

Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization
Annual Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2019

1. Call to Order Chair West called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Roll Call Present: John West, Dan Denno, Tim Harrington, Matt Downing, Sandy Flaherty, Jessica Rieland, Radja Lohse, Lan Tornes
Absent: Dan Breyen, David Olsrud, Jerry Tveit, Joel Greenberg
Audience: Jamie Schurbon of the Anoka Conservation District (ACD), Dan Burke, Tami Isaacson, Juanita Reed-Boniface and Dick Boniface
3. Adopt agenda **Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Tornes seconded to adopt the agenda with the addition of 9. New Business Item D. Rum River Bank grant application support. Motion carried unanimously.**
4. Lake George discussion Introductions were made with lake residents stating what they would like to see done for Lake George.

Mr. Schurbon reviewed the Lake George Water Quality Improvement Assessment Phase 1: Lakeshed Analysis.

1. What's happening on the lake now
Dan Burke and Larry Backlund shared information on weed treatments and cost of the treatments. The Lake George Improvement District (LGID) has taxing authority. The maximum tax charged per year is \$300 per property. Budgeting is done based on foreseeable projects. Grants have helped with funding. The LGID tries to use as little chemicals as possible and do not treat the lake any more than necessary. The lake association keeps data to aid the DNR when final decisions are made.

The weir/dam on the north end of Lake George is rusted and breaking down; it needs replacement. The dam helps to control the lake levels. A grant has been secured by Anoka County Parks to help with funding the dam replacement and maintenance project. Construction is expected to start in the fall.

2. Study results
Mr. Schurbon reviewed:
 - Study purposes – to understand the causes of declining water quality in Lake George and identify cost-effective projects to correct the problem.
 - Study components – water monitoring, modeling, problem diagnosis, and project identification and cost effectiveness ranking.
 - Study findings – a number of factors contribute or may contribute to declining water quality. Of these, the most important is more frequent years with high precipitation. Others of particular note include Ditch 19 weir deterioration and land use changes.
 - Water quality improvement projects – Six projects that would directly impact Lake George and five with indirect impact were identified. The highest-ranking projects based upon phosphorus reduction per dollar spent were an iron-enhanced sand filter at one tributary inlet to the lake and

lakeshore restorations. In addition, Mr. Schurbon noted some non-structural actions including ensuring robust requirements for stormwater in new developments.

It was asked whether there are carp in the lake? Residents and Mr. Schurbon responded yes, but the DNR does not consider them numerous enough to be a problem.

It was noted that projects in this feasibility study are one of three top areas in the new URRWMO Watershed Management Plan to pursue.

Consider financial resources available – Mr. Schurbon described how State Clean Water Fund grants could be used to install projects. Local match of 25% (for competitive grants) or anticipated 10% (for Watershed Based Funding) would be needed from groups at the lake and/or the URRRWMO.

All in attendance engaged in discussion about possible projects. Reservations about the iron-enhanced sand filter project were voiced, in part due to large costs and the need for greater technical detail. Consensus of the Board was to start with supporting project #1 – Lakeshore stabilization particularly in areas with severe or moderate erosion where cost-benefit ratio was best. Secondly, there is support to pursue a grant for a feasibility study for the iron-enhanced sand filter, provided the landowner is willing to entertain the idea. Both the URRWMO board and Lake George Improvement District (LGID) members present favored pursuing Watershed Based Funding grants with an anticipated 10% match, as the 25% match of competitive grants may not be within financial reach.

6. Next step

Mr. Schurbon asked both the URRWMO and LGID to discuss how much they could put toward applying for the favored project grant application. There is the possibility that the Lake George Conservation Club, a community organization, may also be able to contribute money. He will compile the information received and revisit this item in late summer.

5. Approve Minutes

Mr. Lohse moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to approve the March 13, 2019 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Treasurer's Report

A. Financial report

Ms. Flaherty reported:

\$11,399.79 February ending balance

\$11,049.79 March ending balance – 2 debits

\$10,573.50 April ending balance – 1 deposit and 2 debits

B. Receipt of Budget Billings Update

Payment has been received from Nowthen. St. Francis has not paid the January 2019 invoice. Ms. Gessner will follow up on non-payment via email.

Mr. Downing moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Special Orders A. Election of Officers

Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Downing seconded to nominate John West as Chairperson. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair West moved and Mr. Denno seconded to nominate Dan Breyen as Vice Chairperson. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Denno moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to nominate Sandy Flaherty as Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Hear recommended amendments to JPA and/or Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Schurbon reported that a BWSR subcommittee has approved the URRWMO Watershed Management Plan. Approval by the full BWSR Board is anticipated soon. A condition is that the Plan be reviewed and amended in five (5) years.

A call was made for any recommended amendments to the JPA or URRWMO Watershed Management Plan. None were heard.

C. Set regular meeting dates through May 2020

Chair West moved and Mr. Downing seconded to set the following regular meeting dates: July 9, September 10, October 29, January 7, March 3, May 5. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Unfinished Business

A. Annual city activity report template

Mr. Schurbon received no comments from member cities' staff on the template. No further action is needed.

B. Finalize and approve 2020 budget – *This item has been moved to after the discussion of Ham Lake concerns under New Business*

9. New Business

A. St. Francis petition to DNR

Informational only, no action required.

The City of St. Francis petitioned the DNR for six variances from the Rum River Wild and Scenic River in Minnesota Rules. The DNR and the City of St. Francis sent a public notice to all residents in and within 350 feet of the affected parcel, as well as to agencies and other affected parties and interests. The public comment period was open from March 26 through April 26. The DNR is in the process of reviewing the petition, petition attachments, and comments that came in during the public comment period. The DNR intends to issue a decision on the petition by May 20, 2019. In discussion, concerns about the petition arose.

