

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, July 7, 2020**

Members Present

Bushnell, David, Flo, Girard, McGovern, Nyquist, Oltmans, Ordway, Rechelbacher, Rosenberg, Salditt

Managers Present

Manager Loftus

Others Present

MCWD Staff: James Wisker, Brian Beck, Kim LaBo

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Second virtual meeting of the 2020 Citizen Advisory Committee.
Meeting chaired by Rechelbacher and called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Salditt motioned to approve the agenda, Girard seconded, motion approved.

Bushnell motioned to approve the June 16, 2020 CAC meeting minutes, seconded by Salditt motion approved.

Discussion Items:

2021 Budget Overview and Workplan Development – Wisker

The purpose of this presentation was to provide an overview of the status of the District's 2021 budget and workplan development. Over the last several months, staff worked with the board to fine tune the budget, resulting in a balanced budget and flat levy.

The following items were the focus of the presentation:

- 1) Budget process and philosophy
- 2) 2021 priorities
- 3) 2021 budget-revenue breakdown
- 4) Workplan review

Wisker provided the CAC a review of the District's budgeting process and how it relates to the 2016 strategic planning process to focus and align the organization around its highest priorities. As part of this process, the MCWD Board of Managers implemented a series of fiscally responsible measures to maintain high levels of mission focused output and service, while carefully managing its levy, including:

- Aligning program budgets with organizational priorities
- Making strategic reductions and implementing operational efficiencies
- Right-sizing, aligning and investing in human resources
- Strengthening partnerships for capital project financing
- Securing increasing levels of outside funding

- Restructuring existing capital project debt
- Reallocating funds from initiatives delivered under budget to capital projects

2021 Budget Priorities

The District will continue to implement its watershed management in 2021 with the following priorities:

Capital Improvement Projects:

In 2021 the District will remain focused on cultivating public and private partnerships to deliver capital projects that measurably improve the watershed. That work will involve continuing to refine the District's focal geography project pipeline as well as the responsive model and permitting program as pathways to project implementation. Projects in queue include work within the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, Minneapolis and the Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay subwatershed.

Data-Analytics:

Other areas of emphasis for MCWD in 2021 include the ongoing buildout of its data-analytical capabilities. Continued investment will be made in the acquisition of technology solutions that help the District gather, store, retrieve and integrate watershed data – to better inform planning, decision making and communication with partners and the public.

Refocused Outreach:

A final area of emphasis in 2021 will be implementing the District's new outreach strategy. Building off a new program focus, with investments in the website and recalibrated staff positions, the District will emphasize telling data-driven, graphically rich stories about the work that is needed, and the positive effects of the work that has been completed by MCWD and its partners.

2021 Budget/Revenue Breakdown

Wisker reviewed the budget by program area and the various revenue sources that support the budget. The total budget for 2021 was presented as \$14,701,269 The budget is supported by a flat levy of \$ 9,675,993.

Advanced Watershed Model and Machine Learning Model Development - Beck

Beck provided an overview of the District's effort to build an advanced watershed model and machine learning model that will support future project identification, project design, and flood forecasting throughout the watershed. The meeting was used to explain how an advanced watershed model and machine learning model will be used to support the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's (MCWD) strategic focus on building high impact capital improvements and shaping land use and water policy, to produce a measurable result in the landscape in the face of a changing climate.

Overview:

MCWD is considering a program to integrate and maximize the value of recent public investments in data collection to better predict the impacts of changing precipitation across the watershed, and to pinpoint, quantify and evaluate solutions. This program would draw on existing investments made by MCWD, U.S. Geological Survey and Hennepin County in monitoring precipitation and watershed response across the District, which will collect more than 1 million real-time data points per year for precipitation, surface and shallow ground water

levels, and pollutant loading. It will integrate this local understanding with state investments in producing detailed topography of Minnesota, along with local municipal investments in digitizing storm sewer information.

The tools being proposed for development include:

- 1) Machine Learning: Drawing deep insights and revealing trends from the vast quantity of newly available remote sensing data about how shifting precipitation is changing the mass balance of water and pollution.
- 2) 2-Dimensional (2D) Watershed Model: Integrating patterns revealed by machine learning with state topographic and municipal infrastructure data will provide a high resolution planning tool to pinpoint, quantitatively evaluate, and drive decisions on climate adaptation projects and policies.

Bushnell motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Nyquist. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting is Wednesday, August 5 at 6:30 p.m.

Board of Managers Liaison Manager Maxwell