

44 **REGULAR AGENDA**

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46 **Board, Committee and Task Force Report**

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48 *President's report:* President White reported that she attended an Arden Park community
49 meeting as well as the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts special meeting and
50 tour, and that she intends to attend the two upcoming 50th anniversary events as well as
51 the Metropolitan MAWD meeting on Tuesday July 18. She said she may also attend
52 another upcoming Arden Park community meeting. She observed that Watershed Heroes
53 nominations are due. Finally, she noted that comments on the District's comprehensive
54 plan are incoming now. She proposed that the board discuss what exactly it would like to
55 get from the revised and updated Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts at an
56 upcoming meeting, and proposed that the managers rotate representation at the Metro
57 MAWD meetings. The managers concurred in rotating representation at Metro MAWD.
58 A schedule of attendance will be distributed for such purpose.

59

60 Manager Olson provided a report from the MAWD special meeting and tour, noting that
61 it was a very informative tour in and around the Bemidji area. He said the group toured a
62 Civilian Conservation Corps camp, which was not directly related to watershed matters
63 but was historically interesting. He said that the changes to the organization's bylaws and
64 manual of operations and procedures were adopted virtually unanimously. Those few
65 who had reservations were engaged after the vote and their concerns addressed. He stated
66 schedule of dues adopted was the lowest-cost version that was distributed for
67 consideration. No organization will pay more than \$7,500. He said that the whole
68 meeting and tour were very well prepared and organized, and that the new organizational
69 structure is ready to go. Manager Rogness added that the CCC camp was a highlight of
70 the tour, as was research that a professor from Bemidji State University presented on the
71 relationship between beaver dams and fish populations. He also stated that researchers
72 are finding that white pelicans greatly prefer to eat walleye. Manager White added that
73 the birds have a negligible effect on walleye populations.

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75 President White noted that the schedule of upcoming meetings and events is as printed in
76 the agenda.

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78 **Public Hearings and Presentations**

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80 **E-Grade Update**

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82 Yvette Christianson provided an overview and update on the development of the E-Grade
83 resource assessment and grading system. She stated the purpose of E-Grade is to provide
84 a comprehensive and multifaceted review of the quality of the District's water resources,
85 because simple grades don't tell the whole story. She stated that the grading system
86 accounts not just for deep lakes in the watershed but also shallow lakes, upland areas,

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87 wetlands and streams. She stated that using the frameworks that the District has
88 developed over the years, staff is working with Joel Bischoff at Wenck Engineering to
89 improve its grading and assessment system. She stated that during this phase of
90 development staff and the engineers at Wenck are focusing on the Schutz Lake, Six Mile
91 Creek and Minnehaha Creek subwatersheds because they provide examples of each of the
92 types of catchment areas within the watershed. She stated that the development of E-
93 Grade is in phase II, and focused at this point on hydrology and groundwater. She stated
94 that the program will be completed in December 2017 and she introduced Joel Bischoff
95 to provide the managers with more detail on the hydrology assessment and groundwater
96 grading system. Mr. Bischoff described the ecosystems-services model that the E-Grade
97 program is based on, noting that it is a framework that has been embraced worldwide in
98 water resources science. Mr. Bischoff stated that the work the District is doing with this
99 program will help it comply with new regulatory programs and initiatives being
100 developed by state agencies – most notably the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. In
101 response to a question from Manager Olson, Mr. Bischoff stated that usually the
102 Pollution Control Agency will write the standards that are used in a regulatory
103 framework, but MPCA it will get expertise from the Department of Natural Resources for
104 things like plants. Mr. Bischoff focused on groundwater, noting that there are very few
105 wetlands in the watershed that actually contribute to groundwater and more often
106 wetlands contribute to surface water resources. He stated that the level of imperviousness
107 in the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed is essentially starving the groundwater system. He
108 stated that a principal goal of E-Grade is to provide the board of managers with
109 information it needs for discussions on improvements that need to be made. He stated
110 that next steps in the development of the E-Grade program will be to try to figure out
111 how to report its findings in a clear and readily understood way.

