

Lower Minnesota River East 1W1P

Joint Powers Board Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 3:00-5:00pm, Thursday, January 16th 2025

Location:

Le Sueur County Justice Center EOC Room
435 E Derrynane St, Le Center, MN 56057

Attendees: Charlie Peters (Rice County), Doug Schoenecker (Scott SWCD), Dan O'Keefe (Le Sueur County), County), Greg Entinger (Le Sueur SWCD), Roger Bongers (Rice SWCD), Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD)

I. Welcome & Review Agenda

Dan O'Keefe called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

II. Election of Officers

The first item on the agenda is election of officers for the Joint Powers Board. Dan O'Keefe opened up nominations for Chair. Doug Schoenecker nominated Dan O'Keefe as Chair. There were no other nominations for Chair. Dan O'Keefe accepted the nomination. Motioned by Entinger; Seconded by Bongers to approve Dan O'Keefe as chair.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval Dan O'Keefe as Chair for the Lower Minnesota River East Watershed Joint Powers Board.

Dan O'Keefe opened up nominations for Vice Chair. Doug Schoenecker nominated Charlie nominated Doug as Vice Chair. Doug abstained from the Vice Chair nomination. Roger Bongers nominated Greg Entinger for Vice Chair. There were no additional nominations for Vice Chair. Greg Entinger accepted the nomination. Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Bongers to approve Greg Entinger as Vice Chair.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval Greg Entinger as Vice Chair for the Lower Minnesota River East Watershed Joint Powers Board.

Nominations for Treasurer will wait until the 2025 Bylaws agenda item. The Updated Bylaws must be approved prior to nominating a Treasurer.

III. Review and Approval of Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda as presented.

Motioned by Entinger; Seconded by Schoenecker to approve the agenda as presented.

The Motion carried unanimously for the agenda to be approved.

IV. Review and Approval of November 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

There was one correction to the minutes and that was to update the list of attendees and add Greg Entinger.

Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Bongers to approve the November 21st meeting minutes with the suggested correction.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the November 21st 2024 meeting minutes.

VI. Orientation LoMRE Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Informational Item)

The ST thought it would be good to give a quick orientation of the LoMRE Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan prior to us starting to implement projects. Holly read through the powerpoint presentation that was utilized during the 60 day review process and BWSR review process. Additionally, she added in a slide or two that discussed the type of partnership that was formalized amongst LGUs and explained in more detail what the JPB can and cannot do and the type of agreements that are in place for the partnership.

VII. Bylaws (Informational and Decision Item)

In the JPA, we state that the JPB may adopt Bylaws. Bylaws are intended to further assist the JPB in working together by providing direction and guidance for the decisions making processes. The end goal is to make the JPB more efficient.

The Bylaws were updated based off of discussions at the November JPB meeting. The major updates that the JPB decided would be helpful was to add in an officer role, specifically Treasurer. This would help Scott SWCD issue payments in a more effective manner. Additionally, the JPB suggested to further define and add language as to what each officer's role is responsible for including signing authority. This would allow more flexibility for payments.

Motioned by Entinger; Seconded by Bongers to approve the 2025 Bylaws for Lower Minnesota River East Watershed JPB with the suggested revisions.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the 2025 Bylaws for the LMREWJPB.

Dan O'Keefe opened up nominations for Treasurer. Roger Bongers nominated Doug Schoenecker as Treasurer. Doug Schoenecker accepted the nomination. Motioned by Entinger; Seconded by Bongers to approve Doug Schoenecker as Treasurer.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval Doug Schoenecker as Treasurer for the Lower Minnesota River East Watershed Joint Powers Board.

VIII. LoMRE Cost Share Policies and Procedures (Decision Item)

At the last JPB meeting, Holly went through the draft LoMRE Cost Share Policies and Procedures document. The JPB is required to adopt some kind of policy in order to utilize WBIF for cost-share. Additionally, locally each LGU should have their policies updated.

Holly went through each section again, briefly describing the purpose and what was included. Most of the revisions that were made were reducing redundancy and explaining in better detail how the partnership is going to prioritize different projects and practices.

Charlie asked if the document was on par with what we are doing now locally? Holly mentioned that yes it pretty similar to what we each do locally and also has some similarities with what other watersheds are doing as well.

Motioned by Peters; Seconded by Schoenecker to approve the 2025 LoMRE Cost Share Policy and Procedure.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the 2025 LoMRE Cost Share Policy and Procedure.

IX. Legal Services (Decision Item)

Holly provided a summary about legal services that may be needed for the partnership. Legal Counsel for implementation efforts would overall be pretty minimal and for things such as amending bylaws or JPA, reviewing contracts or agreements, or any other legal advice or services.

