

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE – FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, June 11, 2015**

1. Call to Order

The President called the June 11, 2015 Regular Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers of the Forest Lake City Center, 1408 Lake Street South, Forest Lake.

Present: President Richard Damchik, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Treasurer Jon Spence, Secretary Wayne Moe and Assistant Treasurer Stephen Schmaltz.

Others: Michael Kinney and Emily Schmitz (CLFLWD staff), Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners), Laura Jester (Keystone Waters, LLC), Aaron Parrish (Forest Lake), Mark Lobermeier (City of Wyoming).

2. Setting of Agenda

The President called for approval of the June 11 agenda. Manager Moe moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager Spence. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0.

(Manager Anderson arrived at this time.)

3. Public Open Forum

The President asked for public comments. There were no public comments.

4. Communications Plan Discussion

Laura Jester stated that she appreciated being invited back to kick off the development of the communications plan. Water management is as much about working with people – stakeholder groups and cities—as it is about working with water. Watershed Districts alone cannot meet all their goals. Effective communication is to help educate, establish and implement policies and garner support for projects. She provided a survey summary, followed by a discussion on goals, outcomes and audiences.

A Survey Monkey questionnaire was sent to four city managers and three lake association presidents. Six surveys were completed anonymously.

- Five of the six respondents rated communication with the District to be good or excellent.
- While all wanted to be in the communications loop, there was a mix of responses to: Do you want the watershed district to communicate with you or city residents?
- On what to communicate, “projects” was most important.
- On how to communicate, “email updates” was the most important, followed by a tie for regular presentations and newsletters. Social media was low on the list.

- Four of six respondents do not use the website, with one respondent stating they were not able to find information and the site should be updated more often and be interactive.
- In an open-ended question to tell about typical communications received from the District, overall the communication was well received. However, one respondent skipped the question and one stated it was too technical, too full of jargon, too long and too complicated.
- On reusing the information received, three do this multiple times a year, one a couple times and two rarely. One stated the information is not timely enough for their newsletter.
- On how they like to communicate with the District or other groups, email is again the biggest response, but responses are mixed with respondents selecting more than one category.
- Hazelton and the Guthrie Theater were listed as organizations that are good with communication. Timeliness was stated as making an organization an effective communicator.
- On an open-ended question with regards to communication in general, the District was encouraged to do more of it, do it consistently, and do it well.

In a follow up to questions, Ms. Jester clarified that because the survey was anonymous, no specifics about individual respondents is known, but a phone survey could be conducted to get more in-depth answers. Discussion included: respondents preferred the oldest methods of communication—email and newsletters—which might reflect older respondents; more information could be on the website including interactive maps to facilitate searching for site-specific projects, data and photos; currently, a consultant is helping to update the website; anything affecting a lake should be communicated to the lake association president especially stoplog updates; and communication is key to getting leaders of associations involved with the District.

Ms. Jester reviewed the District mission and goals and goals in the Water Management Plan. She noted that coordination is crucial to accomplish the District's interagency communications goals. Other goals and issues identified included: the Wetland Conservation Act, accountability, transparency, building trust and relationships, innovation (though this is a value), inclusivity, sustainability and fiscal soundness. The Managers also emphasized the need to communicate what is a watershed, issues being addressed to keep our waters clean, District challenges and their importance, the scientific rationale for actions and the need for an interactive map on the website, which Flatrock has developed.

Ms. Jester asked what the District wants the end result of the communications to be. She gave example objectives such as education, behavior change, more buy-in and/or cooperation from stakeholders, cities and developers. To this, Managers agreed all are important and further specified:

- Wanting a return on education dollars spent.
- Getting cooperation of key stakeholders such as cities to build a partnership for projects.