112
113 In response to a question from Manager Olson, Ms. Christianson said that the intention is
114 to update subwatershed grades on a three-year rotation. Manager Olson said that it will be
115 important to see what kind of change is resulting from projects and other work the
116 District is doing and to have this change represented in visual ways that are easily and
117 readily understood. Ms. Christianson stated that staff is working closely with the District
118 communications and education department to provide the information in a readily useable
119 and publicly understood manner.

120
121 The managers discussed with Mr. Bischoff the number and types of data points that have
122 been collected for purposes of E-Grade and the potential for the work to require
123 expansion of the hydrology department. Mr. Bischoff noted that the District is trying to
124 use existing state data to the greatest extent possible to populate the E-Grade system. He
125 said that with regard to wetlands there are new parameters being developed and utilized,
126 including rapid floristic quality for wetland assessment. He stated that a purpose of the E-
127 Grade program is to grow data organically, with existing data-collection contributing to
128 the development of the program. He stated that the work will position the District on the
129 cutting edge of understanding its water resources and making decisions based on sound

130 science. In response to a question from Manager Becker, Mr. Bischoff stated that the
131 District is using the Metropolitan Council's Metro Model 3 for delineation of
132 groundwater subwatersheds. And in response to an inquiry from Michael Welch, Mr.
133 Bischoff said that the District is mindful of managing the risk of making itself a target for
134 new state regulatory program rollout by virtue of its being well supplied with data. Chris
135 Meehan noted that while there is some risk of the District being targeted for pilot
136 development of regulatory programs because of the data, having the data also makes the
137 District a frontrunner for possible grant funding.

138
139 Ms. Christianson stated that the staff and consultant intend to publish the E-Grade
140 program as a standard.

141
142 As to a question from Manager Loftus, Ms. Christianson and Ms. Dooley noted that they
143 are working with the communications department to develop the public interface for the
144 E-Grade system. Ms. Dooley noted that there is an appetite among certain elements of the
145 public for additional more detailed data on lake-water quality and water resources
146 assessment. Staff will be doing some testing and graduated roll out to make sure that the
147 system works. Manager Loftus noted the importance of showing how the old grades
148 translate to the new system. She said that realtors will be a key interest group for the lake-
149 grade system. Ms. Dooley said that the hydrology department has developed cost
150 estimates for the acquisition and analysis of data being gathered for purposes of E-Grade.
151 The managers thanked Mr. Bischoff and Ms. Christianson for their presentation.

152
153 Research and Monitoring Report and Wiski Data Management System Demonstration
154

155 Ms. Dooley provided the annual hydrology research and monitoring report with a focus
156 on lakes and streams in favor of aquatic invasive species or E-Grade, on which the
157 managers just received a presentation. She said that 2016 was the wettest year the District
158 has on record but that the watershed did not see a great deal of flooding because of the
159 distribution and timing as to when the rainfall was received. Ms. Dooley provided
160 subwatershed-based data from research and monitoring efforts, and provided highlight
161 findings. She said monitoring of Lake Nokomis showed evidence that the
162 biomanipulation work that the District has done in the past is bringing about
163 improvement in water quality. The phosphorous concentrations in Nokomis are
164 improving. She said total phosphorous and soluble phosphorous levels are showing a
165 decrease in response to the Minnehaha Creek remediation work the District has done,
166 even under conditions of high flow. She said that sediment loading is also decreasing.
167 She said that 28 lakes in the watershed are impaired and that of those, five are starting to
168 meet standards. Six other lakes have not been listed as impaired by the state but are not
169 meeting standards. In response to a question from Manager Olson, Ms. Dooley said she
170 would follow up with information on whether water quality in Lake of the Isles is
171 improving. In response to a question from Manager White, Ms. Dooley said that the
172 reduction in phosphorous in Dutch Lake cannot be attributed to the iron-sand best

173 management practice the District installed because the measurement is from inflow into
174 the lake not the outflow that is treated by the iron-sand facility. Ms. Dooley responded to
175 numerous further questions from managers about specifics of the research and monitoring
176 report.

177
178 Ms. Dooley gave a demonstration of the Wiski Data Management System. She said that
179 the software purchased by the District last year to replace the existing Excel spreadsheet-
180 based system saves District staff considerable time in complying and analyzing data. Ms.
181 Dooley provided the managers with a demonstration of how the system compiles and
182 reports data and how staff queries the software for reports summarizing District findings
183 and information. The managers thanked Ms. Dooley for her presentation.

