



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Agenda Item

Item 10. D. – Committee Communications

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

The Personnel Committee met Thursday October 3, 2024. A meeting summary and action items from the meeting are attached for the review of the entire Board. These attachments were generated by Webex using AI.

Attachments

Personnel Committee meeting summary

Actions items

Recommended Action

No action recommend

October 3, 2024 Personnel Committee Meeting Summary

The meeting discussed various topics including approving minutes, considering multiple firms for a government relations consultant position, addressing potential conflicts of interest, and deciding on staffing options for the watershed district.

The committee discussed the process for approving minutes and including them on the consent agenda of the board meeting.

The committee talked about the government relations consultant position and considering multiple firms for the role.

There was a discussion about potential conflicts of interest with a law firm representing both legal and government relations.

The personnel committee wants to have a conflict-of-interest policy and plans to talk to both firms with bids.

The committee is considering scheduling a personnel committee meeting within two weeks to interview applicants.

The board acknowledges the lack of an agreed upon conflict-of-interest policy and plans to address it in November.

Questions for the lobbying firms will be drafted based on previous ones used for legal firms.

The current employee is considering retirement and suggests hiring an independent contractor to save on employment responsibilities.

If the district chooses to hire staff instead, they would need to advertise for an administrator and potentially draft an employee handbook.

The position title for watershed districts can vary based on organizational decisions and responsibilities.

Other watershed districts have different staffing models, including a mix of staff and consultants.

Transition planning is important due to the knowledge and experience of the current administrator.

Financial considerations, such as costs and budgeting, should be taken into account when considering staff or consultant options.

The board has had challenges providing clear direction on the education and outreach plan.

There is a lack of consensus from the board on the direction for education and outreach.

The board should focus education and outreach efforts on decision makers and policy related to the river.

October 3, 2024, Personnel Committee Action Items

- Check with John about the approval process for committee meeting minutes
- Determine the deadline for Flaherty & Hood's proposal submission
- Schedule a virtual discussion with both firms (Flaherty & Hood)
- Consider making the decision at the board meeting
- Clarify if Flaherty & Hood can serve as both legal and government relations consultants
- Discuss potential conflicts of interest with Flaherty & Hood's representation of MS 4s on the legal side
- Send out a new poll to schedule a personnel committee meeting within two weeks solely focused on interviewing applicants for the public affairs firm
- Reach out to Martha at Flaherty & Hood to inform them of the tight timeline and request their proposal
- Ensure good internet connectivity at the public meeting space for the upcoming meeting
- Draft questions for the interviewees and send them to Linda for aggregation and organization
- Consider strategic priorities and proactive lobbying efforts when selecting a firm
- Explore the option of hiring an independent contractor for the position
- Decide whether to advertise for a contractor or staff position and conduct interviews accordingly
- Determine the responsibilities of support staff and how they will be engaged
- Research employee handbooks from other watershed districts for reference

- Determine the timeline for retirement and whether it can be extended until June
- Consider the potential costs and responsibilities associated with hiring an employee
- Joseph Barisonzi will draft a proposal for the personnel committee to consider and bring to the board for an executive position search, including drafts of solicitation material.
- Therese and Lauren will meet with Linda to gather information about the scope of her current role and responsibilities.
- Therese, Lauren, and Joseph will work together to create a clear job description based on the audit of Linda's role.
- The goal is to have the job description ready by the end of the month.
- Joseph Barisonzi will send an overview of the scope for the education and outreach plan to Teresa for her feedback.
- Joseph Barisonzi and Teresa will meet to discuss and potentially co-author a plan for education and outreach.
- Linda will send out meeting notes, including a meeting summary and action items, as soon as possible.