- Getting buy-in from stakeholders around the lakes by helping them understand shoreline BMPs and their role in clean water. Manager Moe stated that some stakeholders understand and just don't do it and some just don't understand.
- Helping the public in general understand their role in clean water and what they can do on their own property. Everyone can help out in some form and both hobby and working farm owners were specifically mentioned as an important stakeholder group.
- Getting people to understand is different than getting action. Education or understanding comes first. For lake property owners, it might be that clean lakes increase property values. For lake users, it might be a clean water experience for their next visit and for the next generation.
- Communicating accomplishments and the District's goal of returning lake water quality to predevelopment conditions by aggressively decreasing phosphorus inputs.

Discussion on audiences covered:

- Communication can be tricky because the City of Forest Lake is divided between two watershed districts and the public at large is diverse.
- Lake associations (lakeshore owners) are more defined.
- The broad audience of taxpayers, who pay for the District.
- Lake users such as boaters.
- Developers who need personal communication through the permitting process. The process should be efficient and transparent.
- High school students or school districts.
- Agencies the District works with including BWSR, MPCA, DNR, BWSR, Met Council, US Army Corps of Engineers. For grants, it is important that the agencies recognize the District and our work. This contact can be with our staff, by attending agency programs and by distributing a fact sheet.
- The business community such as Rotary and Lions clubs.
- Environmental groups with same goals. Audubon, the St. Croix River Association other river associations and possibly Wild Ones were mentioned.
- The counties include an annual presentation to and personal interactions with commissioners. Commissioners receive and follow the District minutes. The District participates in the Washington County Consortium and works with the conservation districts and the water plan administrators. A quarterly factsheet could be provided.
- Everybody in the watershed district is a stakeholder, though many do not realize they are stakeholders. Few know about watershed districts and what they do. Basic communication: water is out there and is stewarded and why watershed districts exist. Using this input, Ms. Jester will work with Administrator Kinney to define the next steps.

5. Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

Aaron Parrish stated that he was here to address comments or issues. He enjoys the collaboration that the City and District have. With regular staff meetings both are starting to understand roles and are planning for such things as capital improvement projects. The City is budgeting and planning for the 15th Street project which opens up opportunities for water quality enhancement projects in the Target area. The City is doing survey work for the Shields Lake project and continues to reserve funds for the Hilo Lane project. At the last City Council workshop, the council had a significant conversation about increasing

the stormwater fee, specifically for pond maintenance. As far as the WCA discussion, about one year ago the council discussed the pros and cons of assuming responsibility for stormwater and WCA permitting for the entire city. Currently, the City does no stormwater permitting. The City was just made aware it is the local government unit (LGU) responsible for WCA in the CLFLWD area. The Rice Creek Watershed District is responsible for WCA in the balance of the city. One year ago the council was not interested in taking over regulatory authority because the District also collects taxes in the area, focuses only on water issues and is better positioned to deal with this. With the recent election, the new council wanted to reevaluate and make a determination on its permitting authority. Having a one-stop shop, as is done in Hugo, makes it easier for developers, but provides less collaboration with watershed districts. Later in the summer the council will continue this discussion at a workshop.

Managers and legal counsel concurred that as far as anyone can remember, the District has never had WCA authority in Forest Lake, there is no mention in the District minutes directing staff to move forward with taking over WCA authority and the District's number one concern is protecting wetlands. Mr. Parrish assured the District that the council's discussion on WCA authority was because of a desire to look holistically at policy and not because of concerns with the District. The city lost track of being the LGU for WCA. Moving forward there will need to be collaboration as the City and District intersect on a lot of issues. To be most effective, he recommended the District be at city meetings when water issues are on the agenda to provide input and be involved in the city's budget process. He noted that, though still not popular, people are starting to see the benefit of the stormwater fee. Manager Anderson stated that the District's concern is for protecting the resource and not who administers WCA. The District just needs to be compensated for WCA work on behalf of the city.

