



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

5:00 PM, Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Carver County Government Center, 602 East Fourth Street, Chaska, MN 55318

Approved August 21, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. ROLL CALL

On Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. CST, in the Board Room of the Carver County Government Center, 602 East 4th Street, Chaska, Minnesota, President Barisonzi called to order the workshop meeting of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD).

President Barisonzi asked for the roll call to be taken. The following Managers were present: President Joseph Barisonzi, Manager Theresa Kuplic, and Manager Apollo Lammers. Manager Lauren Salvato joined the meeting virtually. In addition, the following attended the meeting in-person: Linda Loomis, Naiad Consulting, LLC, LMRWD Administrator; Della Schall Young, Young Environmental Consulting Group, LLC, LMRWD Technical Consultant; Hannah Schacherl, Rinke Noonan, Attorney at Law, LMRWD legal Counsel; Barb Peichel, Clean Water Specialist, BWSR; and Steve Woods, Consultant for Young Environmental Consulting Group.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Steve Woods introduced himself and shared the purpose for this workshop. He asked each manager why they are on the Board and what they hope to accomplish.

Manager Kuplic shared that she wants to help clear up the river.

President Barisonzi shared that he wants to help clean up the environment in the context of global climate change. He said he is neighbors with the Minnesota River, and he wants to help ensure that it stays clean and moving.

Manager Salvato shared that her background is in water quality and resource management which she is passionate about. She added that she loves to walk to the Minnesota River, and she wants to make sure that her kids will be able to play in the water.

3. HOW THE LMRWD FITS IN

Mr. Woods explained that the LMRWD was created as there was a need for someone to address the river. He shared that watershed districts fit in with and work alongside local, State, and Federal agencies and government, as well as other associations and organizations. He explained that all of these groups can help partner with the LMRWD to achieve its goals. He noted these groups all want to do what they can to help. He shared that watershed districts have levy and assessments authorities and are able to remain very stable. He added that they are also able to focus on very specific things in a watershed district.

4. WD POWERS AND PURPOSE UNDER 103D and 103B

Barb Peichel introduced herself to the Board and gave a background of her experience. She thanked the Managers for their service to the Board. She shared the goal of MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is to help the watershed districts be successful and discussed their other goals and practices.

President Barisonzi asked if BWSR is a partner with the fens. Ms. Young explained that the calcareous fens are under the DNR which is why they primarily work with the DNR for this due to State statue.

Manager Kuplic asked how the differences were established with different watershed districts. Mr. Woods explained that the Act that allowed the creation of watershed districts came out in 1955 and about a third of the State is in a watershed district, including about 40% of the metro area. He explained that different areas handle watershed management in different ways, whether it is done at the city or county level, in a joint power's agreement, or a watershed district board.

Ms. Peichel discussed BWSR's role in watershed management plans, including reviewing and approving the plans, as well as evaluating the performance of the plan, providing assistance with the plan, and providing grant funding.

Mr. Woods explained that BWSR helps the Board document their visions and act more in a coaching role.

Ms. Young shared that it would be helpful if they could get some more information on what will help the Board be successful when they apply for grants. She noted that they want to make sure that the work they are putting in is getting rewarded. Ms. Peichel said they can set up a meeting with BWSR to discuss what successful proposals have in them. She stated they are happy to help with this. She added that they also allow watersheds to get funding for projects upstream.

President Barisonzi asked about the conditions in which the watershed to spend watershed resources outside of its boundaries. Administrator Loomis explained that if they can justify that the project would meet the goals of the watershed district, then they can contribute to projects outside of the boundaries of the watershed district. She added that they can also help with some of the One Watershed One Plan goals.

Ms. Young noted that spending money outside of the district when necessary is a part of their plan and it has been vetted.

President Barisonzi shared that when they work on the 2028-2038 plan, he would like them to increase their prioritization in influencing the water quality and ecosystem stability of their region by directly partnering with projects upstream. He noted that the more they address the sediment and reduce it the better.

Administrator Loomis shared that it was the position of the Board before she started that they would never fund dredging through the levy.

President Barisonzi asked if this was a policy of the Board. Administrator Loomis said it was a practice; however, now they have State money to fund dredging. She noted that if they were no longer receiving State funding for dredging the Board would be able to levy for it or figure out how to fund it.

5. YOUR ROLE AS LEADERS

Mr. Woods noted that all of the Managers were appointed to this Board as their counties saw them as a good fit. He explained that BWSR has already approved the plan put together by the Board's

predecessors and it is the current Board's responsibility to carry this out or make amendments when able. He noted that the Board needs to push Staff in the right direction.

President Barisonzi stated that they are not just representing their watershed district, but everywhere that the water flows.

Mr. Woods emphasized how important Staff is to a watershed district. He explained that the Managers are navigating and directing Staff on how to carry out the plan.

Ms. Young recognized that the current plan was not created by this board. She asked what it is in the purview of the Managers to start working on the 2028-2038 plan or making amendments to the current 2017-2028 plan. Mr. Woods explained that these are 10 year plans that make a lot of sense when they are first created, and over time they can make less sense with how quickly things can change. He shared that most watersheds make an amendment or two over the course of their 10 year plans.

Mr. Woods noted that the job of each Manager is important. He said there will inevitably be split votes when it comes to making decisions as a Board. He added that they should be able to rely on Staff to bring relevant information and statutes to the Board to aid in decision making of the Managers.

6. MAKING DECISIONS AND THE OPEN MEETING LAW

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed and will be discussed at a later date.

Mr. Woods noted that this is too important of a topic to rush through and would be better to discuss when they have enough time to delve into the subject. He gave a brief introduction to Open Meeting Law and conflicts of interest.

7. WRAP UP

Ms. Peichel asked if there were any questions.

The Managers did not have any additional questions.

8. ADJOURN

President Barisonzi adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Attest:

Lauren Salvato, Secretary

Linda Loomis, Administrator