



Scott Watershed Management Organization
200 Fourth Avenue West
Shakopee, MN 55379-1220
952-496-8054 Fax 952-496-8496
www.scottcountymn.gov/wmo

MINUTES

Scott WMO – Watershed Planning Commission

Video Conference

July 27, 2020

Members Present:

Rita Weaver
Virgil Pint
Kevin Shea
Brian Schmidt
Mark Vierling
Pam Caselius

Staff Present:

Vanessa Strong
Melissa Bokman
Ryan Holzer
Troy Kuphal

Others Present:

Tom Wolf
Bruce Loney
Kate Sedlacek
Shelby Roberts

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Chair Weaver called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

- Specific details and video of the entire July 27, 2020 Scott WMO Watershed Planning Commission Meeting is available for viewing on the Scott County Website.
- The video link can be viewed at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgGmUUapXsM>

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Commissioner Pint; second by Commissioner Vierling to approve the July 27, 2020 Meeting Agenda as amended below. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion Carried

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES MAY 18, 2020:

Motion by Commissioner Pint; second by Commissioner Vierling to approve the May 18, 2020 minutes as written and presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion Carried
STAFF REPORTS:

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

SCOTT SWCD

- Details of the July 27, 2020 SWCD report are available in the Watershed Planning Commission meeting packet
- Commissioner Pint would like to see a report of trends in ground water quality and quantity and bring any issues to the WPC early on to be addressed

SCOTT WMO

Updates from Vanessa Strong

- All of the TACS budget dollars have been encumbered for the year
- Staff has been involved in the Lower MN River South Watershed for the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) planning process.
- Staff has also been involved in the Lower MN River South Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF). This group has been working on criteria and ranking for funding projects for next two-year cycle.
- Budget drivers for 2021: 1.) heavily based on grants (WBIF, and EPA Nine Elements); 2.) County board decision on levy increase percentage
- Boat launches on McMahan have had issues this year with safety/traffic issues, and access launching issues. Staff can help coordinate which agency should be contacted.
- Past commission service members will be recognized with a certificate this year due to the pandemic

Commissioner Weaver inquired if we do not participate in the 1W1P planning process, can we still receive and use implementation funds?

Vanessa responded that staff asked that question, and didn't get confirmation, she will double check.

Commissioner Weaver continued with it sounds like the Scott SWCD may still be included in the planning process (1W1P) so hopefully the planning would still include the County?

Vanessa responded that if the SWCD and Lower MN River are interested in the boundary and it encompasses them, then we are included by default.

Commissioner Weaver inquired how the TACS funding vary from year to year? Or is it pretty consistent?

Vanessa responded we heavily supplement the program with grant funds, much of the grant funds we apply for are to keep the TACS program funded. Troy Kuphal responded with we've kept mostly consistent with the local general portion of funds dedicated with slight increases matching inflation, but the fluctuation comes from grants.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Grant Application: Nine Elements (Update from Vanessa Strong)

- In 2018, the WMO started participating in the EPA Nine Elements Plan process for the Sand Creek watershed, it's a total of 16 years of funding, in four-year cycles, administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), but funds come from the EPA
- Plan was approved in February 2020 by the EPA, a link to the Plan can be found here: <https://scottcountymn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14295/IVaSand-Creek-NKE-Plan-2020>
- The WMO submitted the application for Phase I, (first four-year cycle of funding), which was due July 17th
- Applicants will be notified of awards by August 7th
- The Phase I application focuses on Picha Creek, Cedar Lake watershed and management area five (5), which is the Porter Creek, McMahan Lake area
- The WMO did request the maximum amount of \$280,000 in grant funds, with a 45% match; a total implementation budget of \$505,600
- The grant period would run from December 2020 – August 2024

Commissioner Weaver inquired with the 45% match, if it's not a TACS project, is that a landowner match? Or where is the match coming from?

Vanessa responded the 45% match is primarily a WMO match, we realize the landowners will have a match with the TACS projects but we didn't rely on that too heavily when making sure we have the dedicated match funds. Because these funds are federal dollars, they can be matched with state funds.

Commissioner Weaver asked a follow-up question to the match funds, we don't have to define (upfront) which funds that match is coming from (if we use state funds as match)?

Vanessa responded, that's correct.

Motion by Commissioner Pint; and second by Commissioner Shea to recommend to the Scott County Board to move forward with Phase I of the Nine Elements Plan after grant funds have been awarded by the MPCA as presented.

Motion Carried

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Program Updates: Monitoring/Maintenance

Updates from Melissa Bokman Ermer

- CAMP program has been underway since June
- Staff completed two of the aquatic plant summer surveys on McMahan and Cedar lakes, we attempted Thole in June, algae created issues for the boat motor, O'Dowd was scheduled but we had two straight weeks of 90 degree weather so staff wasn't able to complete those surveys yet

- Watercraft inspections have been underway since July 4th, and DNR has started inspections and has been offering a decontamination station at Lower Prior Lake

Updates from Ryan Holzer

- Staff has been doing inspections on three of our CIP projects that need some maintenance, our Public Works staff has looked at them and has expressed an interest in helping us repair them
- Timeline for those repairs: two will be in the fall after row crops have been harvested; one will be a day long project hopefully in August or September
- There is a buffer that needs some repair/maintenance
- Staff will continue inspections on other WMO CIP projects

NEW BUSINESS

Fall Tour w/SWCD (September 28, 2020)

