

Lower Minnesota River East 1W1P

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 3:00-5:00pm, Thursday, September 19th 2024

Location:

Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District Office
181 W Minnesota Street, Le Center, MN 56057

And

Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Jeff Docken (Rice County), Roger Bongers (Rice SWCD), Doug Schoenecker (Scott SWCD), Greg Entinger (Rice SWCD), Dan O’Keefe (Le Sueur County), County), Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Michael Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD), Kortney Spitzack (Le Sueur SWCD), Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Barb Peichel (BWSR), Anne Sawyer (BWSR)

I. Welcome & Review Agenda

Dan O’Keefe called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

II. Review and Approval of Agenda

There was one amendment to the agenda. The order of the Bylaws and WBIF were changed.

Motioned by Docken; Seconded by Schoenecker to approve the agenda with the amendment.

The Motion carried unanimously for the agenda to be approved.

III. Review and Approval of June 20th Meeting Minutes

Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Bongers to approve the June 20th meeting minutes.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the June 20th meeting minutes.

IV. 90 Day Review Update (Informational Item)

90 Day Review Process

- Holly summarized the 90-day review process. She stated there were two required meetings during the 90-day review process.
 - The BWSR Central Region Committee Meeting, which was held on Monday, August 5th from 2:30pm-4:00pm. Mike, Troy, Doug, and Holly attended the meeting to present to the Committee. The Committee recommended approval of the Plan.

- Mike stated that one comment from the Committee that stuck out to him was the props our partnership was given for addressing drainage and talking about it more in depth.
- Anne commented that the Committee had a lot of tough questions, but the partnership did a great job answering them and presenting the Plan.
- The other required meeting was the BWSR Board Meeting, which was held on Thursday, August 29th from 9:00am-11:30am. Staff attended the meeting virtually. BWSR recommended approved of the Plan with 2 edits that recommended by MDH. The edits were removal of a sentence that contradicted a previous sentence and update Municipal Water Systems from 12 to 10. Very minor edits.
 - ISG has already amended these edits, and Holly will send out a link for the Final Draft of the Plan.

VI. Update JPA & Resolution to Adopt the Plan (Informational Item)

All LGUs that would like to participate in planning efforts are required to bring forward the JPA and a Resolution to Adopt the LoMRE Plan. The Lower Minnesota River WD, Scott County, and Scott WMO will be opting out of implementation efforts. The partners that plan on working with implementation efforts are Le Sueur County, Le Sueur SWCD, Rice County, Rice SWCD, and Scott SWCD.

Partners are still in the process of adopting and approving the Resolution and JPA. Anticipate this to be completed by next Tuesday, September 24th. Brad had commented that there were some conversations between Rice County staff and some confusion, and he believes it now has been sorted out.

Once all of the LGUs within the partnership have signed the JPA and Adopted the Resolution, the PC will officially become a Joint Powers Board.

BWSR will need a copy of all the signatures and Resolutions.

VII. Workplan (Informational and Decision Item)

A workplan is required in order to receive WBIF. The funding is for a Biennium, but the Workplan is for 3 years. The ST tried to make the workplan as easy as possible to transfer into Elink (State's reporting). We must track efforts and report outcomes. Tried to allow as much flexibility as possible if need to transfer funds around. There are a few different spreadsheets

that will assist us with Workplan requirements: WBIF FY'24-26 Workplan Spreadsheet, Pie Chart that shows where funds are being spent, LGU allocations, and NonWBIF FY'24-26 Workplan.

WBIF FY'24-26 Workplan

The Workplan is split into different categories: cost share projects, groundwater, education and outreach, planning and assessments, project development, technical assistance, and administration and coordination. We have \$538,396 for each biennium. The ST had numerous discussions about what we thought we could achieve and how much each activity would cost. Furthermore, we discussed what type of outcomes we would get. Most of the funding is targeted towards Cost-Share Projects (42%). Other expenses such as Planning and Assessments, Education and Outreach, and Technical Assistance accounted for about 13%-14% of the budget per item.

- Doug asked about the \$80,000 set aside for grad stabilization projects and thought it didn't seem like a whole lot of funds for those projects. The ST stated that we took an average cost since costs can vary so much to determine a budget. Additionally, there is flexibility to shift funds around if needed and if we achieve the same reductions with less practices, that is a positive for making progress towards plan goals.
- Planning and Assessments will be utilized as leverage to further target projects and practices in HUC 10 Subwatersheds.

The additional expenses (Legal services, audits, and insurance) the ST did not allocate WBIF to cover these costs. The ST asked the PC how we want to cover these expenses. Right now, we do not have a concrete idea on how much these will cost and how often we will need them. The ST recommended using dues to cover these costs for at least the first year would be best. Insurance and legal services were estimated a bit high to allow some will room.

- Steve mentioned that in the CRWJPO insurance costs about \$4,000/yr
- Holly mentioned that we will likely need legal often and the costs should be minimal.
- Dan asked if we could purchase equipment with dues.
 - Holly said yes, but the ownership of the equipment must be with an individual LGU since the JPA says the JPB can not own equipment.
- Jeff stated he thinks the additional expenses are appropriate to be paid for with dues this year.

LGU WBIF Allocation

The LGU WBIF allocation is not required to be reported in elink; however, it clarifies in more details how we are going to split up the funding amongst partners. There is flexibility to shift funds around in here as well (process address in Cost Share Policies and Procedures document).

The ST discussed planned projects for the next few years and went down the activities and allocated funds.

NonWBIF FY'24-26 Workplan

These are activities that will be accomplished within FY'24-26 that do not utilize WBIF. Account this for match towards WBIF if not a state source of funding. This is not entered into elink. Keeps up accountable in achieving all activities and goals within the Plan. As we apply for more funding or more funding opportunities come out, we can continue to build this workplan.

The PC will need to make two motions. The first motion is to approve the FY'24-26 WBIF Workplan. The second motion is to approve staff submitting the request to apply for WBIF funding and work with BWSR to finalize workplan requirements.

Motioned by Entinger; Seconded by Docken to approve the FY'24-26 Workplan.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the Workplan.

Motioned by Schoenecker; Seconded by Docken to approve the FY'24-26 Workplan.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the Workplan.

VIII. Bylaws (Informational 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.

Items included in the Bylaws were: Voting, Meetings, Parliamentary Authority, Officers/Powers/Duties, Committees, Budget Development, Agreements and Contracting, Data Practices and Official Notices.

The PC discussed virtual meetings are an option but must follow State and Local policies. There was discussion on whether the JPB had to adopt Roberts Rules of Order. Holly said she will look into State Statute to clarify and update Bylaws accordingly. Lastly, there was discussion about utilizing may, will, and shall within the Bylaws and being more consistent.

IX. Meeting Schedule

- Meeting in October to elect officers, adopt Plan, finalize and approve various documents.
- May need to meet in November or December of 2024.
- The PC stated that meeting Quarterly each year would be good, and we can always cancel if need be.
- Next Steering Team Meeting: **Wednesday, October 16th, 10:00am-1:00pm**

- LMREWJPB Meeting: **Thursday, October 17th 3:00pm-5:00pm**

IX. Meeting Adjourn

Motioned by Docken, Seconded by Entinger at 4:43 pm

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval to adjourn at 4:43pm.