



PRIOR LAKE SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

BOARD OF MANAGERS RETREAT MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, April 16, 2022

Prior Lake City Hall, Parkview Conference Room

9:00 AM

Members Present: Mike Myser, Curt Hennes, Frank Boyles, Christian Morkeberg
Bruce Loney

Staff & Consultants Present: Joni Giese, District Administrator

Others Present: Matt Tofanelli, Manager Appointee

1.0 BOARD MEETING CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Myser welcomed managers to the annual retreat expressing gratitude to Administrator Giese, Watershed staff members, CAC Members, Farmer Led Council Members and Watershed Managers. While accomplishments have been made, work remains to be done. The hope is that this retreat will be the source of ideas and inspiration for the coming year.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

None given.

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4.0 BOARD DISCUSSION

During this portion of the meeting, Administrator Giese was not present.

Manager Myser asked for opening comments. One comment was about manager communication. Managers may go to Administrator Giese to ask questions or chat but not to direct that work be done. Managers should not talk with staff unless Administrator Giese is aware and in no case is any manager to direct a staff member.

There was a desire, as part of an upcoming workshop meeting, that an orientation be conducted so managers can understand how the staff works, who does what and what managers can do to support the staff.

Watershed members discussed what might be the best format for a manager/staff social and would like input from Administrator Giese.

4.1 Watershed Priorities: Setting or Reconfirming

4.1.1 Water Resource Management Plan: Define Priorities

The Watershed Water Management Plan is a 10-year planning document required by statute to direct the Watershed's activities. As such, it is a compendium of objectives, priorities, and intended outcomes which is legally enforceable.

There was discussion about the way the water management plan, Capital Improvement Program and Annual budget integrate to define direction, timeframe, and resources.

From retreat discussion it was clear that Managers support the "Big Six" Upper Watershed Projects.

There was discussion about whether a wetland banking program should be added to the priorities. Carl Almer from EOR is to be asked to see if there is extensive opportunity for wetland banking in the watershed.

4.1.2 What Programs/Projects should be Stopped or Reduced

There is considerable monitoring done. Focus should be on how much monitoring is required and desirable.

Memos of agreement with cooperators is important but should not be a long-term negotiated process.

Easements are important to enforcing watershed objectives and should be worked on for accuracy and enforceability.

An orientation should be done for new managers.

Work toward more cooperative and communicative relationship with SMSC.

5.0 BOARD AND ADMINISTRATOR DISCUSSION

At this point in the meeting, Administrator Giese joined.

Positive observations included that it was a good year. Financially, the Watershed is strong with money being laid aside for big projects. The new DA is doing a great job. There is a full staff in place.

Administrator Giese asked from the Managers that we all speak in one voice. Both staff and Giese hear mixed messages. One message is to have the greatest carp program but staff worries about having unsuccessful seines. It was clear that the Managers understand that with so many variables in the carp program it is not likely to be a winner every year.

After some discussion there was a manager consensus that the staff should provide a plan and execute it to the best of their ability given the many variables mother nature presents each year.

Changing banks and treasurers is difficult and time consuming-especially when concurrent. There was agreement that there should be a two-year term for Board treasurers to provide for greater transition stability. There was discussion on the use of Bills.com (\$800 mo.) which is more expensive but with better features than ACH (\$400 mo.).

MOTION MADE BY MANAGER HENNES SECOND BY LONEY TO UTILIZE BILLS.COM FOR CHECKING TRANSACTIONS. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

5.1 Watershed Priorities: Setting or Reconfirming

5.1.1 Water Resource Management Plan: Defining Priorities

Administrator Giese stated her goals are the Upper Watershed Projects, wetland banking, Watershed rules, memorandums of agreement for rules, fee revisions, and collaborating optimally with partners.

The question was asked how we engage homeowners to help. SWCD and FLC are good liaisons to agricultural property owners.

TMDLs are an area we are getting behind. Many people do not know what they are. We have not capitalized on our accomplishments. The Farmer Led Council with the relationships they have established can help us.

The Watershed Management Study is in the second of five steps. The Managers believe that the next step should identify various means of improving working relationships and the watershed should support the effort to the completion of that step.

There was discussion about supportive advisory committees and their members like CAC and FLC to assure optimum working relationships.

5.1.2 What Programs/Projects should be stopped or reduced

There was concurrence that we should stop walleye stocking and wetland monitoring.

MOTION BY MANAGER HENNES SECOND BY MORKEBERG TO DISCONTINUE WALLEYE STOCKING AND WETLAND MONITORING. MOTION CARRIED, FIVE AYES.

5.1.3 District Staffing

The staff should seek out experts in public sector land acquisition to advance land use agreements with property owners so high priority projects are not delayed, and the cost of acquisition is deemed fair.

There was concurrence that there is merit in trying to re-establish and strengthen the one stop shop concept so that customers need only go to one government body and are assured that the requirements will be administered like the watershed.

The Managers will work harder to try to mitigate against 50-to-55-hour work weeks for staff. They will seek to engage in a better tone with greater expressions of appreciation.

Administrator Giese expressed her appreciation and enthusiasm for her staff. Each is enthusiastic and engaged in assuming new and important work responsibilities.

The managers were reminded that a sour look or side comments can be interpreted negatively by fellow managers, the staff, the public, our advisory bodies, and public and private bodies with whom we work. Greater self-awareness is in order.

MOTION BY MORKEBERG SECOND BY HENNES TO AUTHORIZE AN INCREASE IN PATTY DRONEN'S WEEKLY WORK HOURS TO 30. MOTION CARRIED, FIVE AYES.

The retreat adjourned by acclamation at 12:23pm.