



Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission (WPC) Meeting

September 13, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

In-person and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

WPC Members in Attendance

Jim Kotz Brad Blackett
Josh Borton Andy Riesgraf
Steve Hamrick Sandra Weber
Kevin Chamberlain

VRWJPO Staff in Attendance

Travis Thiel, Watershed Administrator
Brita Moore-Kutz, Communications & Outreach Specialist

Others in Attendance

Curt Coudron, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) (Virtual)
Nikki Stewart, Dakota County (Virtual)
Valerie Neppl, Dakota County (Virtual)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Kotz at 4:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

All members present except Commissioner Larson.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

4. Approval of Agenda

*Motion by Commissioner Weber to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain.
Motion carried on a 7-0 vote.*

5. Approval of Minutes from the August 9, 2023 Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Borton to approve the August 9, 2023 minutes, seconded by Commissioner Blackett. Commissioner Weber abstained due to missing this meeting. Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.

6. Business Items

a. **Update on 2023 Capital Improvement Projects**

Travis Thiel presented information on the capital improvement projects the watershed is working on or has completed in 2023.

Information only.

7. Updates

a. **Chairperson's Report**

No updates.

b. **Staff Updates**

Brita Moore-Kutz

Brita is mostly focusing on public engagement for the watershed plan development process. She reminded members of the October 12, 2023 initial planning meeting and to RSVP to her if attending. The meeting is open to the public, and the watershed hopes to capture feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders.

Brita also pointed out that the end of the year means a few members' terms are expiring, which can be renewed if the member still has eligibility. She hopes to garner more applications for the new terms each year.

Travis Thiel

With his promotion to Administrator, Travis's next task is to hire new staff. He is continuing to look for a Water Resources Engineer and has some potential candidates.

Travis pointed out that most of Dakota County is under a "Severe Drought" classification and the Vermillion River gage on Blaine Ave. in Empire was showing a flow rate of 9 cubic feet per second in early September, which is very low.

Valerie Neppi

There is a well clinic in Elko New Market on September 30, 2023, which will be staffed by members of the Dakota County Groundwater Protection unit, for private well owners. Water can be tested for nitrates, chlorides, and arsenic.

Curt Coudron

Curt said water monitoring and macroinvertebrate monitoring have been challenging with the drought, but they are adjusting as they can. He said the water has been even lower than it was last summer.

The SWCD has been working on projects with landowners, such as cover crops, grassed waterways, and sediment basins. The deadline is October 15, 2023 to seed the cover crops.

Nikki Stewart

Nikki thanked Travis for accepting the Administrator position and Valerie for her administrative support.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Borton, seconded by Commissioner Riesgraf. Motion carried on a 7-0 vote.

DRAFT