Meeting Minutes
Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting
January 24, 2019, 1 p.m.
Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley, Conference Room 334

Board Members in Attendance
Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik, Chair
Dakota County Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg, Vice Chair
Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf, Secretary/Treasurer

Others in Attendance
Mark Zabel, Watershed Administrator
Helen Brosnahan, Assistant County Attorney
Travis Thiel, VRWJPO Watershed Specialist
Paula Liepold, VRWJPO Water Resources Educator
Mark Ryan, VRWJPO Watershed Engineer
Jen Dullum, VRWJPO Public Outreach and Communications
Bruce Johnson, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor
Mac Cafferty, City of Lakeville
Adam Flett, Friends of the Mississippi River
Amy Kilgore, Friends of the Mississippi River

1. Call to Order
Meeting was called to order by Mark Zabel at 1:00 p.m.

2. Election of 2019 Joint Powers Board Officers

Res. No. VRW 19-00: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to nominate Commissioner Slavik as chair of the VRWJPB, second by Commissioner Holberg.

Mark Zabel called for any other nominations three times. There were none.

Seeing as there was only a single nominee, Mark Zabel asked if there was any objection from members to elect Commissioner Slavik as chair for 2019 by acclamation. There was no objection.

Commissioner Slavik assumed control of the meeting.
Motion by Commissioner Wolf to nominate Commissioner Holberg as vice chair of the VRWJPB, second by Commissioner Slavik.

Commissioner Slavik called for any other nominations three times. There were none.

The VRWJPB cast a unanimous aye to elect Commissioner Holberg as vice chair for 2019.

Motion by Commissioner Holberg to nominate Commissioner Wolf as Secretary/Treasurer of the VRWJPB, second by Commissioner Slavik.

Commissioner Slavik called for any other nominations three times. There were none.

The VRWJPB cast a unanimous aye to elect Commissioner Wolf as Secretary/Treasurer for 2019.

3. Roll Call
All Board members were in attendance.

4. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
There were no comments from the audience.

5. Approval of Consent Agenda

Res. No. VRW 19-01: Motion by Commissioner Holberg, Second by Commissioner Wolf, and passed on a unanimous vote to approve the consent agenda.

6. Approval of Expenses
Mark Zabel presented the current invoices as shown on item 6.

Res. No. VRW 19-02: Motion by Commissioner Holberg, Second by Commissioner Wolf, and passed on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the expenses totaling $256,140.67 incurred between December 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018, as submitted on January 24, 2019.

7. Business Items

7a. Year-end Review of the 2018 Vermillion Stewards Program
Paula Liepold introduced Adam Flett and Amy Kilgore from Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) who presented a year-end review of the 2018 Vermillion Stewards. Adam thanked the Commissioners and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) for continued support and began his presentation. In his presentation, Adam described the total outcomes for the year and provided brief information about the specific event activities.

There were eight events in 2018. The total number of events decreased in 2018 as events in the Watershed that were not sponsored by the VRWJPO, were not reported. Commissioner Holberg asked how many of the volunteer hours were spent on actual projects. Adam explained that each volunteer program is 2 hours, so when FMR calculates volunteer hours they give each volunteer 2 hours. Therefore 162 hours were committed as actual volunteer labor from about 80 participants at the non-educational events. The total volunteer hours seen in the annual report includes additional educational
hours for events like the Riverview Elementary education program for students, which do not represent work on projects.

Commissioner Holberg also asked about the use of the Voter Activation Network for program marketing. Amy explained that FMR uses this platform to target direct marketing and does not populate volunteer information back into the service. Mark Zabel noted that in 2018, the VRWJPO is receiving volunteer information from FMR. It was noted to keep volunteer information out of future annual reports that may become public information.

7b. Presentation on the Results of the 2018 Homeowner Associations’ Irrigation Audit Pilot Program

In 2018 the VRWJPO partnered with the City of Lakeville on a homeowners association (HOA) irrigation audit program. Two HOAs took part in the audit. This program achieved water quantity and conservation goals set in the VRWJPO Watershed Plan and in Lakeville’s Water and Natural Resources Management Plan. This pilot study serves as a model if the VRWJPO were to expand the program throughout the watershed. Travis Thiel shared key findings and recommendations in his presentation. Findings presented show that there were municipal water savings as well as monetary savings for the HOAs.

Commissioner Holberg asked if the HOAs participating in the pilot study were the two highest water users. Travis believes that Century Ridge (CR) was one of the top users. Mac Cafferty from the City of Lakeville noted that the Orchard Meadows (OM) HOA was not originally assessed, but after the HOA approached the City and the VRWJPO about participating in the pilot project, its water use was reviewed which revealed OM was also a very high water user. Commissioner Holberg also asked how many HOAs are in Lakeville. Mac was unsure but believes Lakeville has more than 30 HOAs.

After reviewing the recommendations for OM, Commissioner Holberg asked if individual units have outdoor spigots to allow individuals in the units to water near their units in the event the HOA opts to disconnect the HOA system. Mac replied that they usually do and he believes that each unit is responsible for the cost of outdoor water usage from those spigots. Travis replied that he suggested to OM to disconnect the system and rely on rainfall events and supplement with sprinklers, as necessary.

