



Meeting Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting

July 23, 2020, 1 p.m.

Videoconference via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik, Chair

Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf, Vice Chair

Dakota County Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg, Secretary/Treasurer

Others in Attendance

Mark Zabel, Watershed Administrator

Melissa Bokman Ermer, Watershed Co-administrator

Helen Brosnahan, Assistant County Attorney

Paula Liepold, VRWJPO Water Resources Outreach and Communications

Mark Ryan, VRWJPO Watershed Engineer

Jen Dullum, VRWJPO Public Outreach and Communications

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Slavik at 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

All Board members were in attendance.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the audience.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of amended Agenda
- b. Approval of Minutes from the June 25, 2020, meeting
- c. Acceptance of Treasurer's Report
- d. Approval of Expenses
- e. Schedule a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Draft VRWJPO 2021 Budget and Special Tax District Levy (moved to Item 5b)
- f. Authorization to Execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for the Hastings' Facility Stormwater Reuse Feasibility Study
- g. Authorization to Execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Elko New Market for the Restoration of the Webster Wetland

Res. No. VRW 20-12: Motion by Commissioner Wolf, Second by Commissioner Holberg, and passed 3-0 on a roll call vote to approve the consent agenda, as amended.

Mark Zabel noted that a location or teleconference option needs to be determined when setting a date for the public hearing on the draft VRWJPO 2021 budget and special tax district levy. The current resolution only gives a date and time. Commissioner Slavik asked legal counsel if it is required that the resolution specify location. Helen Brosnahan confirmed that the resolution needs to specify location in addition to the date and time of the public hearing. Commissioner Holberg suggested the item be pulled for discussion.

5. Business Items

5a. Future Meetings

Commissioner Slavik brought three meeting scenarios forward; in-person, teleconference, or a hybrid approach with a socially distanced in-person option combined with teleconference and opened the discussion.

Commissioner Holberg feels the large room at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center (Extension Center) would be able to accommodate social distancing. She does not want staff to feel pressure to attend in person and suggests that anyone uncomfortable can participate remotely. Commissioner Holberg does not foresee a large turnout for August budget meeting and inquired if the large conference room is designed for remote videoconferencing. Mark Zabel confirmed that the room has the available technology for teleconference.

Commissioner Slavik inquired about the status for opening the Extension Center. There is currently no timeline for opening the building. Commissioner Slavik mentioned that the building could be made available for meetings with proper procedures in place. Commissioner Wolf suggested continuing with teleconference meetings. Commissioner Slavik would be open to either teleconference or in-person meetings. He feels individual comfort level should be considered. Commissioner Slavik believes that it is easy to hold a teleconference when everything is on consent but more difficult when there is discussion and limited camera use. He would like to start meeting in person at some point. Mark Zabel will talk with Brian Watson on the Extension Center opening timeline.

Commissioner Holberg believes a public hearing should have public access and asked whether the public hearing could be delayed until September. Mark Zabel noted that the draft budget needs to be to the County Board by September 15. Helen Brosnahan said a hybrid meeting option would work and suggested using the Western Service Center in Apple Valley if the Extension Center is unavailable. Mark Zabel noted that the VRWJPO is currently meeting open meeting law requirements but does agree that having a meeting location for people to come to, and participate in a safe manner, is preferred versus relying entirely on remote electronic meetings. Commissioner Holberg asked if there could be an RSVP in the public hearing notice. Helen Brosnahan noted that is a viable option. The statute is silent on providing more than one format. The VRWJPO would be providing more options than required.

Commissioner Slavik, as Chair, will be available at the Extension Center on August 27 for the public hearing. Teleconference will also be available. Individuals that join in-person will be able to comment live at the meeting. Mark Ryan will be available to attend in-person, if needed. Mark Zabel noted that, in the time he has been with the VRWJPO, people have not attended the public hearing on the budget to express their comments on the draft budget. Commissioner Slavik mentioned that the 2021 budget has no big changes or tax increases. Commissioner Wolf agrees. Commissioner Holberg inquired whether

other commissioners can join in-person. Helen Brosnahan responded that the Statute does not prohibit more than one commissioner from being present. As we move forward, the VRWJPO will reevaluate teleconference and in-person meetings.

