

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE  
WATERSHED DISTRICT  
Thursday, January 9, 2020**

**1. Call to Order**

President Spence called the January 9, 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, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Manager Jim Dibble.

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich

Others: Mike Kinney, Jason Kuennen (CLFLWD staff)

**2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

An item for discussion of aquatic invasive species grants as added to the agenda.

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a vote, the motion carried 4-0.

**3. Workload Analysis**

Manager Schmaltz noted Houston Engineering's emphasis on working with government organizations. He suggested that a private model should be used as opposed to a public model. He indicated that Wenck Engineering's proposal was more geared toward a private sector model. Manager Schmaltz noted that Houston's proposal seems more internally-focused and doesn't include growth trends of the surrounding communities such as the cities of Forest Lake and Wyoming. He described the District's strategy of keeping its levy relatively flat and working within the confines of a smaller budget. President Spence indicated that District staff and managers will be actively working with the chosen firm throughout the process and doing check-ins along the way to ensure the firm is on track according to the District's guidelines. Manager Schmaltz indicated that Houston's proposal is written for a three-year period. He expressed that Wenck's proposal has a well laid out procedure and good attention to detail. It appears to be externally-focused, including comparisons to other watershed districts. Manager Schmaltz indicated that Wenck's proposal amount is higher than Houston's, but in line with what he expected the District would spend on this project. If the District receives a \$10,000 grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) grant program, that would help cover the increased cost.

Manager Anderson expressed that Houston's proposal is the most cohesive for the District. She disagreed with Manager Schmaltz's assertions that private sector planning methods are better than government planning. She stated that government planning differs greatly from businesses and the private sector, in that public service and defined public purposes are the foundation, not profit generation. She indicated that Houston emphasized their expertise in government planning and mentioned the foundation of the District was established by petition for a specific purposes, but Wenck's presentation seemed disjointed, with specifics only coming out through intensive questioning. As to the concern Houston's timeline was three years while Wenck's was eleven, Manager Anderson stated that was because the RFP only asked for three years and the emphasis at the meeting from some board members was the urgency on the building lease renewal time constraints of three years. Wenck's complete proposal came after our meeting and only after many questions were raised during the presentation. She suggested that the District should request that Houston modify its timeline to ten or eleven years as well.

Both firms described communications and outreach as part of the workload analysis. Manager Anderson expressed that Houston's structure for analyzing a government entity and its unique purpose of public service will be important. Responding to the previous question of internal focus; she interpreted the purpose of interviewing staff is to assess skillsets and evaluate whether those skills will be useful in future years given the District's work projections, and how that information is critical to the discussion on whether to hire or contract for services, and our future building and space needs. Manager Anderson stated that Houston is her top choice for the workload analysis and that Wenck may be promising for working with the District on capital projects in the future and perhaps co-engineering with Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) on acceleration of projects. President Spence stated the engineer discussion is a topic for a future meeting.

Manager Dibble recommended that the timelines of each proposal should be aligned so that the costs would be more comparable. In response to board questions, Mr. Kinney clarified that, in Houston's Regional Operations staff reduction projection chart, sent as an example of a past workload analysis project for BWSR, the "minus" numbers reflect staff reductions if the BWSR agency were to go to a scenario that only covered core critical functions. "Plus" numbers would be added to current staffing to address new programs and expansions to existing programs. President Spence expressed that he has more confidence in Houston performing the workload analysis, as it seemed that Doug Thomas and the other Houston staff were well prepared. Manager Schmaltz noted that Houston's proposal doesn't include office space needs and seems to be written in a very broad sense. Manager Anderson indicated that it includes the staffing vs. consulting needs assessment, which drives the office space needs. President Spence noted that Houston verbally expressed a lot of the details of its vision during the interview and their slide presentation. Manager Schmaltz expressed that Wenck is his preferred choice, but he thinks the District can work with either.

There was agreement to request an updated timeline from Houston. Manager Anderson requested that the draft report be discussed with the Board prior to finalization and that both the comprehensive plan and the District rules be considered as part of the workload analysis. Mr. Kinney indicated that the regulatory program will be a significant factor in the District's

activities over the next ten years. Manager Anderson requested that staff send out copies of the presentation slide decks to the managers. There was further discussion about each firm's qualifications. Mr. Kinney indicated that he has experience working with both firms and could foresee working with either on the workload analysis.

