second by Hoefert to approve the 11/27/23 outcomes as presented

Affirmative: Hoefert, Roeschlein, Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

Sub-Watershed Assessment – Pokegama Lake Assn. (Pine SWCD)

Mara Jade from Pine SWCD presented a proposal for a sub-watershed assessment to be completed on the Pokegama Lake watershed by a consultant for \$51,300. The assessment on this watershed is meant to identify the best locations and which conservation practices will lead to an improved water quality on Pokegama Lake. This assessment is planned to be completed over a period of 2 years. The lake assn. and the MN Pollution Control Agency will provide historic water quality testing data. Within the Pokegama watershed it was mentioned that most of the Snake River itself bypasses the lake.

Motion by Leiviska, second by Hoefert to approve the sub-watershed assessment on the Pokegama Lake watershed by a consultant for \$51,300, contracted with Pine SWCD.

Affirmative: Hoefert, Roeschlein, Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

Partnership Insurance with MCIT

We are waiting on an insurance quote from MCIT.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Leiviska to approve the payment of our insurance for 2024, not to exceed the budgeted \$3,000 amount.

Affirmative: Hoefert, Roeschlein, Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

Project Vetting Process:

Pomije led the group through two flow charts showing the process for project approval; first through the staff Steering Committee then followed with an approval by the Partnership Board for projects equal to or over \$20,000. For projects less than \$20,000 the Steering Committee will review proposed projects using a Partnership Board approved project ranking criteria sheet and against any Partnership Board approved project policies, such as cost-share rates for non-structural incentive payments such as cover crops. Priority areas as identified in our Plan will be the focus for outreach in seeking willing landowners to do projects. BWSR has said that the assurance measure for our watershed grant will be to seek out 70% of our project funds to be spent within the priority areas. It was suggested to add onto the flow chart the step where the local govt. unit (LGU, i.e.: Pine SWCD) signs a contract with the voluntary land owner to help fund and complete the project. This step will be added.

Motion by Cummins, second by Lovgren to approve the presented project flow chart showing the project approval process with the suggested addition.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren

Opposed: Hoefert, Roeschlein **Abstain:** None Motion passed.

Service Contracts:

***Attorney Representation (Pine Co)**

It was estimated to need attorney services for the Partnership for ~40 hours per year. There was a discussion over what exact billable rate the Pine Co. attorney would charge. The exact rate was not known. Pine Co. staff estimated between \$75-150 / hour. (*confirmed \$108.26 rate*) There was a brief explanation on how the billable rate is calculated using a BWSR approved calculator. The calculator adds in overhead expenses such as leave expenses, benefits and normal office actual expenses looking back in time 1-year. Normal office expenses may include rent, insurance, board per diems, office and computer supplies, vehicle expenses and annual dues.

Motion by Cummins, second by Lovgren to approve the service contract with Pine Co. for attorney services for representing the Partnership.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Hoefert

Opposed: Roeschlein **Abstain:** None Motion passed.

***Master Contract (one for each SWCD -LGU)**

Motion by Leiviska, second by Lovgren to approve the master service contracts, one with each SWCD; Pine, Mille Lacs, Kanabec and Aitkin.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None Motion passed.

Statement of Works (SOW):

***Sub-watershed Assessment (Pine SWCD)**

Motion by Cummins, second by Lovgren to approve the SOW with Pine SWCD for the completion of a sub-watershed assessment using a consultant (Stantec) on the Pokegama Lake watershed to locate where best to place conservation practices for up to \$51,300.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Various Small Projects, requesting approval:

*Shoreline Protection Projects <\$20,000 each (Kanabec SWCD) Not to Exceed \$5,000

Kanabec SWCD is seeking approval on a shoreline protection project on Fish Lake, that was previously funding through the SRWMB, for \$2,406.39.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Cummins to approve the above SOW with Kanabec SWCD for shoreline protection projects, less than \$20,000 each, using a not to exceed amount of \$5,000.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Request for grant funds of not to exceed \$1,000 (Project Development grant category) for a consultant to consolidate our priority maps into an ArcGIS and web-based map to easier identify which priority areas are promoting which conservation practices. To be contracted with the Kanabec SWCD.

Motion by Cummins, second by Leiviska to approve the above SOW request with Kanabec SWCD to hire a consultant to consolidate our priority maps for ease of use as described, not to exceed \$1,000.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Request for grant funds of not to exceed \$1,620 (SOW - Urban Practices grant category) with Kanabec SWCD, using rain barrels as an outreach tool to engage with landowners within the watershed. Those landowners within priority areas may be reimbursed 25% of the cost of the rain barrel when they show proof of installation.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Cummins to approve the above described, SOW request with Kanabec SWCD to reimburse landowners within the priority areas a portion of the rain barrel cost, not to exceed \$1,620.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Statement of Work contracts:

*Forestry Services (Pine SWCD) Not to Exceed \$89,800

*Outreach / Education (Kanabec SWCD) Not to Exceed \$83,666

*Outreach / Education (Mille Lacs SWCD) Not to Exceed \$5,000

*Project Development (Mille Lacs SWCD) Not to Exceed \$5,000

*Grant Reporting (Aitkin SWCD) Not to Exceed \$5,000

Motion by Lovgren, second by Cummins to approve the above 5 SOW with the various LGU's for the various identified services, each listing a not to exceed amount.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Leiviska, Lovgren, Roeschlein, Hoefert

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Public Input: none

Update on new Watershed Hire by Kanabec SWCD

The Watershed Program Coordinator position closed 1/10/24 with 5 applicants. The selection committee (2 Kanabec SWCD Supervisors; Paul Swanson, staff Pine SWCD) decided the applicants lacked the experience they were seeking, so no interviews were called. They have decided to repost the position and increase the experience required.

*Adjourn Meeting at 12:41pm

Motion by Cummins, second by Lovgren to adjourn meeting at 12:41pm

Affirmative: Beckstrom, Ripka, Belkholm, Cummins, Mohr, Gravely, Leiviska

Opposed: None **Abstain:** None

Next Meeting: (after the SRWMB mtg.)

February 26, 2024, 10:00 am start

Future Agenda Items:

Review / approve project vetting and cost-share policies