The ST drafted an RFP for Legal Services. The timeline on what the RFP will be sent out and when a proposal is due will occur within the month of March. At the April JPB meeting, the ST would have available proposals for the JPB to approve. A list of firms was developed on who the partnership will send the proposal to which includes

Campbell Knutson, Kennedy & Graven, Fluegel, Anderson, McLaughlin, and Brutlag, Hellmuth & Johnson, Blethen Berens, and Smith Partners.

Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Entinger to approve the Legal Services RFP and authorize staff to send out to legal firms in March.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the Legal Services RFP and authorization of staff to submit to firms.

X. CRP Incentive Grant Program and Policy (Decision Item)

Holly introduced to the JPB the CRP Incentive Program. Once there is a comprehensive watershed management plan approved, a watershed is eligible for these funds. The partnership is not required to participate in this program. For the LoMRE, there is \$50,000 available.

In order to move forward and apply for funds, a policy must be developed and must be ready by February.

Holly went through the policy and utilized existing policies as well as staff recommendations to develop a draft. In order for landowners to be eligible for the program they must be eligible for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and must have land within the Lower Minnesota River East Watershed.

In order to receive the incentive payment, the following requirements must be met:

- Minimum of 0.5 acres enrolled
- Minimum contract length of 10 years
- Enrollment must be located in Habitat Priority Areas (Figure 3.5 and 3.6)
- Re-enrollments had smaller incentive than new sign ups

The JPB had quite a bit of discussion about the incentive payments that we should provide for both new enrollment and re-enrollment. The JPB decided to cut the rates that staff originally drafted in half.

- New enrollment: For initial sign up, applicant receives \$500 for a contract which must meet the 0.5 acre minimum; Applicant is eligible for an additional incentive payment of \$2,500 for a contract that is between 5.01-10 acres or \$5,000 for a contract that is over 10 acres.

- Re-enrollment: For initial sign up, applicant receives \$500 for a contract which must meet the 0.5 acre minimum, \$1,000 for a contract that is over 5 acres.

Additionally, the JPB recommended we should prioritize applications that are closest to a water resource within the Habitat Priority Areas.

The policy also addresses the approval process that is required by FSA and the SWCD. Additionally, the policy outlined reporting requirements and noncompliance.

Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Bongers to approve the LoMRE CRP Incentive Policy with the suggested edits from the JPB.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the LoMRE CRP Incentive Policy with the suggested edits from the JPB.

Motioned by Peters; Seconded by Entinger to authorize staff to apply for the CRP Incentive Program.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of authorizing staff to apply for the CRP Incentive Program.

XI. Education and Outreach (Informational Item)

Staff have been working on education and outreach efforts for the partnership. The website will be updated, and social media account(s) will also be created. Additionally staff are in the process creating an education and outreach plan and framework for the partnership. We should have a draft available by the April meeting.

Holly asked the JPB if there were any additional items, activities, events, workshops, etc. that they would like to see incorporated into the education and outreach plan?

Charlie mentioned that there were questions about flooding, culvert replacements, hydrological impacts that he would like folks to be more informed about. Additionally, some education and outreach efforts with townships and cities would be helpful. Another topic that was brought up was ditches and cleaning efforts.

The JPB did have a good discussion about other watersheds and there existing efforts. One thing the board would like to consider is geofencing for radios and and TVs.

XII. Watershed Updates (Informational Item)

- Insurance

- Received quote from MCIT: \$1,488
- Enter into Contact with MCIT for 2025 (board already authorize the Chair to enter into the contact on behalf of the board at an earlier meeting)
- Dues
 - JPB dues for each partner are set for 2025
 - Each partner will be invoiced, and dues will be sent to the fiscal agent
- Subagreements
 - Completed subagreements include: Le Sueur SWCD, Rice SWCD, and Le Sueur
 - Needs approvals and/or signatures: Scott SWCD and Rice County
- Shared Drive-Google
 - Location where all watershed files will be located
 - Will need to create an account in order to access the drive
 - Holly will send out a link to board members

XIII. Future Meetings and 2025 Schedule

- The third Thursday of the month from 3pm-5pm still works for the Board and staff.
- We should be back to our regular meeting location in April.
- There are no conflicts with the April Meeting.
- The JPB will continue to meet quarterly.
- Next Steering Team Meeting: **Thursday, February 6th from 10:00am-12:00pm**
- LMREWJPB Meeting: **Thursday, April 17th, 3:00pm-5:00pm**

XIII. Meeting Adjourn

Motioned by Entinger, Seconded by Schoenecker at 4:53 pm

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval to adjourn at 4:53pm.