

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP
OF THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF THE
NINE MILE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2023

Call to Order

President Bob Cutshall called the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District Board of Managers workshop to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the NMCWD office, Discovery Point, 12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie.

Managers Present: Grace Butler, Bob Cutshall, Peggy Kvam, Chris-Ann Lauria, and Larry Olson

Advisors Present: Janna Kieffer and Michael McKinney (Barr Engineering) and Michael Welch (Smith Partners)

Staff Present: Randy Anhorn (Administrator), Lizzy Boor (Watershed Specialist), Brett Eidem (Natural Resources Planning and Project Manager) , Erica Sniegowski (Deputy Administrator), and Gael Zembal (Education and Outreach Coordinator)

Others Present: Bob Kojetin, watershed resident

I. Oath of Office

Michael Welch administered the oath of office to Peggy Kvam and Chris-Ann Lauria to serve as managers of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

II. Phase 3 Atlas 14 Update

Janna Kieffer reviewed local and regional flood-risk areas in the watershed to facilitate the managers' prioritization of possible NMCWD projects.

Ms. Kieffer displayed a map of composite flood impact scores for regional flood areas. She noted the highest ranked area is Pentagon Park, east of Highway 100 at the border of Edina and Bloomington. Ms. Kieffer said she was surprised at the finding that the lower east corner of the watershed in the Oxboro Lake area has a high priority ranking. She said she was not surprised by the high ranking of some of the areas along the creek.

Ms. Kieffer indicated that the 39 regional flood areas were also ranked based on social vulnerability considerations, which was considered separate from the criteria included in the flood impact scores. Barr, in consultation with District staff, used the composite population vulnerability dataset that was developed earlier this year, which is based on an approach consistent with the Hennepin County Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment composite data set for population vulnerability with adjustments to remove data specifically related to air quality. She pointed out a couple area such as Hopkins and the Oxboro Lake which have higher social vulnerability.

Ms. Kieffer said a factor the district will want to consider is sequencing of the projects. She pointed out that even if one of the creek areas downstream has a higher flood impact score than an upstream area, it does not mean the district should do the downstream project first.

President Bob Cutshall noted his continuing interest in an overall plan for NMCWD's approach to flood-risk reduction. Ms. Kieffer said she thinks the solution will be to develop some sort of overall resiliency plan. She said the plan will need to consider and identify what it will take to meet the district's goals of reducing flood risk. Ms. Kieffer said she thinks the district would need to invest in developing that plan.

Manager Grace Butler brought up industrial areas, including residential housing adjacent to and weaved in among industrial, and the idea of transforming concrete areas into green sponge areas. She said there needs to be engineering done to figure out how to solve the problem of their lack of water storage capacity.

Michael Welch noted that NMCWD can acquire land to store water.

Manager Larry Olson asked Ms. Kieffer if any projects jump to the top of the list as top priorities. Ms. Kieffer said the storage projects because of their cost-benefit.

The methodology and results of the regional flood area prioritization and ranking will be presented to NMCWDs Technical Advisory Committee at its November 1 meeting. Ms. Kieffer said staff will report the results of the Technical Advisory Committee's review of these data.

III. Cost Share Grant Program Presentation

Lizzy Boor reviewed the history of the district's Cost-Share Grant Program, which started in 2008, and the grant application process. Ms. Boor said the district averages 16 grants per year and since the program's inception has awarded 276 grants and just over \$2,000,000 in grant funding.

Ms. Boor said that all the programs under the cost-share grant program are educational programs designed to educate applicants on how to improve water quality, preserve and protect groundwater, and restore native plants. She noted the district conducts cost share project inspections as part of project maintenance agreements.

Ms. Boor said the district has a technical assistance program within the Cost Share Grant Program. She explained the technical assistance program is a design consultation service with the for-profit arm of Metro Blooms, called Metro Blooms + Design Build, for projects in which the district identifies that the applicant needs project design help. She said that Metro Blooms also has a non-profit arm that we have worked with before as well.

Erica Sniegowski mentioned that Metro Blooms also does a great job educating and answering the residents' questions. She said that it is a great value because staff does not have the time or extensive knowledge for the site visits and using Barr Engineering for the residential technical assistance would be more costly.

The board directed Ms. Boor to research the water quality benefits of fescue and active pollinator lawns and the benefits to the watershed of such projects.

Ms. Boor reviewed recent and upcoming changes to the Cost Share Grant Program, including using a rolling deadline for grant applications, using an online application system and generating correspondence templates. She said changes she and Erica Sniegowski will present and recommend to the board at a future date include increasing grant maximums, adding maintenance funding, adding bee lawns and fescue lawns as fundable projects, and equity initiatives.

The managers thanked Ms. Boor for her presentation.

IV. 2023 Budget Amendments

Randy Anhorn proposed amendment of the district's 2023 budget to align with year-to-date expenditures. He pointed out the district hired an additional staff member this year, so he recommends the board amend the 2023 budget for employee salary and benefits to increase the budget by \$50,000 to a total of \$690,000. Mr. Anhorn recommended increasing the 2023 budget for office furniture by \$11,000 and increasing the budget for engineering administration by \$15,000. He recommended

increasing the overall administration budget by \$80,000 through a reallocation of \$80,000 from the program budget.

Mr. Anhorn walked through his memo documenting all the recommended 2023 budget amendments and program budget reallocations, such as a reduction of \$90,000 to the watershed management plan due to anticipating the Whited Fen project will not start until 2024 and adjustments to the cost of rules revisions.

Manager Butler moved, seconded by Manager Olson to adopt the 2023 budget amendments as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried.

V. Administrator Offer

Manager Butler moved, seconded by Manager Olson to extend an offer to Erica Sniegowski to serve as administrator of NMCWD starting January 1, 2024, at an initial base salary of \$123,000, increasing after a six-month probationary period to \$129,000, and for the offer to include the district paying \$6,000 in education assistance and accrual of paid time off at 10.33 hours each pay period. Upon vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Anhorn recommended the board put in place a procedure for the review of the administrator's education reimbursement requests, such as reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

VI. Adjournment

It was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Kvam to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Upon vote, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Grace Butler, Secretary