



UPPER RUM RIVER

Watershed Management Organization

Regular Meeting for **Tuesday, March 7, 2023 6:30 pm**

Meeting location: Oak Grove City Hall. 19900 Nightingale St NW Oak Grove, MN

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Mr. West called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. Mr. West asked the members present to introduce themselves and what city they represent.

Present: John West, Dan Breyen, Patrick Sullivan, Troy Wolens, Shanni Fladebo, Jeff Entsminger, Andrew Wood, Radja Lohse, Tim Miller.

Absent: Ryan Seguin, Paul Tradewell, Chris Beyett.

Audience: Jamie Schurbon (ACD), Katie Kalland (Recording Secretary), Jim Lindahl (ACD)

2. Adopt Agenda

Mr. Schurbon requested to add item “i. watershed plan amendment” under unfinished business and item “a. annual report to cities” under new business.

Mr. Breyen made a motion to adopt the agenda including items requested by Mr. Schurbon. Ms. Fladebo seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes for January 3, 2023

Mr. Breyen made a motion to approve the minutes for January 3, 2023. Mr. Lohse seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Treasurer’s Report

a. Financial report

Mr. Sullivan stated the balance in the bank as of 2/28/23 was \$31,391.45. **Mr. Breyen made a motion to approve the financial report. Mr. Wood seconded. Motion approved unanimously.**

b. Member city invoicing update

Mr. Sullivan reported on checks received in the mail. Mr. Schurbon noted that all cities are paid up for the first half. 2nd half invoices will be sent out in June.

5. Unfinished Business

a. Bethel reviews of URRWMO-required ordinances

Mr. Schurbon discussed this recurring issue and updated new members. He spoke with the Bethel city

administrator and she will be reaching out to their city planner to get this resolved.

b. URRWMO joint powers agreement updates

Mr. Schurbon stated that elected officials, city administrators, state officials, and attorneys met last week. Most recently Ham Lake has explored leaving the URRWMO. At that meeting there was agreement by all including City of Ham Lake officials that their city should stay in the WMOs. There was discussion about funding formulas and unanimous ratification of budgets. Mr. West stated he trusts the Ham Lake Mayor and other officials will find resolutions. Future updates are expected.

c. Projects updates

Mr. Schurbon gave an update on the Lake George shoreline stabilization, Rum Riverbank stabilizations, Dellwood Community Park, and stormwater projects. Ms. Fladebo inquired about how these projects are paid for and what the watersheds role is. Mr. Schurbon described that most projects are funded by grants with matching funds from the URRWMO. The Anoka Conservation District coordinates the projects. Mr. Schurbon also reported on recent outreach and education efforts. He highlighted a recently developed video titled “Our River Connection” which explains reasons for watershed management. Mr. West suggested that ACD share the video at an upcoming meeting.

d. 2022 work results from ACD

Mr. Schurbon demonstrated a “projects dashboard” on the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) website. It shows project locations, photos, and details.

Mr. Schurbon explained that the ACD does an annual report of work done in the URRWMO by ACD. It includes work both paid by the URRWMO and paid by others. Mr. Schurbon noted some recommendations of these work results, number one thing would be to work on phosphorus on the Rum River and Lake George.

e. 2022 project funds

Mr. Schurbon stated that of the \$15,759 the URRWMO provided to ACD in 2022 for projects, \$11,958 was previously allocated to match the Rum metro Watershed Based Implementation Funding grant projects. He noted \$3,801 remains. Mr. Schurbon recommended allocating this funding to the same projects because the original grant budget did not anticipate the magnitude of inflation that has been seen recently. Mr. Wood stated that in his construction profession actual prices have been 20% over the engineer’s estimate. Mr. West suggested delaying this decision until other financial matters later on the agenda are discussed first.