Administrator Kinney stated that permitting is a priority at the monthly engineering meetings, along with communication and working through defining roles and responsibilities. He is also working with the zoning administrator to get far out in front of issues to achieve mutual goals. Manager Anderson stated that this is how the City and District always worked together and the board will rely on the two administrators to do this. Manager Schmaltz stated that if the District feels work on WCA is not being done, Mr. Parrish should be notified. Other issues identified included: it is the District's obligation to notify appropriate agencies when there are WCA violations; WCA does allow for permit fees to be imposed for WCA review; if the city retains LGU status, the one-on-one communication between District and city administrators is key for education; there is a gap in the information the District has received from the city including MS4 mapping of the City's stormsewer system; new city staff are not familiar with city history and ordinances; the need for a permitting process between the City and District to ensure the District knows of all permits, mitigation requests, construction project concept designs that might impact water quality and those needing District permits are directed to the District. Mr. Holtman stated that the District has the authority to issue stop-work and compliance orders for permit violations, though the Board has not delegated that authority to the administrator and would need to hold a compliance hearing with due notice to the alleged violator, typically at least three days; there is a legal obligation for the City as

WCA implementing authority to notify the District about WCA permit applications; a watershed district's watershed plan can specify permit processing coordination protocols for LGUs, but the District's current plan does not. Manager Schmaltz volunteered to pick up a city permit packet given to developers/permit applicants. Administrator Kinney stated that he will work with Mr. Parrish on these permitting issues. Manager Anderson expressed concern about all these programs that do not hang together and need to be tightened up.

Manager Anderson moved to direct legal counsel to prepare a resolution for delegation of order authority to the District administrator for the June 18 regular meeting. Seconded by Manager Moe. Upon vote, motion carried 5-0.

6. East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP) Budget Increase

Administrator Kinney stated that the District funds EMWREP to do a certain level of education work. This is different than the communications plan just being discussed, though there is some overlap. As the communication plan is developed, the District could develop certain requests of EMWREP and noted a recent specific request that was responded to by the staff. Manager Anderson concurred that the service and the recent office support are worthwhile, but that Angie Hong is stretched too thin. She also stated that some programs, such as reaching elementary kids, should be developed and distributed centrally. Manager Schmaltz recommended exploring contracting with the WCD staff for additional services for 2016 budgeting purposes. The District cost for a three-year EMWREP contract is \$18,500 per year. The percent increase over the last three years was unclear. Manager Spence stated that the whole program is spread so thin, though Angie is great. He also stated that he hasn't seen the deliverables such as articles in newspapers and would like to understand the services before committing to a new contract. Administrator Kinney stated that he will provide the 2105 EMWREP work plan.

7. Personnel Policy Manual Meeting

A workshop to review the manual revisions was scheduled for July 15 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

8. Report of Officers and Managers

- Manager Schmaltz distributed information on flowering rush that was sent to Forest Lake lakeshore owners by the District. Eurasian watermilfoil was spotted in two locations on the lake, but more could be found. Administrator Kinney added that the DNR will be out inspecting and can provide recommendations. Early detection and treatment of milfoil in a Hennepin County lake has resulted in a milfoil-free lake for the last three years. At the next meeting a rapid response plan will be presented.
- Manager Spence reported that he has curlyleaf pondweed and most likely Eurasian watermilfoil around his shore on Comfort Lake and will start pulling it.
- Manager Anderson reported that she and her husband helped new neighbors identify and understand how to pull curlyleaf. She asked for an update on the Peshorn project by EOR at the next meeting and reported on an article in the Star Tribune featuring an underwater photographer whose photos educate about the value of aquatic plants and fallen trees for fish habitat. She also reported that a non-toxic filamentous algae has come through the culvert to Comfort Lake and has reached as far as the boat access.

She would like Greg Graska to address this issue at the next meeting and would like a flyer to distribute to residents.

- Manager Moe indicated that he talked to Mr. Graska about monitoring and plans to send Administrator Kinney an email regarding the dicussion.

9. Adjourn Next Meeting —June 18, 2015

Manager Moe moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Wayne S. Moe, Secretary _____