

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Tuesday, January 7, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the January 7, 2020 regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the offices of the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District, 44 Lake Street South, Suite A, Forest Lake, MN.

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Secretary Jen Oknich, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Manager Jim Dibble.

Others: Mike Kinney, Jessica Lindemyer, Peter Brennhofer (CLFLWD staff); Doug Thomas, Lori Han (Houston Engineering)

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Lease Review Update was added to the agenda.

Manager Oknich moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a vote, the motion carried 5-0.

3. Workload Analysis – Firm Presentation and Board Discussion

Doug Thomas and Dr. Lori Han gave a presentation on Houston Engineering’s workload analysis proposal. Mr. Thomas explained Houston’s knowledge of watershed district law, operations and financing, and its scenario-based approach to workforce planning which is designed specifically for government. Mr. Thomas described his role as Project Manager and experience working as the District Administrator for both the Comfort Lak-Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) and Rice Creek Watershed District. Joe Lewis is the Water Resources Engineer for the project, bringing experience in modeling, project management and knowledge of public drainage systems and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit compliance. Dr. Lori Han is the Environmental Scientist for the project and will assist with estimating workloads and analysis of the District’s plans and projects. Houston has other support staff that can assist as necessary. Mr. Thomas described the project purpose and workforce planning model approach including evaluation of statute-required responsibilities and staff capacity and skills to satisfy those responsibilities. This supports management direction, priorities, and budget. It is not designed to evaluate individual performance and/or efficiency. Mr. Thomas described a past workforce planning effort he co-led for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) including timeline, cost, process, and results.

Mr. Thomas described benchmarking older watershed districts. It can be done, but value is limited due to the large amount of diversity among watershed districts. Comparison with Metro watershed districts will be most helpful. Houston's approach to modeling watershed evolution would be guided by its staff's 40+ years of experience working for and with watershed districts. Mr. Thomas indicated that engagement of stakeholders and gaining support for the District's office space decision is critical. Hiring a real estate manager to advise on options and cost could be very valuable, as well as thoroughly documenting the process and reasoning involved in coming to a final decision. Dr. Han outlined Houston's proposed approach including meetings with the Board and staff, review of the District's comprehensive plan and rules, data analysis and staffing scenarios, and final report and closeout meeting.

Manager Anderson expressed that the presentation was clear and concise, and the government-focused framework is helpful. There was discussion about extending the analysis timeline and potentially adjusting the scope and deliverables. Mr. Thomas indicated that this could be assessed during the contracting process and initial meetings with the Board and staff. There was further discussion about how the District's core, statutory responsibilities will be factored into the analysis. Mr. Thomas described Houston's experience with MS4 permitting including work with other watershed districts and cities, the impact of climate change on urban stormwater management, and use of special assessments. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Han thanked the Board for their consideration and departed the meeting.

Mr. Kinney requested that, given the projected number of meetings and workshops this year, managers provide their availability to staff for the year. There was discussion about the workload analysis proposals. Manager Oknich expressed that Houston seemed more prepared and competent than Wenck. Manager Schmaltz indicated that the Board was able to extract a clear scope from Wenck during its interview. He expressed that he had doubts about Houston's pre-packaged approach and that it won't be customized to the District's specific needs. President Spence indicated that this workload analysis process is layered on top of the District's existing watershed planning efforts; the difference with this plan update is that now the District has to worry more about office space facilities. Managers Anderson and Oknich agreed that Houston seems very experienced and confident in the workload analysis field. Manager Anderson expressed that Wenck's proposal seemed more disjointed. Mr. Kinney suggested that opinions may change based on the revised scopes and cost estimates that each firm is to submit. It is possible that both firms could be hired for different tasks. He indicated that there seem to be pros and cons for each firm. Manager Schmaltz indicated that Wenck has a lot of personal experience with staff growth and office space upgrades. President Spence expressed that Wenck's proposal did seem more disjointed than Houston's, and Houston seems more capable of pulling together this project that has so many moving parts. He agreed that seeing the revised quotes will be helpful in making the final decision. Mr. Kinney indicated that he would send the revised quotes and presentation materials to the managers.

4. Lease Review Update

Manager Anderson reported that the District's landlord plans to have the final bills submitted by late January/early February. He will provide a separate page on the 2019 actual common area maintenance (CAM) expenses versus estimates. He is amenable to adjusting the District's lease to an annual basis starting in January, rather than its current December start date; this wouldn't change the rental rates.

5. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – January 9, 2020

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____