Updates from Vanessa Strong

- COVID-19 has produced some challenges, but staff feels it would be possible to still hold our annual WMO/SWCD tour under our current County COVID-19 Plan and would like the Commissioners input
- The focus for the tour this year is Wetlands & Runoff Reduction
- Staff would recommend holding the tour under the following conditions: 1) the group would be small (~20 participants); 2) entire tour would be held outdoors; 3) everyone would be required to wear a mask, and social distancing protocols (6') would need to be followed
- Thoughts from Commissioners: Shea: fully support having the tour; Caselius: fully support having the tour, transportation - would prefer driving her vehicle to the stops; Vierling: support having the tour, for transportation – would recommend driving individually or leaving it up to the individual to decide their transportation; Pint: support having the tour, for transportation – would prefer driving his own vehicle to the stops; Weaver: supports having the tour, doesn't have a transportation preference
- Csmr. Shea volunteered having his property as a meeting stop for viewing McMahan, staff will keep that in mind
- This item was listed as an action item on the agenda, but the commission decided it didn't need to be an action item, just a discussion item

2020 Election Volunteers

Update from Vanessa Strong

- The County is facing a challenge this year getting election judges, we will need approximately twice the amount of election judges this year for sanitizing procedures and ensure social distancing. We are asking Commissioners to: 1) encourage everyone you know to absentee vote; 2) consider volunteering to help with the election if you are able; 3) help spread the word that we need help with elections this year; see links to the website in the packet memo

Comment from Commissioner Caselius, she is already an election judge and she has already reached out to Julie Hanson.

Minor Plan Amendment Process

Update from Melissa Bokman Ermer

- Staff is planning a Plan amendment this year, the memo in your packet lays out the procedure for a minor or major amendment
- If it's a minor amendment, it should be just a 30-day process
- If it's more of a significant change, the process would be the same as when we updated our entire Plan, an initial 60-day review, then a public hearing, send comments and responses sent to the state review agencies for a final 90-day review
- It is recommended that we check with Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) via email on whether they agree if our proposed changes are minor or major before we assume what are timeline is for this amendment approval

Commissioner Weaver commented that she thinks it's a good idea to send BWSR an email to make sure we are in agreement with which amendment process timeline our proposed amendment is.

Grant Application: CWF McMahan

Update from Melissa Bokman Ermer

- Melissa gave a quick background update on attempts to find funding for a permanent outlet for McMahan
- BWSR's FY2021 Competitive Grant application period is now open, \$12 million dollars is available, we have support from McMahan landowners to apply for that grant, match requirement is 25%, application deadline is August 17th
- Total request will be \$469,000, match needed would be \$117,250. The WMO currently has \$130,000 set aside for a permanent outlet for McMahan.
- If awarded the grant would run through December 31, 2023.

Commissioner Weaver asked, what elevation did we have to pump at last year? Are we close to that same elevation?

Melissa responded that I believe we started pumping last year when the lake level was 2.6' above the Ordinary High Water level.

Motion by Commissioner Shea; and second by Commissioner Schmidt to recommend to the Scott County Board to approve staff submittal of a Clean Water Fund grant application to BWSR as presented.

Motion Carried

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Assignment of Duties

Update by Ryan Holzer

- The purpose of this item was to discuss staff having discretion to approve cost share contracts. As evidenced by last month, we don't always have monthly meetings, due to a variety of reasons.
- If there is a TACS screening committee recommendation item that needs to go to the WPC for that recommendation, in those situations, what is the commissioner's thoughts on giving staff the ability to approve those applications to continue moving the approval process forward, in absence of a monthly meeting.
- Additional discussion from Vanessa: The driver for this request is to continue improving our efficiency and delivery of services, the WPC does review and approve the annual updates to the TACS docket, TACS budget, this will be a way for staff to streamline the review when needed

Commissioner Pint commented that besides having input to the TACS docket each year, the WPC has had the privilege of having two WPC representatives on the joint TACS Screening Committee along with the SWCD Board. So the WPC does have direct input in TACS docket already and as long as applications are falling within the guidelines and budget, I see no reason to have it mandatory that the WPC vote on those that are a certain size, so I feel very comfortable with staff moving forward with this.

Vanessa added that she wanted to clarify that this would be only for those applications and meet the qualifications of the docket and fit within the budget approved by the WPC and the Board. Anything outside of that would not be at staff discretion.

Commissioner Weaver commented that she is fine with giving staff the discretion on this, and there is only one time that the WPC hasn't agreed with staff since I started here and that was to approve something that staff had suggested not to approve. It was minimal.

Commissioner Weaver inquired, does this mean we would only be going to meetings every other month?

Vanessa replied, no, this does not mean we would only be having six meetings. There is no plan on reducing commission meetings. We would still bring those projects approved by staff to the WPC meeting the next month.

Commissioner Weaver asked for clarification, it seems like in most instances this would come up if there is a rush and a decision needed to be made before the next meeting?

Vanessa responded, the plan is to keep the process moving as consistently and smoothly as possible.

Commissioner Shea inquired if staff approved something, would that be discussed at the next WPC meeting as an update?

Vanessa responded, absolutely.

Motion by Commissioner Pint; and second by Commissioner Caselius to recommend approval of WMO staff discretionary approval of TACS applications that require WPC approval after TACS Screening Committee approval as presented.

Motion Carried

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Water Resources Conference 2020

Update by Ryan Holzer

- The WMO submitted a joint abstract with Interfluve, Inc. to the University of Minnesota for the Minnesota Water Resources Conference and our abstract was accepted
- WMO will be partnering with Interfluve to present on October 20-21st. The conference will be virtual.

ADJOURN MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Shea and Second by Commissioner Vierling to adjourn the meeting at 5:24 PM. The motion carried unanimously.



Rita Weaver
Chair, Watershed Planning Commission

9/14/20 _____
Date



Melissa Bokman Ermer
Sr. Water Resources Planner