

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

July 11, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers was called to order by President Sherry White at 7:00 p.m. on July 11, 2024, at the MCWD offices, 15320 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

MANAGERS PRESENT

Sherry White, William Olson, Richard Miller, Jessica Loftus, Arun Hejmadi, and Eugene Maxwell.

MANAGERS ABSENT

Stephen Sando.

DISTRICT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS PRESENT

James Wisker, Administrator; Michael Hayman, Director of Project Planning; Gabe Sherman, Planner – Project Manager; Chris Meehan, District Consulting Engineer; and Louis Smith, District Counsel.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Miller, to approve the Agenda as distributed. Upon vote, the motion carried, 6-0 (Manager Sando absent).

MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Hejmadi, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda consisting of approval of the June 27, 2024, Board meeting minutes, and the following resolutions:

Resolution 24-039: Acceptance of Donation

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
Board of Managers
7/11/24

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby accepts the donation of \$300 from the Gleason Lake Improvement Association and authorize the deposit of the donation into the District's general fund;

Resolution 24-040: Approval to Release Request for Qualifications for Legal Services

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to issue a request for qualifications for legal services; and

Resolution 24-041: Authorization to Execute Maintenance Declarations for Lost Lake Commons Project

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the MCWD Administrator, on advice of counsel, to execute the First Amendment to Declaration and the Lost Lake Commons Maintenance Declaration.

Upon vote, the motion carried 6-0.

BOARD, COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

President's Report: President White noted that she would be attending the Lake Walk dedication this coming Saturday in Wayzata, and an upcoming tour of Blake Road reconstruction.

Operations and Programs Committee: Present White noted that the Operations and Programs Committee did not meet.

President White noted the upcoming meeting schedule presented in the agenda.

PERMITS REQUIRING A VARIANCE OR DISCUSSION

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & PRESENTATIONS

None.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution 24-042: Authorization to Award Contract for Minnehaha Parkway Phase I Project Feasibility

Mr. Gabe Sherman appeared before the Board of Managers to review the request for board action. He reviewed the recently approved Cooperative Agreement for Integrating Planning and Water Resource Projects in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed in Minneapolis and noted that the agreement provides for a first phase of three initial partnership projects. Three high-impact projects were selected from the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan to proceed with feasibility study. Together with partners Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis, MCWD has led a process to issue this request for proposals for the feasibility work.

Mr. Sherman traced the RFP process and review of proposals with partners. The multi-agency selection team unanimously recommended that Stantec be selected and awarded this contract for feasibility work. *It was moved by Manager Hejmadi, seconded by Manager Miller, to adopt Resolution 24-042: Authorization to Award Contract for Minnehaha Parkway Phase I Project Feasibility as follows:*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute a contract with Stantec Consulting Services Inc. for engineering, design, and consulting services for the Minnehaha Parkway Phase I Project Feasibility study, in accordance with the developed scope of work as the Administrator may refine it, and in an amount not to exceed the amount set forth in the proposal, and authorizes the Administrator to execute contract amendments in his discretion up to an additional 10 percent, in aggregate, of the contract amount.

Manager Maxwell stated that he appreciated great staff work to advance this project, and wondered whether the MPRB worker strike would impact this project. Mr. Sherman said that his impression is that this work will continue to advance notwithstanding the strike. Manager Miller asked if the staff sees opportunities for noticeable project excellence in this first phase of projects. Mr. Sherman noted that this first phase of work is largely technical analysis, but the design phase will be an opportunity to address this aspect. Mr. Wisker stated that he agreed that the MPRB strike will not impact this technical, desktop work and that at the design phase a landscape architect will be identifying sites for visible distinction, including the Nicollet site as one example. Manager Olson noted that past MCWD projects have achieved a “destination quality” and established high expectations for future projects.

Manager Hejmadi asked how the collaborative process is working among the staff of the three agencies, and Mr. Sherman said the process is working well, with the main challenge being the stress of other duties. Nevertheless, this RFP process has met the desired schedule. Manager Hejmadi asked how MCWD assumes a leadership role while also assuring that others stay involved, and Mr. Sherman noted regular check-ins at key milestones keep everyone engaged. In response to another question from Manager Hejmadi, Mr. Sherman described the intended community outreach process that will be based on the MPRB's model for engagement. Given that the MPRB Master Plan is already approved, this work will largely be in an informing mode, and once schematic designs are developed, more community engagement will follow. Mr. Wisker noted that staff is working on both an internal communications process among the three partner agencies, as well as external communications.

Manager Loftus expressed the need for determined leadership to assure that the MCWD can complete its responsibilities without being too dependent on others' projects. Mr. Sherman noted that some MCWD project responsibilities will be necessarily dependent on other partners' elements, such as trails and bridges. Mr. Wisker noted that in a collaboration working within a complex system, barriers can often arise, but the best approach is simplicity, to identify simple steps where the work can start and gain traction. He noted that the next phase of work will involve critical site control issues.

There being no further discussion, upon vote, the motion to adopt Resolution 24-042 carried, 6-0.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

None.

BOARD INQUIRIES, ISSUES, AND IDEAS

Manager Miller inquired about the state of maintenance work beyond Minnehaha Falls, noting that it appears that MPRB has not addressed some maintenance needs. Mr. Wisker noted that the topic of these maintenance responsibilities will be a part of planning new work to revisit needs and cooperative opportunities.

STAFF UPDATES

Administrator's Report

Mr. Wisker reported on the following items:

1. Rain continues above normal averages. Lake Minnetonka is at elevation 929.8. The Gray's Bay Dam is currently discharging at 300 cubic feet per

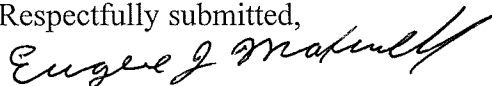
second. At Hiawatha, Minnehaha Creek is flowing at 230 cubic feet per second. Two recent un-forecast pop-up showers resulted in 1.7 inches of rain in 48 hours. This precipitation quickly pulsed the level of Minnehaha Creek from localized runoff. Warmer dry weather is forecast in the coming week. Manager Olson noted some problems he is having accessing water level data on the MCWD web site, and Mr. Wisker offered to assist and evaluate the user experience. Manager Miller noted that in Edina, landowners along the Creek have commented on how much they rely on the MCWD web site.

2. Staff is working on preparation of the July 23 Policy Steering Committee meeting for the collaboration with Minneapolis and MPRB. The agenda will include celebration of early achievements, discussion of long-term planning, and communications planning.
3. Mr. Wisker noted that Josh Wolf is leaving his position with MCWD and thanked him for his time of service and assistance in transition planning. He noted that Stantec will be assisting with some operations and projects duties in this transition. The managers thanked Mr. Wolf for his service to the District.

Adjournment

There being no further business, President White declared the meeting of the Board of Managers adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Eugene Maxwell, Secretary

