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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 10 March 2026

Attachment 3

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Commissioners in Attendance

Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Ann Bolkcom, Fridley; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis (online), Lona Doolan, St. Anthony Village; Michael Lukes, St. Paul; and Meg Fourney, MPRB.

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville-Doeckel, Adam Flett, Mirae Guenther, Akadia Johnson, Dan Kalmon, Abby Moore, Grace Polverari, Kevin Reich, Emily Resseger, and Nancy Stowe, MWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District; Sarah Nassif, Artist in Residence; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Chair Buesgens.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Motion by Bolkcom, second by Doolan to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Dains, second by Lukes to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2026 regular meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Bolkcom, second by Doolan to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports from Staff

New Staff Announcement

Stowe introduced new staff member, Grace Polverari, Watershed Systems Coordinator. She will manage MWMO simulation models, keep them current, lead projects with consultants to update them, and handle other responsibilities.

General Business

2026-008: 5% Contingency Increase Upper Harbor REOA

The Upper Harbor Reciprocal Easement and Operating Agreement (REOA) was approved in February 2023 and established a 10% contingency on the 13 capital projects that are part of the Upper Harbor District System. Under the current agreement, any change order requests over 10% require Board approval for final payment. After project construction began, issues such as contaminated groundwater, clay lenses, and even vandalism on the site have been identified, as well as material and labor cost changes from year-to-year that are likely to cause project budget overages. Two of the four projects completed in the past two years exceeded cost by more than the contingency due to these issues. Staff is requesting to increase the contingency from 10% to 15% of each of the 11 individual district system components on 13 parcels within the project area. Project completion depends on timing of development. Most development has not yet been scheduled, but completion is expected over the next four years.

[Dains arrived 3:15 p.m.]

Motion by Vetaw, second by Doolan to approve Resolution 2026-008 approving an increase in contingency from 10% up to 15% for each of the remaining individual projects listed in the Upper Harbor REOA. Motion carried unanimously.

2026-009: Action and Planning Grants.

Applications for two Action Grants and one Planning Grant have been received and recommended for approval. Staff have also administratively approved nine Community Grants totaling \$39,596.

Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) applied for a \$50,000 Action Grant to repurpose an existing water collection cistern to divert water from the rooftop for use in watering backyard pollinator gardens, bee lawn, and fruit trees and bushes in their residential backyard demonstration site in North Minneapolis. This demonstration site will provide an example of a viable alternative to traditional turf and lawn landscaping with alternative ground cover, rainwater capture and reuse, and alternatives to traditional landscaping.

Seward Redesign applied for a \$50,000 Action Grant for the PFG Raingarden Project. This project would install four raingardens on the Phelan Manufacturing Group (PFG) site to capture nearly all stormwater from the site's impervious surfaces in a **1.25-inch** event, serving as the capstone to a years-long campus greening effort. The raingardens will also improve habitat, bringing in a native plant profile. The project will include business association outreach, signage and employee engagement. There will be a 109% match by PFG with installation done with Metro Blooms and maintenance by PFG employees, Metro Blooms and other contractors.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) has applied for a \$20,000 Planning Grant to support community involvement in dam removal technical studies. The Army Corps of Engineers no longer wants to maintain the lock and dam systems at Lock and Dam 1 (Ford Dam) and St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to study the potential impacts of dam removal. Removing these functionally obsolete dams could restore rare habitat, improve water quality, and enhance river recreation. However, it's not yet clear whether dam removal is the right choice for the trade-offs and costs of removal. The Corps' study is a high-level review and lacks a comprehensive assessment of habitat changes, water quality impacts, and other impacts. FMR has been recommended for \$923,000 in funding from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENTF), pending legislative approval in early 2026, to undertake this study, but the grant does not include community engagement. FMR has partnered with the National Parks Conservation Association, American Rivers, universities and colleges, and more organizations. The match for this grant is 4,864%.

The total request is for \$120,000 to fund the three grants listed above. After this round of grants, there will be \$190,404 remaining in the Stewardship fund for the second round of 2026 grants later this year.

Motion by Dains, second by Doolan to approve Resolution 2026-009 approving the 2026 Action and Planning Grants. Motion carried unanimously.

2026-010: Website Update

The current MWMO logo was created in 2016 and is not always easy to see on digital and printed materials. In 2025, Little Co. was hired for brand services. Their work included interviews with a variety of stakeholders to create a new brand strategy and brand positioning statement. The MWMO brand stands on four main platforms: Passionate, Collaborative, Knowledgeable, and Engaging. Website usage has grown significantly in recent years, and the trend continues upward. The new logo is black and white and includes the stone arch bridge and waves of the river with a bold font. This provides a strong presence, is easy to read, approachable, and an easy-to-use icon. MWMO's new tagline is "Where Impact Flows." There is a new color palette including light blue, green, brown, orange, yellow, stone, and black.

Beginning in 2026, all websites will need to meet ADA requirements. Staff has been working with the company Windmill, the organization's long-time website developer, to define a scope of work that implements the new brand, modernizes key elements of the website's design and structure, and brings it into ADA compliance. This is not a full rebuild of the website but a substantial refresh that layers the new branding onto the existing platform and introduces a design that supports clearer communication and engagement. The estimated cost of the website refresh is \$28,600.

Motion by Bolkcom, second by Doolan to approve Resolution 2026-010 approving website design and development services with Windmill Strategy at a cost not-to-exceed \$28,600. Motion carried unanimously.

2026-011: Window Treatment Upgrade

The current battery and manually operated blinds are fairly unreliable and require ongoing maintenance. Staff obtained a bid to install automated window treatments for the first and second floors of the building. The blinds are necessary to make spaces more comfortable for staff and guests, as well as to help control the climate. The blinds will be programmable to keep closed after business hours and include light sensors that automatically adjust to reduce glare as needed. This proposal includes two components: procurement and installation of the new window treatments, and electrical work to incorporate the blinds with the building's existing electrical system. Staff is requesting approval to proceed with the installation of electric roller blinds at a cost of \$52,129.01, including the purchase and installation of the blinds and the required electrical work. Motion by Dains, second by Lukes to approve Resolution 2026-011 approving \$52,129.01 for office maintenance/window treatment upgrade. Motion carried unanimously.

Open Public Input

None.

Board Updates and Announcements

Lukes announced that he had suffered a heart attack at the end of January but is recovering.

The Kasota Ponds cleanup will occur on April 11 from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. This is prior to the scheduled repaving of Highway 280, so the road should be accessible. Buckthorn removal is also being considered in the area with a proposal to cut the saplings to chest height in the spring, allowing the trees to expend energy on regrowth through fall, then cutting the new branches and stripping the bark to kill the plant. The first stage is expected to be done in early June.

St. Anthony has begun street sweeping for the year.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Dains, second by Doolan to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.