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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 8 September, 2015
Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Location: Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
2522 Marshall St. NE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418

ATTACHMENT 3

Commissioners in Attendance

Jerry Faust, St. Anthony; Mary Gaasch, Lauderdale; Jim Saefke, Fridley; Donna Schmitt, Columbia Heights; Kevin Reich, Minneapolis; Betty Wheeler, St. Paul; and Scott Vreeland, Minneapolis Park & Recreation.

Staff and Guests: Doug Snyder, MWMO; Marcy Bean, MWMO; Nick Busse, MWMO; Max Dalton, MWMO; Stephanie Johnson, MWMO; Michaela Neu, MWMO; Michelle Ross, MWMO; Tammy Schmitz, MWMO; Charlie Yunker, MWMO; Renee Van Siclén, Minneapolis Park and Rec Board (MPRB) and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Commissioner Reich.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Motion by Vreeland, second by Faust to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Vreeland, second by Schmitt to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2015 meeting with the correction to Mary Gaasch's name. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Reich, second by Faust to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Program Reports

Neu reported that MWMO is pursuing a potential program with Hennepin County called **RiverWatch**. RiverWatch is a hands-on environmental education program for middle and high school aged youth. Teams of students assess the health of rivers and streams by identifying and quantifying the stream or river's biological community. A pilot will be done with North Park Elementary in Columbia Heights in 2016 to monitor on the Mississippi River. If the program is successful, it could be available to all schools and can also be included in home school and after school programs. This program is separate from the adult monitoring programs.

[Gaasch arrived at 3:07 p.m.]

This summer MWMO partnered with Spark-Y Youth Action Labs to host four interns who designed and built a **hydroponic garden demonstration system** for the rooftop garden. Two of the interns involved in the project presented information on the vertical system and table salad garden system to the Board. The demonstration garden is an urban growing idea.

MWMO will have extended hours August 24 through September 30 while exhibiting the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) **satellite crocheted coral reef**. There were over 100 contributors to the display and the reef has enticed many visitors so far, despite only being open since September 5.

Ross reviewed the agenda for the September 19 **open house event**. There will be children's activities, several exhibits, and the outdoor interpretive signage will be in place. Busse has drafted talking points for Board reference as necessary that cover all program areas. Feedback on the talking points was requested by the end of this week and finished copies will be provided to Board members early next week. Press releases were in the local newspapers and community associations, and WCCO and MPR have shown interest in the event as well. Vreeland noted that the brand used has been MWMO, or Mississippi WMO, not MMRWMO or Middle Mississippi WMO. Busse will make the change. Appreciation was expressed to Busse for the new, professional look to the communications.

MWMO will be opening a second round of **applications for CIP project funding** with a deadline of October 1, 2015 to receive applications. Board members were encouraged to relay the information to their communities. Applications submitted in May 2015 have been reviewed and closed with only one outstanding, the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Staff is continuing discussions with the applicant and working to complete a feasibility study with them to solidify costs and incorporate stormwater reuse in a very tangible way. Staff is proceeding carefully because this is the first private applicant for CIP funding.

The **Stewardship Fund Grant program** was reopened in October 2014. Between October 2014 and June 2015, 22 projects were offered Stewardship Fund Grants, including 15 mini grant projects, six planning grant projects, and one action grant project. Staff evaluated the program using Survey Monkey for both funded and unfunded applicants, staff on review teams, and CAC members. Based on the evaluation, the Stewardship Fund Grant program will continue with changes detailed in the packet. A Stewardship Fund Grant Informational Session will be held September 10. Action grant pre-applications are due by October 2. Mini grant pre-applications have two rounds per year and are due November 16, 2015 and April 11, 2016. Planning grant pre-applications are due June 3, 2016. Additional information can be found on the MWMO website.

Administrative Updates

Snyder was invited to serve as **Vice Chair of the Environment and Energy Council** at the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS). The position doesn't require a large time investment and is good for relationship building. CTS brings together University faculty and staff with practitioners from the private and public sectors to exchange information on current transportation issues and trends, and recommend direction for improving CTS's research, education, and information/outreach programs.

An **investment strategy** has begun with short term CDs that will continue through June 2016. Staff will continue to build this program and more information will be presented at the November or January meeting.

Snyder discussed **use of Board Resolutions** with the attorney. Resolutions are best used for a complicated motion that may need background information provided. Staff will create a policy for when to use a resolution vs. a motion and bring back a preliminary recommendation at the November meeting, with approval anticipated at the January meeting after comments and feedback are received. Faust recommended contacting the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust for additional information on resolutions as well.

General Business

The **draft 2016 budget** was presented to the Board. The budget is based on MWMO's comprehensive plan, strategic plan, and CIPs. A final budget will be presented at the November board meeting. The budget represents a 1.79% increase over 2015 at a total of \$5,700,000.

