



# Minutes

## Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission Meeting

April 12, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

In-person and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

### WPC Members in Attendance

James Kotz    Sandra Weber  
Josh Borton    Andy Riesgraf  
Brad Blackett    Steve Hamrick  
Linda Larson

### Staff in Attendance

Brita Moore-Kutz, VRWJPO  
Travis Thiel, VRWJPO  
Mark Zabel, VRWJPO

### Others in Attendance

Anne Sawyer, BWSR

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

### 2. Roll Call

All members present except Sandra Weber who joined a few minutes late (4:33) after attending a separate meeting.

### 3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Anne Sawyer introduced herself as the new Board Conservationist for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Anne described the area assigned to her and the responsibilities her position fulfills for the BWSR. Anne provided some personal background. She is from this area and previously served with University of Minnesota Extension out of the Farmington office and so is familiar with Farmington and its surrounds. Her background and interest has been in outreach, engagement, and communications and conservation. She is here to learn and support the efforts of the VRWJPO in implementing conservation projects and the Watershed Plan.

### 4. Approval of Agenda

Chair Kotz asked for approval of the agenda.

*Motion by Commissioner Larson, second by Commissioner Borton, to approve the agenda as distributed. The agenda was approved by a 6-0 vote.*

### 5. Approval of Minutes from the January 11, 2023 Meeting

Chair Kotz requested any adjustments to the minutes as presented.

*Motion by Commissioner Borton, second by Commissioner Riesgraf, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023 meeting, as presented. The minutes were approved by a 5-0 vote. Commissioners Blackett and Larson abstained due to not having been present at the meeting.*

## **6. Business Items**

### **a. Recommend Approval of Proposed Amendments to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) 2023 Budget**

Mark Zabel described the layout of the budget spreadsheet and that changes compared to the Final 2023 budget were shown in the first column in red. The changes shown in red reflect a change of either an increase or a decrease. Mark went through each changed item and described the reason for the change. Overall proposed expenses went up from \$2,993,980 in the Final Budget to \$3,750,680 in the proposed amended budget and revenues from \$3,421,830 to \$3,966,750 with a cash reserve change from \$427,850 to \$216,070. Commissioner Kotz asked about the allocation for watershed tours as the line indicates plural. Zabel indicated that the allocation would allow for the potential for more than one tour as there has been interest in small group tours. Zabel also informed members of the development of planning for a joint VRWJPO tour with the BWSR as the BWSR has indicated an interest in coordinating the BWSR Board Annual Tour with the VRWJPO this year. That tour would be August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Commissioner Larson asked who might be invited onto the VRWJPO tour. Zabel listed the groups that have been invited on past tours. Commissioner Weber asked about the Alum Feasibility Study for Alimagnet Lake and when the alum treatment occurs as the grant term is 2022-2025. Zabel responded that this project is just the feasibility study where the study looks at the conditions in the lake and what would be appropriate for an alum treatment. The treatment itself would not be done until after the feasibility work is complete. Commissioner Weber then asked how long a treatment is expected to last. Travis Thiel responded that there are no guarantees but grant funding provides an expectation that it would last ten years. Commissioner Larson asked about treatment of Long Lake. Travis described the placement of a drawdown pipe that allows repeated drawdown to treat infestation of curly-leaf pondweed and rough fish that was implemented several years ago and has been used several times.

*Motion by Commissioner Larson, second by Commissioner Borton, to recommend the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board approve the amendments to bring the budgeted total expenses in 2023 to \$3,750,680 and total revenue to \$3,966,750 with a cash reserve of \$216,070. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.*

### **b. Recommend Authorization to Submit 2022 VRWJPO Annual Activity Report and Financial Statement to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources**

Brita Moore-Kutz provided the Draft 2022 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Annual Activity Report as a handout for each of the Watershed Planning

Commission Members. Brita briefly summarized the content of the Draft Report, the requirements and purpose of the report, and the timeline for its submittal. Brita requested the Watershed Planning Commission recommendation to the Joint Powers Board for submittal of the 2022 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Annual Activity Report to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

*Motion by Commissioner Borton, second by Commissioner Weber, to recommend the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board authorize staff to submit the 2022 Annual Activity Report and Financial Statement to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources on or before April 30, 2023.*

## **7. Updates**

### **a. Chairperson's Report**

Chair Kotz asked if there were any further developments or consideration of issues regarding Watershed Planning Commission member changes to terms of service since the last meeting. Zabel responded that there is a new member applicant for the open seat for a Dakota County resident that will bring membership for Dakota County WPC members to full complement. There is still an open seat for a member from Scott County. There has been no other developments or considerations on WPC membership other than that. Zabel confirmed that he would bring the issue of term limits as previously discussed to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board as a staff update.