Commissioner Holberg questioned the water rate in the City of Lakeville and whether the return on investment would be even better in other communities with higher rates. Mac replied that historically, Lakeville has had one of the lowest rates but it has been slowly increasing. Lakeville has been investing in infrastructure, including installation of a new municipal well and water tower in 2018. Two-years prior a new water treatment facility was built. Reducing reliance on groundwater for lawn irrigation could help preserve infrastructure and prevent the need for facility expansion. Commissioner Holberg believes that Lakeville and other communities have been getting better at determining the return on investment for water infrastructure and how to make the best of its resources.

Mac noted this pilot provided valuable data and they look forward to expanding the project in 2019. Work continues to simplify and streamline the audit process to improve efficiencies while simultaneously providing information needed by the HOAs to make informed decisions. Commissioner Slavik asked if there were fees assessed to the HOAs for this pilot project; there were not. Mark Zabel identified the two phases of this project: 1) the audit, which the VRWJPO can do and which shows value in irrigation upgrades; and 2) the upgrade, for which the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (VRWJPB) needs to determine whether any cost-share would be offered. Both will be taken into account as the VRWJPO moves forward. Commissioner Slavik stated that he is fairly comfortable with audits but
is uncertain about providing cost-share for HOA irrigation upgrades. Commissioner Holberg asked if the Lakeville City Council has been involved in the pilot project. Mac replied that it is currently Lakeville Public Works and the VRWJPO heading up this project. Mark Zabel concluded the discussion by stating the auditing portion of this project may continue in 2019, in which case it will be discussed with the revised budget at the April 25 meeting.

**7c. Authorization to Execute a Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the South Creek at Hamburg Avenue Stream Restoration Project**

Travis Thiel reminded the Commissioners that the VRWJPO applied for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant money for a project to improve stream habitat and bank stability in South Creek. The VRWJPO was awarded $282,000 in December for the project. The grant funding will pay for some of the remaining engineering, permitting, bidding, and construction of the project. The grant requires a local match of 10% of the requested grant amount. The City of Lakeville is providing $38,950 in cash match and $3,000 of in-kind staff time toward the project. The VRWJPO will provide $3,500 of in-kind staff time and will administer the CPL grant. This is a 2-year grant agreement with construction anticipated in 2019.

*Res. No. VRW 19-03: Motion by Commissioner Holberg, Second by Commissioner Slavik, and passed on a unanimous vote to execute a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the South Creek at Hamburg Avenue Stream Restoration Project.*

**7d. Authorization to Execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Lakeville for the South Creek at Hamburg Avenue Stream Restoration Project**

Travis Thiel requested the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (VRWJPB) execute of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the City of Lakeville to pass through up to $282,000 of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant money to the City of Lakeville for the project to improve stream habitat and bank stability in South Creek.

*Res. No. VRW 19-04: Motion by Commissioner Wolf, Second by Commissioner Holberg, and passed on a unanimous vote to execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Lakeville for the South Creek at Hamburg Avenue Stream Restoration Project.*

**8. Staff Reports**

Helen Brosnahan will bring a contract policy to the February VRWJPB meeting for action.

Travis Thiel has consent item agreements for Commissioner Slavik’s signature.

Mark Ryan reminded the Commissioners that the first ad-hoc group meeting to discuss the Standards took place on January 9. The next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, January 30 and Wednesday, February 13. Commissioner Holberg challenged members of the group to bring both ideas and solutions, short of changing the Standards, to the next meeting. She stated that she would need to be convinced that it is impossible, or nearly impossible, to enforce the current Standards. Commissioner Holberg suggested changing the time of the February 28 VRWJPB meeting to accommodate ad-hoc members who would potentially attend. She will poll ad-hoc members at their January 30 meeting to gauge interest. Should there be formal action on the Standards, it would be at the March 28 VRWJPB meeting, after recommendations are brought before the Township Officers at their March meeting.

Mark Zabel reminded the Commissioners to submit their campaign finance paperwork.
Mark Zabel updated the Commissioners on a letter sent to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) regarding anecdotal evidence of the lack of adherence to best management practices. The VRWJPO, Dakota County, and MDA met to discuss groundwater protection collaboration efforts. One of the items the group is hoping to work together on is nitrate issues in the Hastings area Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA). Hopefully, collaborative efforts will bring additional resources to Dakota County and to that area. The Groundwater Protection Rule seems to focus heavily on DWSMAs. Travis Thiel stated that outside of the DWSMA, nitrate issues will be dealt with on a voluntary basis.

Mark Zabel informed Commissioners that he is participating on a Watershed Based Funding Forum. The group is forming recommendations to the Board of Water and Soil Resources on the allocations of dedicated funding should Watershed Based Funding continue as a mechanism for Clean Water Fund disbursement. The group is recommending a change in future funding allocation from county-based to watershed-based. The VRWJPO is a major watershed, so funding would go directly to the VRWJPO and then be distributed based on projects and in consultation with partners. Commissioner Slavik appreciated Mark's participation in the group and noted the funding challenges that the North Cannon Watershed faces in the One Watershed – One Plan process, being both a part of the seven-county metro area and a rural, major watershed.
Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Wolf, Second by Commissioner Holberg, and passed on a unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: February 28, 2019 – Western Service Center, Room 334 at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Jen Dullum
Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Mark Zabel
Administrator for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Attest

[Signature]
Commissioner Tom Wolf
Secretary/ Treasurer

[Date]
2/28/19