

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the June 9, 2020 special board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. via online teleconference

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Assistant Treasurer Jim Dibble.

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich

Others: Mike Kinney, Jessica Lindemyer, Emily Heinz (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Angie Hong (East Metro Water Resource Education Program); Jay Riggs (Washington Conservation District); Mike Isensee (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District); Jen Kostrzewski (Metropolitan Council); Craig Mell (Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District); Pam Anderson (MN Pollution Control Agency); Matt Kocian (Rice Creek Watershed District)

2. Watershed Management Plan Update – Education, Interagency Coordination, Monitoring

Attendees introduced themselves, Watershed Technician Emily Heinz facilitated discussion of public education and interagency coordination, and Dr. Meghan Funke facilitated discussion of water monitoring.

Public Education

The current Watershed Management Plan (WMP or Plan) contains three goals for Public Education. Ms. Heinz noted that these goals should be made more prioritized, targeted, and measurable (PTM). Angie Hong suggested tying the education goals back to measurable goals for other issue areas such as lakes and streams. What sort of education needs to occur to ensure those water resources goals are met? There was discussion about how to make education goals measurable. Manager Schmaltz explained the District has limited funds available and needs to be picky where it focuses efforts and funding. He indicated the District should understand the measurable outputs (e.g. phosphorus and total suspended solids reductions) resulting from education activities. One example of a measurable education program is Adopt-a-Drain wherein volunteers record the amount of litter/material they sweep up from a storm drain. It was noted that high priority areas for nutrient loading may also be high priority areas for education and outreach, which is a method for targeting. Jay Riggs noted Goal A has an output of “increased knowledge of and appreciation for”

water resources. He suggested promoting behavior change in addition to increased knowledge and understanding.

A wide array of target audiences was discussed. Different goals may be needed for different audiences to make the goals more prioritized and targeted. The District should reach out to new lakeshore homeowners *and renters* with information about how to protect the lake. Operations and Outreach Specialist Jessica Lindemyer indicated there are a lot of apartment residents and renters in Forest Lake who may not have a yard of their own, but still use the lake and want to do their part to protect it. Ms. Hong agreed that renters could receive more attention, as they still use the lake, for example by fishing off the shoreline and public docks. She indicated that communities of color could probably receive outreach attention as well, as current programs may not be connecting with them as much as they could.

There was discussion about outreach to the agricultural community including farm owners and field renters. Ms. Hong explained there is often an economic disincentive to taking farmland out of production to make room for best management practices such as grassed waterways. Mr. Kinney stressed the importance of working with farmers, and sometimes asking the right questions, to find a solution that works both economically and environmentally. Saving the soil by preventing erosion and soil loss saves the farmer money in the long run. Craig Mell indicated there has been a large demand for the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) no till drill this spring. One machine is not enough to service all of Chisago County.

Ms. Hong explained this spring, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, East Metro Water Resources Education Program (EMWREP) converted all in-person workshops to online webinars, and attendance was outstanding. Virtual attendance via computer or phone can often be easier for people, making it more likely they will attend. Webinars were recorded and posted to online, which have been receiving a significant amount of views as well. These methods are showing to be convenient for people, making it easier to spread the message further. Ms. Hong indicated EMWREP will continue to use this medium in the future, in addition to holding in-person workshops. Manager Anderson recommended adding to the list of objectives in the plan: Utilize new technology such as webinars, social media, podcasts, etc. in the Districts outreach activities. She recommended focusing the existing Goal B on shoreland owners and local zoning authorities and moving that goal up to be Goal A (therefore being a higher priority). She explained her suggestion to make this more targeted goal the top priority and make the more general outreach goals lower priorities below that.

District signage was discussed. Manager Anderson supported implementation of standard project signage for cost-share projects and the District's capital improvement projects. Such signs would have the District logo and explain what the project does. Ms. Heinz suggested the District undergo a comprehensive re-branding effort including hiring a professional graphic designer to help redesign the logo. She recommended this occur prior to creating project signage. It was noted this effort would go hand-in-hand with the website upgrade to a new platform, which will make it possible to implement several improvements to the

website. Ms. Heinz noted the ongoing workload analysis project will also inform staffing needs for the demanded increased online presence and increased outreach in general.

Interagency Coordination

Partners were listed including cities and townships, counties, state agencies, federal agencies, schools, SWCDs, Lower St. Croix One Watershed-One Plan (LSC 1W1P), other watershed districts, and nonprofits (such as lake associations). A list of potential partners, which may not necessarily be all-inclusive and may be updated as needed, will be included in the Plan. The list may also include comments about what/when/how coordination will occur with these entities. In response to a question from Manager Anderson, Ms. Heinz explained staff is setting up quarterly coordination meetings with Scandia and Wyoming city staff and is attending existing monthly staff meetings with the City of Forest Lake. Manager Schmaltz indicated the meetings with cities and townships should be issue driven and focus on common goals/objectives/issues (e.g. increasing development, growth). Manager Anderson indicated that CLFLWD is not anti-development but is in favor of smart development. She noted the value that the District can bring to the table by providing knowledge of the local environment and hydrologic systems. Mr. Isensee noted the coordination that has occurred between CLFLWD and CMSCWD and expressed interest in continuing to find opportunities where staff sharing can be utilized. Manager Anderson suggested switching the order of Goals A and B, thus making Goal B a higher priority. Like Education & Outreach, Interagency Coordination goals may be tied back to other goals with measurable outputs like lake and stream water quality.

Monitoring and Data Acquisition

Dr. Funke provided an overview of the District's surface water monitoring program including long-term stream, citizen-assisted tributary, diagnostic, project effectiveness, and in-lake monitoring. She explained there may be an interest in performing more groundwater monitoring as well. There was discussion about other entities currently performing groundwater monitoring including MnDNR, MPCA, MDH, Metropolitan Council, cities, and counties. Step one in considering groundwater monitoring will be to review what monitoring is already occurring and identify gaps that need to be filled. There was discussion about the District focusing more on groundwater-dependent resources (such as groundwater-fed lakes like Lake Keewahtin) and letting cities/counties focus on the drinking water side of groundwater, so as not to duplicate existing efforts. Chloride is a pollution of rising concern over the past few years. Chloride monitoring is especially important when looking at roadway expansions occurring near lakes (such as the Highway 8 expansion between Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake). It helps to have both a surface and depth sample because chloride tends to fall to bottom of lake (depth samples also inform on internal phosphorus loading). It was noted there is one stream in the District listed as impaired for chloride (Judicial Ditch 2 upstream of Comfort Lake). Mr. Isensee noted CMSCWD plans to explore septic system concerns as part of its plan update. The District's new citizen-assisted tributary monitoring program works with volunteers to collect water samples, and District staff run the analysis. This is a cost-effective way to do some diagnostic monitoring in the watershed. Administrator Kinney explained funds are limited,

so the District trying to find less costly ways of obtaining monitoring data it needs to target water quality practices. There was discussion about monitoring databases and the collaborative TC-WaMoDaG (Twin Cities Water Monitoring and Data Assessment Group) partnership. With so many entities performing water monitoring, it is important to be as coordinated as possible among both local, state and federal agencies.

3. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – June 11, 2020

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Spence. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X
Jim Dibble	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____