### **b. Staff Updates**

Brita Moore-Kutz

Brita mentioned that the VRWJPO has begun the process for the next update of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan. Currently a notice requesting input to the Plan has been sent to review agencies and stakeholders. Brita has also set up a place on our website where people can submit comments. Brita highlighted the recent newsletter that was posted. Brita has changed the newsletter format and its email delivery process. Brita is also planning to increase the frequency for newsletter releases to at least quarterly with intermittent additional postings such as a current posting associated with Earth Month, which included events of interest occurring around Earth Day. Brita reported that she will be tabling at the Lakeville Earth Day event and will be promoting the Adopt-a-Drain program and will have some macroinvertebrate samples for people to view. Brita highlighted the Wetland Health Evaluation Program, a volunteer program for participation around wetland sampling in coordination with local cities. Brita mentioned that the VRWJPO is currently having six interpretive signs fabricated and plan to have them installed at completed project sites sometime late Spring or early Summer. Brita also mentioned that the We Are Water exhibit was nominated as a candidate for the Dakota County "Heroes" award. The project was recognized among the finalists for the award.

Travis Thiel

Travis updated on three projects:

There is a project proposed to create a basin in the Foxborough Park area in Lakeville to treat sediment (total suspended solids) before it reaches North Creek. Most of the funding for this project was obtained through a successful grant application to the BWSR Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant process. The project was bid late this past Winter and bids came in below the engineer's estimate. The City of Lakeville is managing the project and they are allowing the contractor to select when they start the project within the growing season but have limited the project to a 60-day window to completion once they have started. VRWJPO staff will be involved in on-site oversight and review of construction.

The North Creek stabilization project is occurring in this same area and upstream to around Highview Avenue. This project involves placement of sixteen check dams in the stream channel to address the incised stream that was created as the stream head cut its way upstream. The check dams are placed to build a new stream gradient and reduce the incised condition of the stream at this location. It will also reduce delivery of sediment to the area downstream by stabilizing the upstream area and stopping the head cut. The project is substantially done, there is a little bit of touch up work left to be done once road weight restrictions are lifted this Spring and the contractor can get back on site.

The VRWJPO received some grant funding for the Alimagnet Lake Alum Treatment Feasibility Study. A feasibility study is required to be completed if we want to apply to BWSR for a Clean Water Fund Grant to do an in-lake alum treatment. The feasibility study will sample lake sediments and evaluate lake water quality to determine a recipe for dosing for the water in the lake. This includes all the logistical elements of accessing the lake with equipment and chemicals and determining the best methods and timing of application as well as whether done as a single or multiple applications. We expect the feasibility study will be completed this Summer with the expectation to be ready to apply for CWF Competitive Grant funding in August when BWSR is expected to open the 2024 funding application round. Commissioner Blackett asked if there is city participation involved in this project. Travis responded that there is a \$9,000 cash match for the grant for the feasibility study that is provided through the VRWJPO. It is anticipated that there will be city participation in the application for the CWF Competitive Grant that would provide match funds if successful. It is anticipated that an alum treatment could range in cost at \$200,00 to \$400,000. Commissioner Larson asked if this is looking at treating the entire lake or a portion of the lake. Travis responded that it is possible that within the feasibility study there could be consideration for what is most effective and that could mean multiple treatments or different approaches for different portions (basin) of the lake. Usually, alum treatments involve the entirety of the lake, but dosing could vary. Commissioner Blackett noted that the western arm seems to have more problems than the eastern arm. Travis mentioned that the consultant will sample sediment and water quality in these areas to determine what is needed for the best approach. Commissioner Hamrick asked how Alimagnet Lake is connected to the watershed/ river. Travis responded that Alimagnet Lake has a pumped outlet that connects to the Vermillion River through the storm sewer system and ponds, eventually entering East Lake and ultimately North Creek.

Travis mentioned the City of Rosemount has been in conversation with VRWJPO staff about designs for the new City Public Works and Police Campus proposed for a site to the northeast of the existing City Hall. Discussions have centered on possible water reuse, as well as infiltration practices. The infiltration practices proposed exceed what would be required to meet

standards. Because they are proposing practices above and beyond requirements, we are considering cost-share to support those practices.

Mark Zabel

Mark updated the WPC on the status of the Elko-New Market development associated with the Niagara Bottling proposal. Mark mentioned that the Elko-New Market City Council has tabled action on the Niagara Bottling project awaiting a decision by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on the City's request to amend the water appropriations permit. Mark summarized the amendment to the water appropriations permit, as well as the Niagara Bottling project noting that the current City appropriations amendment would include servicing phase 1 of the Niagara Bottling project. Mark also provided some other recent appropriations request to give context to the information. Mark also shared that the area around the Vermillion River could be included in future studies for groundwater management, possibly after the Dakota County Geologic Atlas update is completed. Groundwater sustainability is critical for the Vermillion River as it depends on groundwater inputs to maintain its flow and cool temperatures. Mark also noted the open Water Resource Engineer position with the VRWJPO. Mark Ryan has taken a promotion to the Senior Water Resources Engineer position with Dakota County. His position is currently involved with completing the upgrade to the Byllesby Dam. The Byllesby Dam was constructed in 1911 and has been undergoing an upgrade for several years. New turbines are being installed this week and are expected to be connected to flow later this coming Summer and potentially producing power to the grid this Fall. We are looking for a good candidate to fill the vacant position and if you know of someone who might be interested would encourage them to apply.

#### **8. Adjourn**

*Motion by Commissioner Riesgraf, second by Commissioner Borton, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. The motion passed on a 7-0 vote.*