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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 09 May 2023

Attachment 3

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Commissioners in Attendance

Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Steve Eggert, Fridley; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis, via telephone; Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; Michael Lukes, St. Paul; and Billy Menz, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB).

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville, Nick Busse, Adam Flett, Shawn James, Dan Kalmon, Abby Moore, Connor Price, Kevin Reich, Udai Singh, and Nancy Stowe, MWMO; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chair Eggert.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Motion by Lukes, second by Buesgens to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

None.

Reports from Staff

Singh introduced Price, the new Administrative and Project Support Intern.

Kalmon discussed the MWMO climate change planning initiative as part of the 2023-2024 planning initiatives, which also includes DEI and Operations and Maintenance planning. These three initiatives have overlapping objectives with shared outcomes and measurable benefits. Climate change has global and local causes and impacts to address. Phase one of the climate change planning initiative is applied research to gather and curate the most recent data and science related to MWMO activities. The deliverables are to provide a set of issues, data, and plan content tailored to MWMO's responsibilities and complete a draft outline of the climate action plan. Phase two is to complete the climate action plan.

On a global level, the primary causes are related to the burning of fossil fuels increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere. The impacts include a net increase in global temperatures, long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns, intense droughts, fires and flooding, declining biodiversity, and increasing water scarcity. At the local level, confirmed impacts include a 47 percent increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events from 1948 to 2006 in the metro area; a net increase in temperature, increase in winter precipitation and decrease in summer precipitation. Shorter winters with less snow, more ice, winter rain events and rapid spring snowmelt. Warmer waters have increased the frequency of algal blooms. There are two pathways for addressing climate change — adaptation and mitigation.

The 2011–2021 MWMO capital projects and initiatives increased focus on climate change and more efficient resource management, going from individual projects to creating more green space that has educational value and provides HPS (habitat, public spaces, and surface stormwater management). This has led to larger projects and bigger partnerships, integrating parks and stormwater features and community gardens supported by water reuse.

[Dains arrived 3:20 p.m.]

MWMO's approach to outreach and communications has also evolved over the past decade from how yard and street pollutants connect to the river to how individual actions can reduce climate change. The most recent focus has been on building long-term relationships with neighborhoods and community groups to engage larger scale behavior changes, creating landscapes and communities that are more resilient. Monitoring data is used to assess long-term climate change impacts for water quality, macroinvertebrates, precipitation and flow rates.

Applied research is underway. Staff is looking to answer the question: what scale can MWMO manage low Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and fish kills that are occurring because of climate change and warmer water in the river? Staff will be working to define and choose the right actions tied to MWMO's authority under statute 103B to work with our cities.

Deliverables for this initiative will be the applied research process; curate, catalog and report findings; evaluate information in response to the MWMO mission, programs and purpose; and create mitigation and adaptation approaches. Staff will be working with BWSR, MPCA, Met

Council, the Department of Health and other local agencies, as well as communicating with Counties and SWCDs in Minnesota to learn what their planning process is. Staff will also review federal grant or funding opportunities related to climate change.

Kalmon reviewed the REOA grant and phasing loan requests for the Upper Harbor Terminal project. The public works parkway has a phasing loan of \$225,177 and a grant of \$27,462. The phasing loans are for projects underway to complete the infrastructure for the site prior to build. Any bids that come in over the 10% margin will require board approval as phasing loans for all projects already have amounts set in the approved agreement. The MPRB phase 2 phasing loan and grant in the amounts of \$176,253 and \$1,757,906, respectively, are to build the stormwater facility that will support parcel 3. Once the lease for parcel 3 is signed, the loan will be paid back. This grant also includes the riverfront park, riverbank stabilization and planting projects. The bid for the parcel 2 water storage/reuse tank came in well above budget but other items have come in under budget. The next large cost item will be for the water treatment project behind parcel 5.

General Business

2023-016: Increase in Grant Commitment for Upper Harbor REOA. This is a request to increase the grant commitment in the REOA for the common reuse system on Parcel 2 from \$585,771 to \$1,757,906, while maintaining the current not-to-exceed total grant amount of \$10,711,931. This reuse system is a central requirement for MWMO participation, not a function requested by MPRB. The estimate for the reuse tank was far below the bids received. This reuse system allows for the full connection for the ephemeral stream, habitat and connected space across the site. This is not a regulatory requirement. For MPRB to receive approval to award a bid at their June meeting, proof of grant agreement availability is required. While MWMO engineers believe the tank cost is significantly out-of-line with their estimates, they are unable to communicate with the contractor to discuss the issue until the bid is awarded by MPRB. It may be that after discussion with the contractor, the tank cost may be reduced after the bid is awarded. If not, this increase will result in the overall project running six percent over budget. This request is within the boundaries of the capital funding schedule and within the limits of the not-to-exceed committed grants to the project. No modification in the overall budget is proposed at this time. Other infrastructure items may be modified or removed in the future to ensure the project is completed within budget.

