

**MEMORANDUM**

To: MCWD Board of Managers

From: Lars Erdahl, District Administrator

Date: December 14, 2017

Re: **Human Resources Structure and Plan Implementation Progress**

Background

For much of the past two years, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) staff and Board of Managers have worked closely together to define increased focus and clarity for MCWD's purpose, strategic direction and operational model to maximize its return on investment of public resources in order to create higher value for the communities it serves. Together, we developed a more relevant and meaningful mission, vision, guiding principles and goals statement (January 2016). Together, we undertook an in-depth internal strategic planning process to thoroughly evaluate MCWD programs, projects, operations and strategic priorities to better align resources and to increase the potential program and project impact (February 2017). We conducted an assessment of the MCWD organizational framework to better align its human resources with its strategic priorities (July 2017), but that effort did not provide sufficient direction to guide action and implementation to achieve its stated goals...

Human Resources Plan Goals

- **Align human resources (talent, organizational structure, jobs & processes) with MCWD strategic priorities.**
- **Integrate Work Functions and Units**
- **Improve Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Along with others, I have expressed some regret and frustration along the way at parts of the process that compounded issues and/or slowed progress toward goals, but I have tried to be respectful and truthful to all involved and fully support the need to restructure our human resources with more focus, clarity and strategic alignment. Unfortunately, the process to align our human resources assets with our strategic priorities has not been nearly as smooth, efficient or effective as it should have been. There are many lessons learned and there have been many moving parts and variables, but as District Administrator, the responsibility and accountability rests with me.

At its August 24, 2017, the Board approved a new MCWD Organizational Chart structure and a *Summary of Change & Impact* table that identified 17 human resources changes and directed the District

Administrator to implement the changes by December 14, 2017. During the November 9, 2017 Operations and Programs Committee meeting, it became clear that there had been a misunderstanding or misinterpretation on my part regarding the direction and deadline for the implementation framework and timeline. Again, the responsibility and accountability for the misunderstanding or misinterpretation rests with me.

All of this background brings us to where we are today, with some progress, but not full completion, and the need to move the organization forward in the most productive and effective manner possible. The most significant changes directed by the Board have been accomplished and/or are currently in process. As changes in leadership, supervision and responsibility are implemented in the short-term, recommended to become effective January 1, 2018 to start the new fiscal and calendar year, based on discussions with and advice from key staff, the terms and conditions of carrying out some changes can best be made in a sequential manner and in transition as determined by the current priorities and capacity limitations for staff who are heavily engaged in ongoing MCWD projects that will continue to require significant time and focus and as staff define and transition into new roles as directed in the board-approved *Summary of Change & Impact* table.

The following updates refer to the board-approved human resources changes as numbered and identified in the *Summary of Change & Impact* table (attached). Implementation progress of the changes is as follows...

Research & Monitoring: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change items 1-4)

- As of January 1, 2018, the Research & Monitoring Department will be brought under the direction of the Planning & Projects Director/Assistant District Administrator.
- The Research & Monitoring Director position will be eliminated. Through a structured process, a separation agreement between MCWD and the employee has been developed and negotiated to carefully manage and protect MCWD resources and interests. The terms of the negotiated separation agreement will be considered by the Board.
- The internal work group structure of the Research & Monitoring work group will be changed to eliminate 3 manager roles and establish a single program supervisor and to make the changes to Research & Monitoring Tech and Rep positions as directed. Working with the Planning & Projects Director/Assistant District Administrator, who will direct this work group effective January 1, 2018, I have recommended and discussed with staff a sequential, internal and competitive hiring process. The timeline to advance these changes is to select the supervisor by February 1, 2018, the Aquatic Biologist by March 1, 2018 and the Field Monitoring Coordinator by March 1, 2018. Research & Monitoring staff will continue in their current roles until the new roles have been determined and become effective.

Planning & Projects: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change items 5-7)

- As of January 1, 2018, the Planning & Projects Director, James Wisker, will assume the additional title and role as Assistant District Administrator to provide strategic planning oversight and alignment for work groups and employees under his direction and also for the whole

organization. This will require close and ongoing collaboration and coordination between this role and the District Administrator to ensure consistency, clarity and focus.

