

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

July 12, 2007

CALL TO ORDER

The workshop meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers was called to order by Vice President Pamela Blixt at 7:00 p.m. at the District offices, 18202 Minnetonka Boulevard, Deephaven, Minnesota.

MANAGERS PRESENT

James Calkins, Pamela Blixt, Lee Keeley, Jeffrey Casale, Brian Shekleton.

MANAGERS ABSENT

Richard Miller, Mike Klingelhutz.

OTHERS PRESENT

Eric Evenson, District Administrator; Julie Westerlund, District Education & Communications Manager; Melissa Reimer, Education & Communications Intern; Michael Panzer, District Consulting Engineer; Chuck Holtman, District Counsel.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Manager Keeley, seconded by Manager Shekleton to approve the agenda with the addition of the personnel committee report and Board consideration of the sale of a personal item by the Administrator to the District. Upon vote, the motion carried.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Manager Blixt reported that the Personnel Committee met on July 9, 2007, at Edina City Hall to discuss proposed staff changes and the personnel budget with the Administrator. The committee concurs in the Administrator's proposed changes that will be presented later this evening.

DISTRICT PURCHASE OF POP-UP TENT

Mr. Evenson indicated that staff would like to purchase from him a pop-up tent with canopy that he bought in the fall of 2005 and that the District has been using for a year. The tent is three sided with a canopy, and is useful for District events. Mr. Evenson paid \$259 and will sell it to the District for \$200. The matter is brought to the Board for

authorization to conform to District policies requiring Board approval of any business transaction between the District and a staff member.

It was moved by Manager Keeley, seconded by Manager Shekelton to authorize the District's purchase of the tent for \$200.00. Upon vote, the motion carried.

DISCUSSION OF 2008 EDUCATION & COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Mr. Evenson introduced the topic by reminding the Board that the District is operating from a strategic education plan prepared five years ago, effective through 2008. Staff will ask the Board to update the strategic plan. Ms. Westerlund has reviewed the program audit from August 2006. She finds that the plan has been a good guide but, especially given the comprehensive revision of the District's water resources management plan, that an update is timely. Staff would like to establish stronger goals. Mr. Evenson also remarked that the education/communication program budget request for 2008 would represent a slight decrease from 2007.

Ms. Westerlund presented the 2008 work plan. A budget of \$135,000 is proposed for ongoing programs. Ongoing programs includes general communications and public education including watershed events, local newspaper columns written by Board members, media relations, kiosks, content for city newsletters, website maintenance and interpretive signage at select sites. It includes as well the lake association program, the WaterPro newsletter, youth education, NEMO and the tree sale/giveaway program.

Regarding city newsletter content, Mr. Evenson observed that the strategic plan identified a subwatershed focus for education. Ms. Westerlund has found this to be a difficult undertaking and that the use of local publications is a better route toward the same goals. Staff has found that the District's message largely is the same across subwatersheds.

Ms. Westerlund reported that lake associations are forming for Dutch and Schutz Lakes pursuant to the District's lake association program and that the District as well is assisting the already existing Grass Lake Association. Manager Blixt asked that the Grass Lake joint powers agreement between the District and the City of Minneapolis be reviewed for its relevance to this work.

Manager Blixt asked as to efforts to orient education toward developers and local decisionmakers. Mr. Evenson replied that the NENO program is geared toward policymakers and developers and also that staff interacts extensively with the community as "learning opportunities" arise. Ms. Westerlund also referred Manager Blixt to some of the new initiatives planned. Manager Casale mentioned that the rulemaking task force has discussed reduced bonding requirements and similar incentives for those who have completed District training. Manager Keeley emphasized that to succeed in its educational efforts, the District has to be considered a trusted resource by target

audiences. Ms. Westerlund noted that the District is creating an interactive web application as a tool for youth education using the existing water atlas.

Ms. Westerlund indicated that a budget of \$40,000 is proposed for new 2008 initiatives. These include a climate change conference model on the successful 2006 low impact development conference; forums in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and others for public works staff; aquatic invasive species laws training for local law enforcement officers; the strategic plan update; website enhancement and outreach and training directed at neighborhood organizations.

Mr. Evenson indicated he is intending to increase staff by one-half FTE to support Ms. Westerlund. He believes her program is well suited for intern assistance. He expressed the view that staff is doing a very sound job and that the materials the District is creating are of great quality.

Manager Blixt expressed the view that the District may need a webmaster. Mr. Evenson suggested this would be a good place to partner with other watershed districts.

Manager Calkins urged that the strategic plan be carefully reviewed and that appropriate parts be carried forward into the new plan. He suggested there are some benefits to a subwatershed approach to communication, in that it can focus residents' attention. He also suggested that the website be "lake-management-plan" based. Manager Keeley suggested that the one-half FTE should have web competencies. Manager Shekelton and Manager Casale opined that the site has much information, but needs attention to design. Manager Casale suggested that District staff seek concepts from design firms. Manager Calkins emphasized that the most important educational task is to inform the community that the District exists as a resource.

Mr. Evenson concluded by advising that staff will review the work plan and budget in light of the discussion and revise accordingly.

2008 OPERATIONS BUDGET

Mr. Evenson presented a spreadsheet for the purposed operations budget. Overall, the budget is proposed to increase by nine percent, and the levy by eight percent. Major expenditure increases will be to purchase a color copier and to cover an expected rent increase as a result of the upcoming five-year lease review.

2008 PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Evenson stated that he will recommend a 14 percent increase in the personnel budget. Interns are proposed to increase from four to six FTE's. He intends to add a summer intern half time for field work, as well as a one-half FTE intern to assist Ms. Westerlund,

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a one-half FTE intern to assist Renae Clark with project maintenance and operations and a one-half FTE to assist Mr. Wyatt with public meetings and plan reviews.

Mr. Evenson reported that he is considering shifting a current intern who performs lake sampling into a full-time employee. According to Mr. Evenson, Udai Singh believes the position is well suited for a full-time staff member due to the investment in learning sampling techniques, quality assurance/quality control and similar skills. Mr. Evenson would replace the current position with another half-time intern.

Ms. Blixt commented that she believes assistance to Mr. Wyatt and Ms. Westerlund should be from staff and not interns. She believes this is more effective in the long run. Managers Casale and Shekelton concurred, noting that this work is keyed to building and maintaining relations with stakeholders.

Responding to a question from Manager Casale, Mr. Evenson indicated that staff is in the process of soliciting quotes for the 2007 computer system overhaul. Four quotes are being solicited and are likely to be in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range. Mr. Casale replied that the overhaul should focus on a system design before any equipment upgrade. He also would like to see the request for proposals. Mr. Evenson said he would put the subject on the Board agenda. The Board urged that to properly budget for 2008 it needs to have an understanding of the planned computer/website work and its accompanying cost.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the workshop meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Keeley, Secretary