Motion by Dains, second by Menz to approve Resolution 2023-016 approving an increase in the REOA's grant commitment for the Parcel 2 common reuse system from \$585,771 to \$1,757,906. Motion carried unanimously.

2023-017: Southside Green Zone Infrastructure Planning. This is a request to approve professional services for large-scale green infrastructure planning for the City of Minneapolis

street projects in the Southside Green Zone. MWMO is partnering with Minneapolis Public Works water and sewer department to implement Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) instead of BMPs. This policy was completed in 2016 to inform decision-making around transportation projects and was updated in 2021 to include GSI and revised stormwater ordinances on linear construction/reconstruction projects. Green Zones are neighborhoods with high levels of environmental pollution and racial, political and economic marginalization. Including GSI above ground removes pollutants, adds habitat, lessens the heat island effect, and improves the pedestrian environment. Minneapolis has been including GSI in projects, which has been effective for one and two block reconstructions. Currently the City is planning for a project totaling nearly 55,000 linear feet, making the GSI process too time-consuming for the City to pursue alone.

MWMO Staff proposes to support the hiring of a consultant to aid in this project and provide GSI recommendations based on technical information, public input, conceptual designs and implementation plans. This would be bridging this new implementation effort until city resources can meet these needs. The maps and studies provided by the consultant would identify the potential for GSI implementation as well as potential barriers such as steep slopes or utility conflicts. Without GSI, cities will resort to underground treatment, which loses many benefits mentioned above. The intent is for this effort to be replicable for the next generation of large-scale street projects and available to other member cities. This will be the first clustered GSI study specifically with DEI in mind. This project will be valuable for the engineers who design and install projects and the first time GSI will be planned for several miles of roads in one area of the City. The outcome will be a systematic study with an outlined methodology to identify the most cost-effective GSI and conceptual designs to incorporate with the street projects, which will make future grant applications more robust to local, state and federal agencies.

Staff is asking for an amount not-to-exceed \$170,000 from the watershed assessment fund to support the Minneapolis Surface Water & Sewers Division with large-scale green infrastructure planning for street projects in the Southside Green Zone. Motion by Lukes, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2023-017 approving professional services for large-scale green infrastructure planning for City of Minneapolis street projects in the Southside Green Zone. Motion carried unanimously.

2023-018: Organizational Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Planning Consultant. This is a request for a professional services contract of \$50,000 to create a framework and roadmap to incorporate DEI principles into the MWMO's current ten-year management plan.

CultureBrokers, LLC is a local consultant located in Northeast Minneapolis that has worked locally with the DNR, Met Council, Great River Passage and more organizations, as well as other organizations around the country. Their proposal includes a strategic action plan to be completed by the end of January 2024. Staff, stakeholder groups and the Board will be involved in this process. Many meetings with the consultant will be held via Zoom and recorded for easier

participation and later viewing. Four staff members worked to create the RFP and four other staff members participated in the proposal review and selection process.

Motion by Menz, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2023-018 approving a professional services contract for \$50,000 for organizational diversity, equity and inclusion planning with CultureBrokers LLC. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Updates and Announcements

Dains noted that the U of M Bee Lab in Lauderdale was right next to a property that had posted signs about chemically treating their lawn, which seems contrary. He gave kudos to the MWMO organization for the bio-friendly landscape installed, which is educational and speaks to the climate change issues. Lauderdale did participate in No Mow May.

Eggert noted that he had walked down to the river prior to the meeting and there will be a new high water mark for this year, though it's still about six feet below the 1952 mark.

Buesgens noted that the preliminary site plan for Block E redevelopment came in at \$200 million and includes a water reuse system as well as underground parking for 1,000 vehicles.

Lukes reported that the Kasota Pond Cleanup event was supported by St. Paul Community District 12. The event was cool and cloudy but rain-free and had 35-40 attendees who collected approximately 120 bags of trash and recycling. He extended his appreciation to Mary Thelen, MWMO staff member, who attended and helped at the cleanup event.

Menz extended his thanks and appreciation to Moore for hosting a field trip at the MWMO facility earlier this year. School had been cancelled but 10-12 students still attended the planned field trip.

Open Public Input

None.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.