

Lower Minnesota River East 1W1P

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 3:00-5:00pm, Thursday, October 19, 2023

Location:

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

And

Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County); Laura Amundson (LMRWD); Danny O'Keefe (Le Sueur County) (chair); Jeff Docken (Rice County); Doug Schoenecker (Scott SWCD), Linda Loomis (Lower MN River Watershed District); Troy Kuphal (Scott SWCD); Melissa Bokman Ermer (Scott County & Scott WMO); Bailey Griffin (ISG); Anne Sawyer (BWSR); Rita Weaver (Scott WMO); Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD)

I. Welcome & Review Agenda - Policy Committee Chair

Chair O'Keefe called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm. Holly gave an introduction on the agenda and what will be covered in today's meeting.

II. Review and Approval of Agenda

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda.

Motioned by Docken; Seconded by O'Keefe to approve the agenda.

The Motion carried unanimously for the agenda to be approved as presented.

III. Review and Approval of September 21st Meeting Minutes

Motioned by Docken; Seconded by O'Keefe to approve the September 21st meeting minutes.

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

IV. Implementation Table (Informational Item)

Bailey gave an overview of the Implementation Table. Last month the BMP section of the implementation table was discussed. This month sections of the table include, Data, Studies & Monitoring, Policy and Regulation, Outreach and Education.

Bailey discussed what is required to be in the implementation table. Bailey gave a recap of the priority issues statements and the six issue areas that were identified as priorities (surface water,

groundwater, habitat & natural resources) and a quick background on the implementation table development which included two prioritization exercises with the Advisory Committee. The implementation table format includes, implementation action, location, priority areas, measurable outputs, timeline, estimated cost, lead and supporting agency, and goal the action falls under.

Bailey went over the draft implementation actions in the Data, Studies & Monitoring, Policy and Regulation, Outreach and Education sections of the table highlighting some of the actions. A menu approach is being taken for the Education and Outreach implementation section which allows for flexibility in approach that best suits need at the time of implementation, meet the changing needs of best target audience and tailored approach to each campaign topic.

There are several educational and outreach campaigns with targeted audiences, supporting partnerships and strategies. The campaigns are Smart Salting/Chloride Awareness, Upland Water Storage, Soil Health, Riparian Landowner Education, Habitat and Stream Restoration, Groundwater Quality Testing/Well Testing, Building Collaborations, Infiltration BMPs, Point Sources, SSTS, & Manure Management, Easements/Protected Lands, and One Watershed One Plan Updates and Notifications. Each of those areas would develop a campaign with target audiences, supporting partners and strategies. Ten percent of Watershed Based Implementation Funds (WBIF) funds will go towards outreach and education. Costs for Plan Implementation is as follows: Best Management Practices \$15,116,985; Education & Outreach \$1,511,699, Technical Assistance \$3,023,397, Data, Studies, and Monitoring \$1,769,000 and Policy & Regulation \$175,000. Total plan costs are \$21,596,081 over ten years.

V. Organizational Arrangement (Informational)

Holly updated the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) based off comments that were made at the last meeting. Edits were minor, Holly stated Greg had asked about property & easements. Holly talked to the county attorney and updated the language in the draft JPA. Essentially, if an easement is provided, that easement will need to be help with the local government unit (LGU). If the easement is placed to help accomplish the goals of the Plan, that respective member entity of which the easement is located will hold that easement.

Dues were discussed and Holly went over the creation of two tiers for dues and stated dollar amounts for each tier. It would equate to \$18,000 per year in membership dues. Holly showed the tiers and their amounts in the JPA. Tier 1, membership dues will not exceed \$4,000 annually. Tier 1 shall consist of members with more than 8% of the total land within the planning area (Le Sueur County, Le Sueur SWCD, Scott SWCD). Tier 2 dues shall not exceed \$2,000 annually and

shall consist of members with less than 8% of total land within the Planning area (Rice County, Rice SWCD and Lower MN River Watershed District). Those two amendments were the major changes to the draft JPA. A question was asked of what the dues will be used for. Holly mentioned some ideas, but the partnership will need to discuss dues usage in the future, it's unclear what will be eligible and not eligible with the WBIF funds in the future. It will be put in the Bylaws what the dues will be eligible for. Holly stated that any dollar amounts put in the JPA will need to be approved by each board to make any changes. It was suggested to put the Membership Due Tier language in the JPA but leave the dollar amounts out of the JPA and put those dollar amounts in the budget instead. Holly indicated the roles will be kept out of the JPA because it gives more flexibility when positions change, roles will be put in the Bylaws.

VI. Lower Minnesota River East Planning Grant Budget Update

Troy provided an update on the budget. Staff is looking for feedback as to whether the board want to authorize funding shifts between planning tasks in the budget or if the board wants to authorize those decisions to staff. We have \$12,776 in contingency funds available and given the number of meetings we've had and still need to have with ISG, we will likely go into the contingency funds to cover costs of the consultant. Does the board want to make those decisions, or does the board want to authorize staff to move budget amounts to cover costs? There are a few other tasks in the budget we could use the funds in other tasks.

Schoenecker stated he would be fine with staff making those decisions as long as there is a report of the adjustments. Some further discussion occurred about the contingency funds.

Motioned by Jeff Docken, Seconded by Doug Schoenecker to authorize staff to shift planning budget funds when needed subject to reporting to the board.

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval of staff to shift planning budget funds when needed subject to reporting to the board.

Additional comments from Anne Sawyer (BWSR) included, BWSR allows up to 10% budget movement for grants per discretion and no approval from BWSR. More than 10% requires approval from the Board Conservationist, documentation is also required.

VII. Planning Effort Timeline & Policy Committee (PC) Meeting Schedule (Informational Item)

Holly provided an update of the plan timeline. We are starting the internal review process for the Plan, Advisory (AC), Steering (SC) and Policy Committee (PC) review. Holly asked the PC how they would like to provide comments on the draft plan. The PC stated they would like to send their comments to Holly, and she will record them as comments for the internal review. In

November ISG will revise the plan, there will be no AC or PC meeting held in November. In December, review plan updates and answer any last-minute questions and thoughts. January 2024, ISG attends PC meeting for full review and staff will ask for a 60-day review in January. The official 60-day review of the Plan will begin in January.

VIII. Updates & Next Steps

Updates & Next Steps

- Next Steering Team Meeting: **Wednesday, November 15th 1:30pm-3:00pm**
- Next Policy Committee Meeting: **Thursday, December 21st 3:00pm-5:00pm**
- Advisory Committee Meeting: **Wednesday, December 20th 10:00am-1:00pm**

IX. Meeting Adjourn

Motioned by Doug Schoenecker, Seconded by Jeff Docken at 4:06 pm

The Motion carried unanimously for the approval to adjourn at 4:06 pm.