Later in the meeting the board agreed to use \$1,300 of these funds to obtain a new website. No decision was made on the remainder.

f. Website platform update

Mr. Schurbon explained that the website is over ten years old and lacks an SSL certificate. The current platform, Joomla3, will no longer be supported in the second half of 2023. If not updated, there will be further security vulnerabilities. Some risks of not upgrading could be: the website is hacked, ransomware, the website could redirect to an inappropriate website, or viruses when accessing files. Mr. Schurbon went over options and prices to fix this. Mr. Sullivan stated he would be for upgrading to WordPress. Ms. Fladebo asked about the traffic on the website. Mr. Schurbon stated there is no counter on the current website platform. Mr. Wolens stated he was in favor of WordPress with a traffic counter. Mr. Entsminger stated it’s something that needs to be done. Mr. Lohse stated he would be in favor with the WordPress upgrade. Mr. Miller stated he doesn’t want to overspend the budget however, if there was a way to amend the budget to do so. Mr. West stated he would not be in favor of the upgrade unless the funding, within approved budgets, is identified.

Mr. Entsminger made a motion to authorize ACD to release \$1,300 of the \$3,802 2022 project funds to upgrade the URWRMO website with the WordPress platform. Mr. Sullivan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

g. Request for proposals for 2023 professional services

Mr. West and Mr. Schurbon discussed the RFP for 2023 professional services. ACD is the only organization that responded. The proposal is \$513 below the 2023 budget for the those items. **Mr. Sullivan made a motion to accept the ACD proposal of \$40,362 and authorize the Chair to sign a contract for the same. Mr. Wolens seconded. Motion approved unanimously.**

h. 2024 draft budget

Mr. Schurbon discussed the changes that were made from last meeting (website, Ham Lake departure) and noted the addition of a line item for JPA updates. It was noted that a previous line item of \$5,520 for a five-year watershed plan amendment can be changed to \$0 based on recent conversations with the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

The board discussed funding for JPA amendments. There are recommended amendments regardless of whether Ham Lake departs the URRWMO. Mr. Schurbon noted that the neighboring Sunrise River WMO chose to exclude this item from its regular budget and instead make a separate funding request to the member cities at the appropriate time. Mr. West agreed that he felt this should not be included in the URRWMO budget because it is the work of the cities, not of the WMO. The item was removed by consensus.

Mr. Breyen asked to add the website SSL certificate yearly charge (\$100) on the budget. No objections to adding it were heard.

Discussion ensued that the budget is now similar to recent years and \$1,718 below the amount in the watershed management plan.

The board discussed the timing of budget ratifications from the cities. Discussions about JPA amendments are ongoing, and those will need more time. The concensus of the board that the budget ratifications should happen before the next URRWMO meeting to allow for any comments to be addressed and the budget to be adopted so cities can set their preliminary levies in a timely way.

Mr. Wolens made a motion to send the 2024 draft budget of \$41,814.00 to cities with ratifications due by end of April 2023. Mr. Sullivan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

i. Watershed plan amendment

Mr. Schurbon discussed that the 2019 state approval of the URRWMO Plan included a requirement for a plan amendment by year five. He has discussed this with Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) staff and there is agreement that the URRWMO's 2021 amendment met the requirement with the exception that BWSR felt a discussion of budget adequacy was still needed to ensure compliance. The question to be discussed is whether the URRMWO is spending enough money to meet plan goals. Mr. Schurbon he felt the answer was "yes" because planned amounts are being spent, many grants have been secured by partners, new Watershed Based Implementation Funding is available instead of less certain competitive grants, and those grants have lower match requirements. Mr. Breyen, Mr. West, and others voiced agreement. At the next URRWMO meeting BWSR Board Conservationist Michelle Jordan has been invited to give a presentation about watershed law, and thereafter would like to discuss this question with the board.

6. New Business

Mr. Schurbon will be sending out the annual mini-report to city administrators in a few days. He welcomed the board to look at it and give edits if needed. Mr. West stated that this is a good tool for your city councils to use and it's very important to keep them in the loop on what's happening in the URRWMO.

7. Invoice(s)

- a. Recording Secretary services for 1-3-2022 meeting \$ 175.00

Mr. Breyen made a motion to approve invoice #12 for recording secretary services for \$175.00. Mr. Wood seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Fladebo made a motion for adjournment at 8:12 p.m. Mr. Miller seconded. Nays: Mr. Breyen. Ayes: All other members present. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by: Katie Kalland (Recording secretary)