

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, July 30, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the July 30, 2020 special board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. via online video conference

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Assistant Treasurer Jim Dibble.

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich.

Others: Mike Kinney, Emily Heinz (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke, Greg Graske (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners)

2. Old Business

a) Draft 2021 Budget: Program & Project Implementation Update

Watershed Technician Heinz presented an update on program and project implementation. Programs account for 43% of the proposed 2021 budget and 66% of the 2020 work plan. She explained that the Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) requirements for prioritized, targeted, and measurable (PTM) implementation can be applied to programs as well as projects. The program priorities are often reflective of project priorities, which the District categorizes by issue area (Floodplain, Lakes, Wetlands, etc.). Ms. Heinz stressed the importance of prioritization indicating if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. She presented recent progress highlights for each program including a 95% permit site inspection compliance rating in 2019 and a cumulative phosphorus reduction of approximately 70 pounds per year as a result of required stormwater management facilities. Manager Schmaltz indicated total suspended solids reductions from permitted projects should be tracked and displayed as well. Mr. Kinney noted that this phosphorus reduction figure only applies to stormwater management facilities and does not include phosphorus reductions achieved from erosion and sediment control practices. The latter is harder to quantify precisely, but staff is seeking research on the topic to be able to demonstrate the value of erosion and sediment control regulations.

Additional program highlights included approximately 400 water monitoring samples collected in 2019, a significant increase in education and outreach efforts in recent years, major grant awards over the past 7 years, and completion of approximately 30,000 watercraft inspections at public launches over the past 5 years. She explained programs are valuable because they can result in direct outputs like projects do (e.g. permitted

stormwater management projects result in an estimated phosphorus reduction of 70 pounds per year) as well as indirect outputs (water monitoring provides data necessary to identify projects, obtain grants, and communicate progress to stakeholders). Programs are defined by their cyclical nature on an annual basis, whereas projects always have a defined start and end date. Ms. Heinz explained this distinction applies to the program and project budget categories.

Ms. Heinz explained projects account for 45% of the proposed 2021 budget and 14% of the 2020 work plan. As of now, most District staff time goes toward programs, with a significant amount of project assistance coming from consultants. Projects should be prioritized, targeted and measurable. She recommended success should be measured by outputs achieved (e.g. phosphorus or TSS reductions) rather than number of best management practices (BMPs) implemented or dollars spent. Ms. Heinz described progress toward goals. Ten of the District lakes have quantified water quality goals in the current Watershed Management Plan. As of 2020, half of those lakes are currently meeting either their 2030 goals (Bone, Forest, Comfort) or their 2040 goals (Keewahtin, Heims). Two lakes are on track to meet their long-term (2040) goals very soon (Moody, Shields). Three lakes need more work (Birch, School, Little Comfort). Overall, the District is 75% of the way toward achieving the phosphorus reductions necessary for all ten lakes to meet state standards and 68% of the way toward achieving the reductions necessary to achieve District long-term goals (which in many cases are more aggressive than state standards). Manager Anderson suggested staff combine the visual displays for progress toward District goals and state standards so the two can be compared more easily. Manager Anderson indicated the project priority tier structure needs to be adjusted to include additional benefits beyond phosphorus.

Ms. Heinz recommended the Board consider what the next priority will be once these lake goals are achieved. She provided updates on project implementation progress in each LMD, describing future projects necessary to achieve final goals. Manager Dibble suggested the District focus more heavily on the Adopt-A-Drain program which works with residents to clean out leaves, sediment and other pollutants from storm drains in their area. He explained he participates in the program and was surprised by the high amount of material that accumulates. Mr. Kinney indicated preliminary results of the 2019 Forest Lake Enhanced Street Sweeping show a cost efficiency for this program. He suggested it may be cost effective for the City to expand its program, and the program may work well in other cities such as Wyoming as well. Cecilio Olivier noted the operation and maintenance program is very important to keep in mind as projects need to be maintained and in some cases partially replaced to ensure functionality in the long term. President Spence recapped the proposed budget currently stands at \$2.9 million and the levy is at \$1.4 million.

Manager Anderson suggested adding a total of \$135,000 between the Programs and Projects categories. Manager Schmaltz suggested adding funding for projects in the Washington Judicial Ditch 6 (WJD-6) subwatershed. Staff and EOR were directed to estimate an exact amount to be added to the 2021 budget for WJD-6 projects.

b) WJD-6 Projects

Dr. Funke presented an overview of the proposed projects in the WJD-6 subwatershed. The goal phosphorus reduction for this subwatershed is 170 pounds per year. Potential projects include County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter (IESF), greenway corridor, channel/ditch enhancements, WJD-6 wetland restoration (south of Highway 97), and a wetland enhancement in the R7D subcatchment. Implementation strategies include partnerships with the City of Forest Lake, Washington County & DNR; land acquisition/easements; partial ditch abandonment; FY20 Clean Water Fund (CWF) grant application; discussions with landowners; and another future CWF grant application. Mr. Graska noted that implementation of the greenway corridor may affect the outcome of some of the other projects (except for CR50 IESF). The Board discussed project details including flow patterns, design specifications, estimated costs, landowner coordination and potential impacts, easements and acquisition possibilities.

3. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Ms. Heinz noted the City of Forest Lake proposed Monday, September 21st for the joint Board-City Council meeting. Manager Schmaltz asked if that is the same time as a regular City workshop, and Ms. Heinz confirmed it is. She indicated she would ask City staff if there are any other items on the agenda for that evening besides the joint meeting with the District.

4. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – August 13, 2020

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X
Jim Dibble	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____