



PRIOR LAKE SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

BOARD OF MANAGERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, January 7, 2023

Prior Lake City Hall, Wagonbridge Conference Room

9:00 AM

Members Present: Bruce Loney, Frank Boyles, Christian Morkeberg
Matt Tofanelli, Ben Burnett

Staff & Consultants Present: Joni Giese, District Administrator (for 2nd half of meeting)

1.0 BOARD MEETING CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by President Loney at 9:02 AM. Everyone present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

Agenda changes: addition of other topics at the end of the meeting.

Motion to approve the amended agenda made by Manager Morkeberg. Second by Manager Tofanelli. Motion carried: 5-0.

3.0 BOARD DISCUSSION

3.1 Open Board Discussion

- Manager Loney will be out of the state during the months of March and April.
- Each board manager talked about their thoughts on various issues.
- Open meeting law was discussed.
- Do the Board Meeting packets contain everything we need?
 - Would like more public concerns and feedback, and more background from experts.
 - If the board managers have questions, each will connect Administrator Giese with those questions prior to the board meeting to allow staff time to prepare a response at the meeting.

3.2 2022 Review

- Manager Loney handed out a summary report.
- The District is working to use the services of Scott SWCD better and Scott SWCD is willing to provide additional assistance to the District.

3.3 2023 Goals

- Move more projects from “study” to “implementation.”

3.4 ROW Acquisition Process – Revised Project Process

- Improve how projects are evaluated before time is spent on preparing feasibility studies.
- The number of property owners and level of expected cooperation should be determined before DNR queries and engineering consultant expenses.
- Condemnation/Eminent Domain – this needs to remain on the table, but it is the last resort and PLSLWD wants to avoid, if possible.

3.5 Potential Drought Projects

- If there are cost savings to do projects while the water is low, do them. Snow fall may negate this in the spring.

3.6 Small Projects to be Funded with Budget Reserves

- Can we do more small projects where landowners are more open to projects? Is there a way to try to optimize for these projects, such as working with SWCD and pairing funding opportunities?

4.0 BOARD AND ADMINISTRATOR DISCUSSION

District Administrator Giese joined during this portion of the meeting.

4.1 Open Board Discussion Highlights

- Reviewed previous discussions for Administrator Giese.
- Scott SWCD may be able to do bulk of our permitting work. Retaining Scott SWCD for permitting is pending.
- Scott SWCD is likely to obtain more grant funds this year; PLSLWD need to try to partner with Scott SWCD take advantage of these funds, if possible.
- District desires to improve DNR Relations – Water Resources Project Manager, Emily Dick, is working on this.

4.2 Prioritized 2023 Projects

- Staff is working to establish the next “public” goal associated with flood reduction work.
- Landowner interest should be used as a priority test to determine if projects will move forward to feasibility studies.

4.2.1 Water Quality Projects

- Regarding water quality, the District is attempting to focus first on projects in the outer reaches of the watershed, as the level of water treatment achieved in the outer projects will inform the design of water quality projects closer to the impaired lakes of Spring and Upper Prior.

4.3 ROW Acquisition Process – Revised Project Process

- Working with real estate consultant to develop potential solutions that may be of interest to landowners.
- New Process:

- Pre-discuss with landowners, DNR and other agencies.
- If conditions seem favorable for a successful project, proceed to a feasibility/engineering study.
- Upon completion of a feasibility study and continued project support, apply for grants.

4.4 CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) Funding (Bonding vs. Grants vs. Budget Reserve)

- Ehlers was selected by the District to assist with bond planning when we get closer to needing to bond.
- Staff is currently preparing a grant application to cover the cost of several upcoming feasibility studies.
- Staff members Emily and Elizabeth are heading the grant research and application process related to CIP.

4.5 District Permitting

- Staff is currently working on establishing equivalency agreements.
 - Meetings are scheduled with the Cities of Savage, Prior Lake and Scott County. City of Shakopee does not want to establish an equivalency agreement, which is consistent with prior approach.
 - Staff desire is for other permitting partners to bring PLSLWD into the permitting process sooner than what is typically occurring.

4.6 Scott SWCD Assistance to PLSLWD

- District staff is currently in discussions with Scott SWCD to determine if Scott SWCD can provide permitting assistance to the District.

4.7 Future Alum Treatments

- The District has an Alum Reserve Fund
 - The original expectation was that Upper Prior Lake would be the next lake in need of an alum treatment.
 - Based on most recent water quality test results, Spring Lake may be the next lake in need of an alum treatment.
 - Spring Lake is likely receiving runoff with high phosphorus loads from the Upper Watershed via County Ditch 13.
 - Staff will continue to monitor to determine when alum treatments may be necessary.
 - More carp removal is needed from Spring Lake and Upper Prior Lake.

4.8 Watershed Management Study – Future Collaboration Priorities

- Working with Scott SWCD to provide permitting services is one example of increased collaboration resulting from the study.
- First step: Request the re-establishment of a water-focused team within SCALE.

4.9 CAC Membership and Procedures

- Working on Bylaws updates.

4.10 Staff Workload

- 2023 Budget is a full staff workload; this means that anything else suggested or added in 2023 needs to have something drop off (trade off).

4.11 Other

- Discussed current low lake water levels
 - Various managers have received public inquiries regarding what can be done about the current low lake levels.
 - Reasons – we have no natural process to get more water (we need rain/snow), No reasonable option to add water (wells, aquifer, pump-in water from somewhere else).

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

Motion to approve amended agenda by Manager Burnett. Second by Manager Tofanelli. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 12:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Burnett, PLSLWD Secretary

1/26/2023