



Meeting Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting

July 22, 2021, 1 p.m., In-person and Teleconference using Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik, Chair

Scott County Commissioner, Tom Wolf, Vice-Chair via Zoom

Dakota County Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland, Secretary/ Treasurer

Others in Attendance

Mark Zabel, Dakota County, Watershed Administrator

Greg Wagner, Scott County, Senior Planner

Megan Tasca, Scott County, Water Resources Engineer

Travis Thiel, Dakota County, Senior Watershed Specialist

Mark Ryan, Dakota County, VRWJPO Watershed Engineer

Brita Moore-Kutz, Dakota County, VRWJPO Communications and Outreach Specialist

Paula Liepold, Dakota County, Public Outreach and Communications

Helen Brosnahan, Dakota County, Assistant County Attorney

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 1:11 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Slavik, Hamann-Roland, and Wolf 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 Agenda
- b. Approval of Minutes from the April 22, 2021, meeting
- c. Acceptance of Treasurer's Report
- d. Approval of the City of Elko New Market Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan
- e. Schedule a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the Draft VRWJPO Budget and Watershed Management Tax District Levy
- f. Authorization to Execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Rosemount for an Irrigation Audit Program in 2021

Res. No. VRW 21-15: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland, Second by Commissioner Wolf and passed on a 3-0 vote to approve the consent agenda.

5. Approval of Expenses

Mark Zabel presented the current expenses for approval as shown on item 5.

Res. No. VRW 21-13: Motion by Commissioner Wolf, Second by Commissioner Hamann-Roland and passed on a 3-0 vote to approve the expenses as presented.

Business Items

6a. Mid-term Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Review

Chair Slavik introduced the item and asked Mark Zabel to give an overview. Zabel presented a spreadsheet identifying goals, objectives, and actions identified in Section 6 of the VRWJPO Watershed Management Plan. The spreadsheet was presented to the WPC to prioritize the various action items identified in the spreadsheet. The results will be compiled, interests determined, and amendments considered based on WPC feedback. The results will be addressed in future work plans and budgets addressing prioritized items going forward with Plan implementation. Commissioners will also have the opportunity to review the spreadsheet and prioritize the action items. Commissioner Hamann-Roland inquired about invasive Jumping Worms and whether addressing these invasive species is in the Plan. Zabel responded that terrestrial species are not typically addressed except when connected to a water quality issue. A Plan amendment could be considered to address specific invasive terrestrial species and their impacts if it is needed to address water quality issues.

Staff Reports

Greg Wagner presented on a proposed development in the New Market Township area of the watershed. The area being proposed for development was re-guided in the 2019 County Comprehensive Plan process, and in conversation with the City of Elko New Market and New Market Township, into a category called Rural Business Reserve. Based on that designation, the project can be subdivided and uses that would have outdoor equipment storage and or a shed or workshop would be eligible under this category.

A public hearing was held by Scott County on this request on June 14, 2021. There was a lot of public comment with forty to fifty people, mainly from the neighborhood to the north, who expressed concerns about traffic, visual aesthetics, water management, and water quality. Individuals from that neighborhood contacted VRWJPO staff expressing concerns about groundwater, on-site septic systems, and stormwater management.

Scott County staff and VRWJPO staff discussed the proposed development. VRWJPO Administrator suggested that this be brought to the attention of the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board to inform the Board members about the issue because they may receive calls about this development. Commissioner Wolf commented that Messenbrink Construction has addressed some issues and has worked out some details with nearby residents and this should be a good project in that area. Mark Ryan commented that he has not reviewed the development plan details, but that Scott County has, and the Plan currently shows wetlands being avoided, including some of the smaller wetlands which often get impacted in development. Commissioner Slavik noted that they are following the VRWJPO Standards. Commissioner Slavik asked about fire suppression for buildings that might be constructed

here, given they are on private wells. Greg Wagner responded it is too early in the process to have that information as building plans and sizes are unknown.

Brita Moore-Kutz reported that the VRWJPO will have a presence at the Dakota County Fair in the Natural Resources Building along with other conservation organizations and partners. The theme of the County Building is "Transportation" and there will be environmental messaging in the sustainability section of the displays. Brita provided a summary of social media activity including promoting the Salt Symposium scheduled for August 3rd and 4th. The VRWJPO Tour and date was also discussed. Commissioner Slavik described the tour as an opportunity to highlight completed cost share projects supported by the VRWJPO.

Commissioner Slavik suggested that a focus on water conservation at the County Fair might be an appropriate message in a drought year. Brita noted that there is an effort to try to coordinate a consistent messaging among partners at the Natural Resources Building.

Travis Thiel provided an update on the deadfall inventory. There was only one deadfall blocking the river to the point where water was backed up (approximately 6 inches of fall over the deadfall). A few partial blockages were noted. None of the deadfalls can be attributed to any flooding. A discussion ensued about whether to remove deadfalls in the river. It was decided that sometime in the future a deadfall removal plan needs to be developed. Once the review of the Watershed Plan is finalized, a decision will be made on developing a removal plan. A discussion was also had about contacting the Minnesota DNR to inquire as to the potential to designate that portion of the river as a Water Trail.

Mark Zabel presented the Draft 2022 VRWJPO Budget highlighting those areas changed in comparison to the 2021. There were questions and discussion around the change in the budget to the Wetland Health Evaluation Program line item which is zeroed in the Draft 2022 VRWJPO Budget. The overall budget expenses are reduced from \$2,297,500 in 2021 to \$1,778,860 in 2022. Budgeted revenues are reduced from \$2,497,900 in 2021 to \$1,942,600 in 2022. Difference between revenues and expenses in 2022 leaves \$163,740 in cash reserve which is 8.4% of the budget total. Commissioner Slavik requested that in future years the Draft Budget be provided as an information item at the July meeting. The Draft Budget will be presented as an information item at the July meeting next year. Commissioner Slavik expressed his appreciation of staff identifying projects throughout the watershed. Zabel noted that the Watershed Plan has a prioritization included which sets priorities on a subwatershed basis, which also informs how projects are selected.

Zabel brought up recent media reporting about goldfish. Zabel mentioned that staff from the City of Burnsville had posted a picture of a football sized goldfish on social media and that posting then went viral. Brita Moore-Kutz mentioned the several media outlets that had since covered the story including, Good Morning America, Inside Edition, and the Washington Post. Brita commented that this showed how something eye catching like this can really impact our communication efforts. Brita also mentioned that it may be possible to wrap this into the Dakota County Fair displays. Possibly printing a picture of the giant goldfish with a message of not releasing them into the wild.

Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland, Second by Commissioner Wolf and passed 3-0 vote to adjourn the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, August 26, 2021, at 1 p.m. in Conference Room A at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington, MN.

Mark Zabel

Administrator for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Attest

Commissioner Hamann-Roland

Secretary/ Treasurer

Date