- As of January 1, 2018, Project Manager Michael Hayman will assume a new role as Project Manager, Supervisor to implement strategic plan priorities and supervise and develop project managers, working closely with Planning & Projects Director/Assistant District Administrator. Due to the significant role that Mr. Hayman has in critically important MCWD priority projects, this is one of the roles that can become effective January 1, 2018 in recognition of the leadership he already provides to colleagues, but the transition will need to be further developed and defined by Mr. Wisker and Mr. Hayman in a manner that will meet current and upcoming project management demands and develop clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability within the Planning & Projects work group.
- Senior Project Manager Becky Christopher has proven herself to be a high-performing and very valuable leader for MCWD policy and planning initiatives. As the Comprehensive Plan process is finalized, Ms. Christopher will continue to provide leadership for MCWD efforts to link with cities to provide guidance and support for their planning and policy efforts and to develop a grant program that aligns with MCWD strategic priorities and community needs. Project Manager Renae Clark has also demonstrated her skills and value in interactions and engagement efforts with partner cities and residents. There have been discussions for ways that Ms. Clark could become more directly involved with community relations and engagement, but she is also currently tasked with management of a significant high-profile MCWD partnership and project. The transition to policy support and management and the development of the grant program will need to be further developed and defined by Mr. Wisker, Mr. Hayman, Ms. Christopher and the Planning & Projects work group in a manner that will meet current and upcoming project management demands and develop clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability within the Planning & Projects work group.

Permitting: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change items 7 & 8)

- The Permitting work group has hired a third Permitting Technician role as directed and is engaged in a process to streamline and improved their work-flow processes and rule-making to protect natural resources. The Permitting Tech roles have a balance of specialized skills and focus and the ability and capacity to support the overall priorities and demands of the work group.
- The three temporary Permitting District Rep positions will continue in their current roles and status during a transition to two permanent Permitting District Rep positions, with an anticipated effective date of March 1, 2018. This transition will need to be further developed and defined by Mr. Wisker and Permitting Supervisor Katherine Sylvia in a manner that will meet current and upcoming permitting priorities and demands and develop clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability within the Permitting work group.

Operations & Support Services: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change items 10-14)

- The Operations & Support Services Director role has been eliminated and the person who served in this role has left MCWD employment. The recommended new role to replace some of

the duties formerly provided by the Operations & Support Services Director has been developed and titled as the Operations Manager to better reflect the business management duties and operational functions and responsibilities of this role will have to manage finances, human resources, information technology, support services and the MCWD office facility. A position description has been developed and the position will be posted this week, with plans to hire the position by February 1, 2018.

- As approved and directed by the Board of Managers, while maintaining responsibility as leader of the whole organization, the District Administrator role has been changed to focus more on the internal business and operational needs of MCWD, including direct oversight of operations personnel to improve support functions and direct leadership to deliver the annual budget and the information technology plan. This position and role will continue to develop in close and ongoing coordination with the newly created Assistant District Administrator role.
- Two support staff roles had previously been filled by Temporary staff and were vacated in the past few months, one of the positions has been eliminated (identified as Tech Support Specialist) and the 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant position will be hired after the new Operations Manager position has been filled in order to maximize and balance the support service staff skills and functions. The other 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant positions will be filled by January 1, 2018.
- The Finance Administrator role will be restructured as Accounting Clerk/Administrative Assistant effective January 1, 2018 to more accurately reflect the duties to prepare and process accounts payable, monthly financial statements, vendor relations and internal support.

Education & Communications: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change item 15)

- As of January 1, 2018, the Education & Communications Department will be brought under the direction of the Planning & Projects Director/Assistant District Administrator.
- The Cost-Share grant program is being administered by the Education & Communications Director as this program is closing-out past grant obligations and transitioning to a new grant program to focus more directly on MCWD strategic priorities. The staff position that had been part of the Cost-Share Grant program has been eliminated.