There was agreement to delay the final decision until a future board meeting so that Mr. Kinney can obtain additional information regarding timing, interagency coordination and office space needs. Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> was proposed. Mr. Kinney indicated that he would confirm whether this date works for Manager Oknich.

#### **4. Salary Survey**

Mr. Kinney explained that the Gallagher interviews with staff were discussed by the Board, but the cost for which was not included in the motion. He recommended that the motion be amended to a higher contract amount in order to include the interviews.

Manager Anderson moved to amend her motion to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with AJ Gallagher in accordance with the September 19, 2019 Classification and Compensation Study proposal to include interviews with employees, and in an amount not to exceed \$14,300. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a vote, the motion carried 4-0.

#### **5. Aquatic Invasive Species Grants**

Mr. Kinney explained the two grant opportunities available this year for treatment of aquatic invasive species (AIS). One grant program from the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is expected to go live in mid to late January; this program is being brought back after two years of not being available. AIS Prevention funds through the counties are distributed in a variety of ways. This year Washington County will designate a certain level of funding specifically for the CLFLWD for watercraft inspections. Local organizations, including CLFLWD, can also apply to Washington County for funds to treat AIS. Chisago County has historically used their AIS Prevention funds for internal programs, one of which is a cost-share program available to lake associations to perform AIS treatments. Mr. Kinney suggested that the District reassess its role in invasive species treatments once the grants are announced.

Manager Anderson indicated that she shared the grant notice with some Comfort Lakes Association (CLA) board members and informed them that the District could assist with preparing an application. She then suggested the best idea would be for the District to apply for a consolidated grant, listing the three lake associations (Forest, Bone, Comfort), and listing the District as the fiscal agent. This would show cooperation, and perhaps improve our chances of securing some of the limited grant dollars. Manager Anderson said she asked the new CLA president to prepare a 1-2 page proposal on how the CLA would use the funds and submit it to the district. She was unsure if the CLA had reached out to staff on this topic yet.

Manager Dibble indicated that inspection rates at the Forest Lake 3 access (east basin) are typically low during certain weekdays. He suggested installing a locked gate and sign directing boaters to the other two public accesses during these times. He indicated that Forest Lake Lake Association (FLLA) members are planning to meet with DNR staff next week to discuss this topic. It was noted that the other two accesses aren't very far away from the east basin access. Mr. Kinney noted that in the state of Wyoming boaters wait for hours to get thoroughly inspected before launching at a lake.

There was general agreement in favor of the District coordinating with the lake associations to apply for a DNR grant. Mr. Kinney indicated that, once the program is announced, staff can report back to the Board as to what the DNR's priorities are. Manager Schmaltz recommended involving the cities as well and figuring out how to frame the proposal if certain cities aren't going to be active partners. There was agreement that separate applications may be necessary. Mr. Kinney noted that staff has assisted FLLA with Washington County grant applications for Eurasian watermilfoil treatment in the past. Staff also assists FLLA with planning and permitting for the Forest Lake plant harvester.

Manager Schmaltz reported that at the last Washington Conservation District (WCD) board meeting he attended, Matt Downing offered to present to the CLFLWD board about the WCD's AIS program. Manager Schmaltz indicated that the program is very active. Manager Anderson asked why the Board would want to have Mr. Downing make a presentation. Manager Schmaltz indicated that the Board might be surprised to see how much they are doing. He noted that Mr. Downing is currently the Administrator for the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization. Mr. Kinney indicated that he has recommended to WCD that they upload their meeting materials to their website, similar to what CLFLWD does. There was further discussion about the WCD AIS program including basing their program framework on the CLFLWD's program and funding through the county AIS Prevention Aid. There was agreement to review the presentation materials and then decide whether to request Mr. Downing provide an in-person presentation at a board meeting.

## **6. Adjourn**

### **a) Next regular board meeting – January 23, 2020**

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Dibble. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Jen Oknich, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_