Motion by Vreeland, second by Faust to set the 2016 levy amount not to exceed \$5,700,000 and directs Staff to submit the Truth-in-Taxation documentation to Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey Counties. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff has identified a need for **engineering services** on an ongoing basis to support MWMO initiatives such as the Stewardship Fund, CIP feasibility, watershed assessments, and review of grant proposals. Staff recommends Barr Engineering for 2015-2016. A general services agreement has been created and projects incurring over \$20,000 in expense will be brought before the Board. MWMO is required to solicit interest in services in fall 2016 and affirm service providers at the January 2017 board meeting. Faust expressed concern that not going through the bid process for individual projects and giving all to one firm may not be cost-effective. Staff noted that this agreement will be used mainly for smaller projects such as project reviews.

Motion by Vreeland, second by Saefke to approve the engineering services agreement as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

At the July board meeting, Staff was asked to provide background on how MWMO has participated in **land acquisition projects** in the past. Staff reviewed the Land Acquisition policy adopted in November 2009, the purposes and objectives of the land conservation initiative stated in the Watershed Management Plan, and past land acquisition projects. This research showed that MWMO contributed the lesser of 25% of the total acquisition costs including land, building, and fees, or the maximum amount of eligible costs which include appraisals, legal fees, easement, title, and closing costs. The 25% is not documented in policy and seemed to be done on a case-by-case basis. The July motion to participate in a land acquisition with MPRB at a total not to exceed \$500,000 is consistent with past practices. After this review process it was discovered that there are items in the policy that are inconsistent with the Management Plan. Staff suggests reviewing the full policy and making revisions at a future date to ensure the policy supports the direction of MWMO.

At the July meeting, the Board approved funding for the **Andrews property acquisition**. Met Council rejected the grant request for the acquisition of this property which prohibits any private use of property which bonds are used to acquire, so MPRB is now requesting the owner to sell through a contract for deed for \$2 million. MPRB feels that the cash from the leases will pay off that debt. An environmental review of the property and vapor testing of the building have been completed.

MPRB has negotiated the purchase of a 0.28 acre residential property at **1822 Marshall Street NE**. The property is a mixed use area along the east bank of the Mississippi River with 50 feet of river frontage. The single family home on the property will be demolished shortly after closing. The long term goal is to use the land as part of the Above the Falls Regional Park. MPRB is requesting 25% of the acquisition costs, not including demolition, for a total of \$131,560. MPRB is applying to Met Council for the other 75% of the acquisition cost.

Motion by Faust, second by Saefke to approve a grant allocation not to exceed \$131,560 for MPRB to acquire riverfront property at 1822 Marshall Street NE, subject to Met Council approval of MPRB's request for 75% of the total acquisition cost. Motion carried unanimously.

Since MWMO staff size has increased and meeting space has been offered to partner organizations, **additional meeting space** would be valuable to maintain workflow. Staff submitted a proposal to add office meeting space above the monitoring room. The total cost is estimated at \$75,000-\$85,000. At this point, the proposal is exploratory. Board members expressed concern about the lack of parking.

Motion by Gaasch, second by Saefke to move forward with the expansion project at a cost not-to-exceed \$100,000. Motion carried, Faust abstaining.

In July, MWMO released an RFP for a project to design and implement a **new MWMO website**. Thirteen proposals were received and evaluated. Staff interviewed representatives from the two highest scoring firms and is recommending Westwerk, a web design and development firm based in Northeast Minneapolis. The new website is intended to be launched in the first quarter of 2016.

Motion by Vreeland, second by Schmitt to approve Westwerk for the website redesign project at a cost not-to-exceed \$50,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff recently completed the 30% design for the **University Avenue District Stormwater System** adjacent to Green 4th (SE 4th Street). The design was within the project budget and continues to perform as expected in the feasibility study. This project will meet rate control requirements for the area and may allow for stormwater reuse. Faust expressed concern about expending a large amount of funds for a design that may not be implemented. Staff noted that the landowners in the Prospect North Partnership continue to demonstrate a high level of involvement and support during this process and the three area developers have expressed interest in using the design if it coincides with their build-out timing. The final design will be completed and presented to the Board at the November meeting for a final decision on whether to move ahead with this project. The total project cost for the System is estimated at \$1.5 million.

Motion by Vreeland, second by Faust to contract and hire Barr Engineering and Bruce Jacobson to complete the final construction design and bid documents for the University Avenue District Stormwater System at a cost not-to-exceed \$180,000. Motion carried unanimously.

The **District Stormwater System land acquisition discussion** was tabled until the November meeting due to lack of time.

Board Updates and Announcements

None.

Open Public Input

There were no public comments.

Public Input

There were no public comments.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Vreeland, second by Saefke to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary

Record of Motions

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Motion by Reich, second by Faust to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

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There being no further business, motion by Vreeland, second by Saefke to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.