



Meeting Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (JPB) Meeting

August 24, 2023, 1 p.m., in-person and virtual via Microsoft Teams

Board Members in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik
Dakota County Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland
Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf

Others in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Bill Droste, VRWJPB alternate
Bruce Johnson, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor
Nikki Stewart, Dakota County, Environmental Resources Department Director
Jennifer Wolf, Assistant Dakota County Attorney, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Counsel
Travis Thiel, Dakota County, VRWJPO Senior Watershed Specialist
Brita Moore-Kutz, Dakota County, VRWJPO Communications and Outreach Specialist
Brian Watson, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Manager
Valerie Neppel, Dakota County, Groundwater Protection Unit Supervisor
Paula Liepold, Dakota County, Water Resources Educator
Jessica Schaum, City of Apple Valley (virtual)
Melissa Bokman-Ermer, Scott County, VRWJPO Co-Administrator (virtual)

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Slavik, Hamann-Roland, and Wolf were in attendance.



3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Agenda
- b. Approval of Minutes from the July 27, 2023 Meeting
- c. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports and Draft Fund Statements
- d. Authorization to Approve Drainage and Ravine Maintenance Easement for Ravenna Trail Ravines Stabilization Project

Res. No. VRW 23-24: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

5. Approval of Expenses

Valerie Neppl presented expenses from July 15-August 14 totaling \$40,478.86.

Res. No. VRW 23-25: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the expenses, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

6. A. Public Hearing to Receive Comments on and Adopt the 2024 Vermillion River Watershed Draft Budget and Tax District Levy

Valerie Neppl reviewed the proposed tax levy and budget breakdown. The overall impact of the tax levy on individual homeowners decreased in both Dakota and Scott Counties.

Commissioner Slavik said that at some point he'd like to know how VRWJPO's tax levy compares to other local watersheds.

No comments in the public hearing.

Res. No. VRW 23-26: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

Res No. VRW 23-27: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to adopt the 2024 Vermillion River Watershed Draft Budget and Tax District Levy, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.



B. Schedule and Public Notice an Initial Planning Meeting to Develop Priorities and Issues for the 2026 Update of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan

Valerie presented the potential dates for the initial planning meeting for the 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan development. This meeting is required by Minnesota Rule 8410. The Board settled on Thursday, October 12, 2023, from 4-6 p.m. as an open house and comment period for the public, with a backup date of Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Brita Moore-Kutz said she'd drafted a public notice for the meeting.

Res. No. VRW 23-28: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to set the meeting date for October 12, 2023 seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

C. Authorization to Execute a Contract with HKGi for Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Stakeholder Engagement Services and Amend the 2023 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Budget

Travis Thiel shared that VRWJPO had distributed a Request for Proposals (RFP), evaluated seven submitted proposals, and selected HKGi as the consultant for stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement services was not initially identified in the 2023 budget, and staff felt it was prudent to amend the budget to reflect this service. The total cost of the consultant service will be paid out in both 2023 and 2024.

Res. No. VRW 23-29: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to authorize the contract execution and budget amendment, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

7. Staff Reports

Nikki Stewart

Nikki was working on hiring for the VRWJPO Administrator and Water Resources Engineer.

She also reached out to County Finance to clarify what Commissioners already see in terms of fund balances.

Paula Liepold

Paula said she was very happy with the collaborative Watershed Tour the previous day. The tour introduced Commissioners and state agency staff to watershed projects in person and applauded the



partnerships that made these projects possible. She had heard from recently retired VRWJPO Administrator Mark Zabel, a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board member, that the Board had “exuberant accolades” for staff in planning the tour. The tour was fully covered financially by BWSR. Next, VRWJPO will send a brief article about each tour stop to its respective local partners.

Jennifer Wolf

Counsel Wolf accepted a new position and is leaving the County. Paul Beaumaster is set to return as VRWJPO Counsel in September.

Brian Watson

The Dakota SWCD is working in partnership with VRWJPO, Dakota County, the City of Hastings, and Forever Green on potentially developing a Kernza growing plot on eighty-two acres owned by the City, in conjunction with a local farmer. It could provide an education and outreach opportunity for the community.

Travis Thiel

Travis submitted three applications to the BWSR this week for competitive Clean Water Fund grants. The first is a stormwater treatment project at Green Ridge Park in Lakeville, benefiting North Creek, for \$475,000. The second is in the city of Farmington, a hydrodynamic separator on 4th and Willow discharging to the Vermillion River for \$115,000. The third is for the alum treatment in Alimagnet Lake, requesting \$317,000. The total request is \$907,000. BWSR has about \$7 million in Clean Water Funds available. Dakota SWCD and the City of Apple Valley have also submitted applications for the funds.

Jessica Schaum reported that the Apple Valley request is for just over \$750,000 for Whitney Pond.

The Commissioners complimented Travis on his presentations during the tour.

Brita Moore-Kutz

Brita spent four days at the County Fair along with several other staff. The Natural Resources Building included many local and state partners of the VRWJPO and the We Are Water MN panels that Dakota County got to keep from their exhibit. She had a lot of positive conversations with fairgoers, including many from Hastings reflecting on their experience with the River and some from the headwaters area. She included a map of the watershed in her exhibit to help people understand the area better.



Commissioner Slavik said he'd heard positive comments about the VRWJPO website and gratitude for the interactive projects map.

Brita added that the website fees will be paid on an annual basis starting in 2024.

Valerie Neppi

Commissioners had previously asked about the investment fund balances in the budget. Valerie included more details intended to answer their questions in the August Treasurer's Report.

The Minnesota Well Owners Organization and Minnesota Groundwater Association are holding a well water test clinic in Elko New Market on September 30. They reached out to VRWJPO and Dakota County staff for event support. Brita will provide education and outreach materials, though she cannot attend in person. The County Groundwater Unit will provide staff to help explain test results.

Melissa Bokman-Ermer

Melissa worked with Scott County staff to provide a QR code to direct people to purchase water testing kits at the Scott County website.

8. Adjourn

Commissioner Slavik asked that staff send mid-month updates in September.

Motion by Commissioner Wolf to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Slavik. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 28, 2023, at 1 p.m. in Conference Room A at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington, MN.

Respectfully submitted by

Brita Moore-Kutz

Communications & Outreach Specialist for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization



Attest

Maez Jimenez-Rolond

Commissioner

Secretary/ Treasurer

10/26/23

Date