5b. Schedule a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Draft VRWJPO 2021 Budget and Special Tax District Levy

As noted above, the public hearing will be held by both teleconference and in-person at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center in Farmington, MN at 1:00 p.m. on August 27, 2020.

Res. No. VRW 20-13: Motion by Commissioner Wolf, Second by Commissioner Holberg, and passed 3-0 on a roll call vote to Schedule a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Draft VRWJPO 2021 Budget and Special Tax District Levy.

6. Staff Updates

Mark Ryan informed the Commissioners about the Park Conservation Area streambank stabilization project. The contractor has been delayed several times after the river flow came up due to significant rainfall events, but the project is progressing with the contractor back on-site this week. Mark noted that the Conservation Corps of Minnesota will be working at Bachman's Wholesale in Farmington on a project aimed to keep water cool in the upper reach of the Vermillion River by removing downed trees and debris. Mark also mentioned the reallocation of 2019 Watershed Based Implementation Funds that were initially allocated to a City of Farmington street project. After the feasibility stage did not produce beneficial water quality projects, it was decided to reallocate the funding. Partial funding will likely go to the Erickson Park project in Apple Valley and some to the Records Trail ravine stabilization in Ravenna Township pending a determination of project costs. There will likely be a Board action on the reallocation at the August meeting.

Jen Dullum mentioned that social media activity continues. New infographics directed towards homeowners about improving water quality, irrigation efficiency, landscaping, and pollinators have been posted weekly on Facebook. There are new learning activities for kids featuring water, wetlands, nature bingo, and coloring sheets that will start being published soon. Jen is also working with the city of Hastings on Vermillion River tour/hike/games for people to explore the river in Hastings.

Helen Brosnahan noted that a violation of ordinance 50 was filed today for an area within the watershed. This is a Dakota County ordinance; however, the specific violation is related to the river.

Melissa Bokman Ermer mentioned that the investigation on bacteria in the headwaters continues. Scott County was hoping to use the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District drone for some summertime investigation, however, SWCD Board policy does not allow for this type examination. Melissa is talking with the Scott County Highway Department to determine whether the use of their drone is a viable option. She is hesitant to walk the stretch of stream due to known safety concerns along the stream reach.

Paula Liepold informed the Commissioners that the Metro Children's Water Festival is doing an online program to accommodate COVID issues in 2020. There will be live learning stations along with taped presentations and classroom work. By going virtual, there will be no need to limit the number of students attending.

Mark Zabel discussed the proposed 2021 budget, explaining specific increases or decreases. The current draft 2021 expenditures are estimated at \$2,491,800 with cash reserve estimated at \$312,400 bringing total annual expenses to \$2,804,200. Total annual revenue is still being refined but is estimated at \$2,804,200. The budget will be refined for the August presentation and adoption.

Commissioner Slavik ended the meeting by thanking the attendees. He asked for staff reports to be added to agenda as a regular item. Lastly, Commissioner Slavik mentioned implementation of new controls by the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District for black flies near the City of Hastings. The controls were reviewed and approved for use by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the reaches of the Vermillion River where the black flies are emerging in order to curb the black flies/biting gnats coming from the Vermillion River in Hastings.

Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Wolf Second by Commissioner Holberg and passed on a roll call vote 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

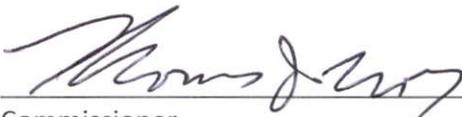
Next Meeting Date: August 27, 2020 via teleconference using Zoom as well as in person at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center at 4100 220th Street West, Farmington, MN.

Respectfully submitted:

Jen Dullum
Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Mark Zabel
Administrator for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Attest



Commissioner Secretary/ Treasurer

10/6/20
Date