GIS/IT Role: (From Summary of Change & Impact table, change item 16)

- As defined in 2018 work plans, the need for a staff member dedicated to GIS and perhaps other technology initiatives will be further explored and developed into a recommendation for consideration, likely as part of the 2019 budget and work plan development process. This function, and whether or not it is most effectively achieved internally, externally or a combination of internal and external, was to be considered in the proposed Information Technology Plan which was re-directed to the OPS Committee for further consideration and development.

Conclusion:

The approved organizational structure and changes are in process and while some significant changes in leadership and organizational relationships have been and will be achieved in the short-term, much of the work to define the transition is still to be determined through close collaboration from the District Administrator, Assistant District Administrator and leaders within work groups to manage change in a manner that recognizes the roles that MCWD staff leader have to continue critically important MCWD priority projects and develop clarity for their new and developing leadership roles.

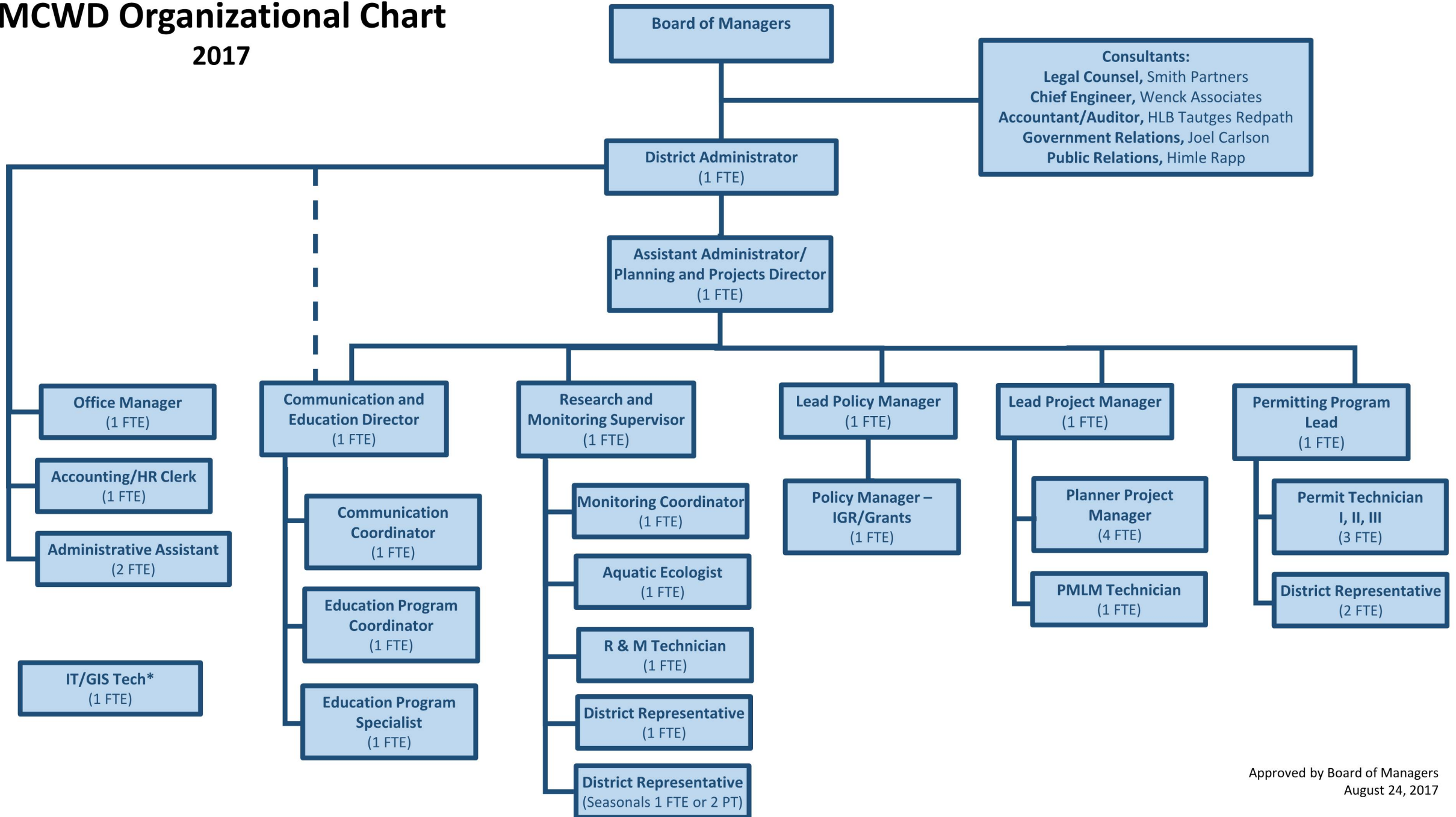
Please contact me if you have any questions.

