



**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

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MEETING MINUTES

Date: 14 January 2025

Attachment 3

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Attendance

Commissioners: Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale (Teams); LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis (Teams); Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; and Michael Lukes, St. Paul.

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville, Aaron Goemann, Akadia Johnson, Dan Kalmon, Abby Moore, Kevin Reich, Emily Resseger, Sarah Nassif, and Nancy Stowe, MWWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District; Robert Lodge, MPA student; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. by Chair Stille.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- a. 2025-004: MWMO Salary Structure.
- b. 2025-002: CAC Appointment Renewals.
- c. 2025-003: Executive Director Review.
- d. 2025-004: Service Providers 2025-26.

Motion by Lukes, second by Buesgens to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Reports from Staff

In January 2021, the Board approved a staff proposal to begin an engagement and outreach plan based on art. In 2024, MWMO contracted Nassif, a local artist and botanist, as its Artist in Residence to bring together people and nature with art. Since 2021, the art outreach effort has engaged with more than 1700 people. In 2024, MWMO engaged with over 500 people through nine community partners and 13 offsite events. These efforts continued to build on the Southside Green Zone relationships, as well as communities in Columbia Heights, Northeast, Longfellow and Whittier neighborhoods. The 2024 program Art & Science On the River includes workshops focused on learning about specific threats to the Mississippi including salt, buckthorn and carp. The program was so popular many workshops exceeded capacity, so the program will be repeated in 2025. A handout of the Creative Watershed Plan was provided and is a framework to engage the community in water and environmental protection. This plan expands the audience through partnerships, deeper community connections, and builds understanding through creative engagement and conversation, addressing barriers to community engagement.

MWMO worked to create AWE (Art+Water+Ecology) Network in June 2024 to connect artists and the water community on an ongoing basis. Two meetings were held in 2024 with over 50 attendees. The official launch of AWE Network will be hosted on January 27, 2025 at Silverwood Park.

The third engagement plan in 2024 was to begin a rotating exhibit program at MWMO. The 2025 workshop and exhibit lineup is in progress now, with the next exhibit opening on February 3, 2025. One of Nassif's art pieces has been installed in the quiet room on a permanent basis. The current exhibit will be uninstalled this week.

MWMO is a leader in using an arts-engaged approach, and it has paid off with more engagement across a broader audience, from Edison High School students staying for voluntary after-school workshops to broader engagement at the community level rather than individual level, and partnerships with local art institutions.

Reich reviewed the one-page budget format recently created to capture the MWMO annual budget in a more easily-comprehensible document.

General Business

2025-005: Approval of Budget for Audit Services

MWMO is required by state statute to complete a financial audit each year. Redpath and Company provided superior service in completing the 2023 audit, and Staff recommend engaging Redpath for a three-year term with an annual fee schedule of \$26,000, \$27,300, and \$28,600 to complete audits for the fiscal years of 2024, 2025 and 2026, respectively. Motion by Vetaw, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2025-005 approving an audit service budget of \$81,900 for the 2024, 2025 and 2026 audits. Motion carried unanimously.

2025-006: Development of MWMO Climate Action Framework

The MWMO's 2021-2031 Watershed Management Plan states that the MWMO will develop a plan to identify its role and priorities around climate change. Staff interviewed several firms and recommends EOR as the consultant to develop the Climate Action Framework. This process will clearly define the problem and develop the plan purpose; review existing plans, frameworks and existing public engagement documentation; conduct a vulnerability assessment and vision for the climate action framework; develop goals for the climate action framework; and draft the Climate Action Framework. Many of MWMO's partners have developed climate plans already, so Staff and the consultant will review their data to avoid duplication. The timeline for development of the Climate Action Framework is to begin in February and to have a draft plan completed in October, with a November Board update and the final plan ready for implementation to begin in January 2026. Lukes asked to have language addressing water quantity added to the resolution. Motion by Buesgens, second by Vetaw to approve Resolution 2025-006 approving funding for the development of the MWMO Climate Action Framework at a cost not-to-exceed \$91,000. The motion includes a change for the second paragraph to read: Whereas, The MWMO recognizes that climate change poses significant threat to water quality, water quantity, habitat and communities in the watershed; and. Motion carried unanimously, Dains absent.