B. Bethel 2040 Comprehensive Plan review

Mr. Schurbon will review the plan and provide comments to Bethel. Board members are asked to bring their comments to the July 9 meeting.

C. Discuss Ham Lake concerns with WMO budgets and JPA

Ham Lake has not responded to the URRWMO 2020 budget ratification request. It is understood that Ham Lake has concerns including:

- A 38% increase to the SRWMO budget. It was noted that large portions of this are for a once-every-five-year required audit and a once-every-ten-year review and approval of local water plans.
- A 322% increase to the URRWMO budget. This is related to requirements addressed within the soon-to-be-state-approved URRWMO Watershed Management Plan.
- Member communities pay equal shares of operating (admin) costs, but all other expense contributions are based on market values and land area in the WMO.
- Being a part of three different watershed organizations.

Ham Lake directed its consulting engineer to schedule meetings with the affected parties to discuss Ham Lake's concerns. Mr. Schurbon stated that Ham Lake Engineer Tom Collins had informed him that he is meeting with BWSR first. After that meeting, Mr. Schurbon anticipates city staff will meet with SRWMO board members, URRWMO board members, Coon Creek board members and BWSR. It was noted that BWSR approval is needed for any watershed boundary changes.

Chair West asked for the member cities' representatives' thoughts on this matter.

- Oak Grove – Mr. Denno does not want to lose Ham Lake's share of the budget nor does he want to change the percentages charged. He would like other solutions to be considered.
- St. Francis – Mr. Tornes believes the budget is equitable as is.
- Bethel – Ms. Rieland stated if the percentages are changed that Bethel too would want the same deal that may be given to Ham Lake.
- Ham Lake – Mr. Downing and Ms. Flaherty support the concerns and requests of Ham Lake.
- Nowthen – No representation was in attendance.

If Ham Lake becomes a part of the Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD) only, operating costs would be billed directly to residents by the Coon Creek Watershed District as a line item on property taxes. WMO contributions are part of taxpayers' bills to the city. Therefore, if the city were entirely in the CCWD, the city's budget may go down, but the burden on taxpayers may not.

D. Rum River Bank grant application support

Background information:

The recent Rum Riverbank erosion inventory performed by ACD is prompting a five-year plan between ACD and Anoka County to address Rum Riverbank erosion and habitat. ACD is requesting that the URRWMO provide written support for this grant application now. The grants, if secured, would meet one of the three large projects in the new URRWMO plan.

ACD will simultaneously pursue three grants: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), Clean Water Fund, and Conservation Partners Legacy funds. These grants are oriented at habitat and water quality and ACD has identified

projects that provide each. On less severe eroding riverbanks bioengineering will be used to stabilize and restore habitat. On more severely eroding riverbanks harder engineering techniques required to achieve stability and reduce sediment and nutrient delivery into the river will be used.

Anoka County has pledged grant match funds. It is possible that financial support may be requested from the URRWMO moving forward with the final two grant applications. Right now, additional money is not requested. If, as the grant applications are built out more funding is needed the URRWMO will be asked for financial support.

The first and largest grant application being pursued is the LSOHC. This LSOHC grant request is for ACD and Anoka County to enhance riverbank sites that can be addressed using eco-sensitive bioengineering approaches such as bendway weirs, native plantings, and willow staking, along with light toe riprap and minor grading. Sites will be prioritized considering linear feet of habitat enhanced, cost benefit analysis, and the potential for public recreation.

Here is how this grant application, if funded, compares to your promised URRWMO Watershed Management Plan activities:

<u>Accomplishment</u>	<u>URRWMO Plan</u>	<u>This grant application</u>
Number of sites	2+	8 of 22 identified sites
Phosphorus reduction	250 lbs/yr.	Not yet calculated but very likely >250 lbs/yr.
Sediment reduction	180 tons/yr.	1,000 tons
Habitat enhancement	Yes	Yes
Grant Request:	\$ 952,255	
Match - Anoka County	\$ 141,888	
Match - Landowners	\$ 96,175	
Match - Partner WMOs	<u>None requested at this time</u>	
Project Total:	\$1,190,318	

Mr. Tornes moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the Anoka Conservation District application to the LSOHC for Rum River Bank habitat restoration. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Unfinished Business (continued)

B. Finalize and approve 2020 budget
Ms. Flaherty moved and Mr. Tornes seconded to approve the 2020 budget as written and provided to member cities. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Mail

None

11. Other

A. Mail out 2nd half of budget invoicing
 Ms. Gessner was directed to mail out the second half of the 2019 budget billings.

B. Solicit bids for professional, legal, and administrative services for 2020 Solicitation for bids was done in 2019 for years 2020 and 2021.

12. Invoice(s)

A. Recording secretary May invoice for \$175.00

Mr. Harrington moved and Ms. Flaherty seconded to pay the recording secretary May invoice for \$175. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Anoka Conservation District invoice #2019050 payment 1 of 3 for \$6,680.00

Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Downing seconded to pay the Anoka Conservation District invoice #3019050 payment 1 of 3 for \$6,680.00. Motion carried unanimously.

C. MSA Invoice #24 for \$3,650.70

Mr. Tornes moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to pay the MSA invoice #24 for \$3,650.70. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjourn

Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Downing seconded to adjourn at 9:04 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Gail Gessner

Submitted on 5/21/19