Attachments:

1. MCWD Organizational Chart – 2017 (approved August 24, 2017)
2. Summary of Change & Impact (approved August 24, 2017)

MCWD Organizational Chart

2017



Summary of Change & Impact:

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Rationale</u>	<u>FTE Impact</u>
1.	R/M Dept	Bring under umbrella of Planning/Projects	Strategic alignment and coordination	0
2.	R/M Director	Eliminate position	Temporary position - no longer high priority	-1
3.	R/M Managers	3 manager positions updated to single program supervisor	Redundancy and AIS no longer a primary strategic focus	0
4.	R/M District Tech & Rep	Eliminate one tech position and make one rep. permanent	Take three Rep positions and make them two which more closely reflects current practice. One District Rep is long-term therefore should be permanent to aid in consistency. Second position is part-time seasonal(s).	-1
5.	Planning/Projects Director	Position promoted to 2nd in command - Assistant District Administrator	Position provides strategic planning leadership and oversight of alignment between roles.	0
6.	Project Manager	Add one Lead Project Manager	Capacity needs in department to implement strategic plan, position oversees 5 FTE in Projects	+1
7.	Planning Assistant	repurpose to Policy Manager - IGR/Grants	contract position ending with Comp Plan. repurposed to Policy Manager for IGR/Community Relations - needed for strategic planning and possibly grants.	0, +1
8.	Permitting Tech I,II,III	add levels to tech	allows growth opportunity	0
9.	Permitting District Rep (4 temp)	make 2 permanent Rep positions and repurpose other two into 1 Tech	employee retention and alignment	-1
10.	OSS Director	Title returned to Office Manager	title more accurately fits current duties and returned similar to 2009 hire (no longer overseeing permitting, comm, R/M like	0

			2010-2014), reclassification (no supervision) duties include routine finance, HR, office support, IT, facilities, equipment, etc	
11.	District Administrator	Clarify Duties to include: Budget, Finance, debt service, HR, IT	Leader of whole organization with special attention to lead the business side with direct oversight of operations personnel to ensure support functions improve and hands-on leadership to personally deliver budget and IT plan	0
12.	Tech Support Sp.	Eliminate 1 position with recent vacancy	Temporary position from 2015	-1
13.	Finance Administrator	Title to Accounting/HR Clerk	title more accurately fits duties of preparing accounts payable and assisting with benefits, also increase position to 1 FTE.	+.25
14.	.75 FTE Admin Asst and Temp Support Services Specialist	2 permanent full-time Admin. Asst. positions	Increase support services with less emphasis on front desk duties (given low foot traffic, bell coverage only when office open, automated phone with self guidance, etc) and more higher level full-time admin duties (board packets, support District Admin. And Asst. Admin, support other depts)	+.50
15.	Comm/Ed Dept	Bring under umbrella of Planning/Projects	Strategic alignment and coordination	0
16.	Grant - cost share position	repurpose as placeholder for IT/GIS	If operating levy gap is resolved in 2 years, hire IT/GIS position if IT plan by is approved by board.	0
17.	Supervisor titles	various positions - 4 less positions with supervisor role	11/33 employees are currently supervisors which is too many. For supervisor title/pay should have most of the following: 2-8 direct reports, financial oversight, independent judgement in decisions	0
	numerous issues in HR study	total of 17+ org chart changes	alignment with strategic plan and path forward. Previous chart had 33 positions, proposed has 31. Same # as consultants plan.	total -2