2025-007: Sullivan Lake Water Quality Study

Staff are requesting funding to study this 16.8-acre shallow lake in Columbia Heights. Sullivan Lake has a 433-acre watershed coming from areas of Colombia Heights, Hilltop, and Fridley. Lake Sullivan is on the impaired waters list for excessive nutrients. Algae blooms threaten the marine ecosystem by consuming more oxygen, lowering water clarity, and some blooms can be harmful to people and pets. Total Phosphorus (TP) and chlorophyll levels have increased over time. These nutrients can come from sewage effluent, stormwater runoff, shoreline runoff, and internal loading. Sullivan Lake is used for both aquatic recreation and serves as a settling basin to remove pollutants before stormwater discharges via pipe to the Mississippi. The lake has available water quality monitoring data from 1993–2005 provided by MPCA and 2013–present by Anoka Conservation District. Staff are requesting funding for professional engineering

services to conduct a water quality study of Sullivan Lake, including an assessment of existing conditions, an understanding of the lake's ecology and response to incoming pollutants, and a plan for improving lake water quality. Motion by Buesgens, second by Lukes to approve Resolution 2025-007 approving funding for the Lake Sullivan water quality study at a cost not-to-exceed \$88,000. Motion carried unanimously. Board members noted their desire to collect water quality data at the outlet of the pipe from Lake Sullivan to the Mississippi as well. Staff noted that this information could be gathered through regular staff monitoring but not included as part of the study.

2025-008: MPRB – Shoreline Feasibility Study

This study is for a shoreline restoration, shoreline access and extension of a bike path at 2100 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis. The Sample Room restaurant is located at this parcel and is surrounded on both north and south by parcels owned by MPRB. Gluek Park is just south of this parcel. The parcel owner is looking to convert the river side of the lot, currently the parking area, to a thermaculture business, and MPRB would allow a parking lot on the MPRB property to replace the existing parking area. MWMO would work with MPRB and the property owner to complete four concept designs that would include slope stabilization of the riverbank, extension of a current bike path from Gluek Park across this parcel near the bank, and restoring native vegetation. Staff is requesting funding not-to-exceed \$112,000 for this shoreline improvement and access feasibility study. No acquisition of property will occur with this project. The bike path will be a permanent easement. Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2025-008 approving funding for the shoreline improvement and access feasibility study not-to-exceed \$112,000. Motion carried unanimously.

[Vetaw departed 4:30 p.m.]

2025-009: Upper Harbor Contamination Cleanup Change Order

Staff is requesting \$92,000, half of the project's contingency budget, plus \$308,000 in additional funding for a total of \$400,000 for the cleanup of contaminated soils on Parcel 2 necessary for the common reuse system reuse tank. This project, when finished, will have 12.5 acres of connected habitat and public spaces including an ephemeral stream and the southern regional treatment and reuse system that will treat 75 acres of currently untreated runoff from North Minneapolis. All funding in the Reciprocal Easement Operating Agreement (REOA) was based on 60% design. The REOA included \$184,000 in contingency for the entire project. This request would use half of that funding, plus additional funding from MWMO capital funds to clean up diesel fuel contamination discovered on the site during dewatering. Motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2025-009 approving contamination cleanup funding for the Park Board Common Reuse System. Motion carried unanimously.

2025-010: Election of Officers and Meeting Dates

Current officers are: Stille-Chair; Buesgens-Vice Chair; and Vetaw-Treasurer. The current officers noted their willingness to continue serving in these roles. Motion by Lukes, second by Dains to re-elect the current officers for the 2025 term. Motion carried unanimously.

Meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of odd-numbered months in 2025. The November meeting date falls on Veteran's Day. Staff will work with the Board to plan a new meeting date

Board Updates and Announcements

Stille reminded board members to complete the evaluation forms that were received by mail and submit those by November 24. Stille also reminded board members to submit any expense reports to Reich prior to December 31, 2024.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2025.

Open Public Input

None.

Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.