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185 **STAFF UPDATES**

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187 Committee Structure Update

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189 Lars Erdahl provided the managers with a memorandum showing a possible new
190 committee structure and schedule for meetings. He said that the present two-committee
191 structure with occasional Executive Committee meetings was established in 2013 in
192 response to a recommendation from the District's organizational-management consultant.
193 He stated that the simplified committee structure implemented at the time was meant to
194 not only replace the numerous specific committees the District had established but to feed
195 information to Board of Managers meetings and decisions. He stated that since then the
196 operation of the committees has been evolving, and the Planning and Policy Committee
197 has come to be attended by all of the managers with some frequency, especially during
198 the recent plan development. He stated that the existing Operations and Programs
199 Committee has tended to focus on budget for work that has been developed with the
200 Policy and Planning Committee. Mr. Erdahl stated that he recommends that the managers
201 move to a committee-of-the-whole structure that would allow the managers to work on
202 new and developing ideas in a more fluid manner. He said the distinction between
203 workshop meetings of the managers, at which actions are not taken, and the regular
204 meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month be essentially eliminated. He stated that the
205 committee could meet before one or the other or both of the two board meetings, which is
206 more efficient for staff. Manager Loftus said that she likes Mr. Erdahl's concept and
207 favors the revision of the structure and schedule for meetings but would also like to see a
208 quarterly financial presentation to the managers. In response to an inquiry from Manager
209 Becker, Mr. Erdahl noted that as opposed to the monthly financial data and invoices that
210 the managers receive, the quarterly report would involve a summary of performance
211 against budget categories by program. The managers concurred in Mr. Erdahl's proposed
212 structure and schedule.

213

214 Administrator's Report

215

216 Mr. Erdahl reported on a meeting focused on the District's human resources plan
217 progress two weeks ago with the District's human resources consultant. He set forth a
218 timeline for action by the managers on the plan, proposing that the consultant come to the
219 next meeting or at a special meeting soon to make a presentation of the consultant's final
220 report. He said he thought it would be particularly useful for the consultant, Ann
221 Antonsen from Springsted, to be present for the presentation and he noted that staff has
222 been using the results of the human resources analysis in preparing for 2018 budget and
223 planning. He stated that implementation of the human resources recommendations would
224 be set by the end of this month. Manager Olson stated that it would be important for the
225 consultant to present both of the alternative human resources models that are discussed in
226 the human resources report and he would like to see each would look in terms of an
227 organizational chart. Manager Becker concurred. Manager Loftus reported on her efforts
228 to come up to speed with the development of the human resources report. She stated that
229 it is important that the managers receive the final report several days in advance of the
230 board discussion. Mr. Erdahl noted that he would ensure that the report is timely
231 delivered.

232

233 Mr. Erdahl highlighted the governor's planned 25-by-25 town hall meetings on water
234 topics across the state and noted that it would an opportunity for the Minnesota
235 Association of Watershed Districts to highlight watershed interests. One of the 25-by-25
236 meetings is in Minneapolis on September 26.

237

238 He said that the Metropolitan Council's plan for updating the Hiawatha tunnel has been
239 revised in response to comments from the public and will be coming forward sometime
240 soon.

241

242 Mr. Erdahl said that the District received quite of bit of favorable media coverage for its
243 work on zebra mussel research, including a story carried the *San Francisco Chronicle*.
244 He reiterated that the Watershed Heroes nominations forms are out and noted District
245 cleanup events on July 23 and August 19.

246

247 He reported that the Orono Big Island Committee had a recent meeting and that staff are
248 intending to attend the next meeting and make a connection with staff at the city in the
249 meantime. In response to inquiries from Manager Becker, Mr. Erdahl stated that the city
250 and committee are interested in knowing what they can and can't do under the District's
251 conservation easement. Manager Becker noted that he is concerned with the District
252 establishing any kind of precedent for what someone can do under a conservation
253 easement that isn't consistent with the District's intentions and goals. Manager Loftus
254 added that she has some concern that the citizens and committee working on the Big
255 Island Park redevelopment are going to get ideas for uses that are not consistent with the
256 District's conservation easement and the District will be in the unenviable position of

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257 having to tell them down the road that their ideas cannot be realized. Manager Loftus said
258 the District should advise the committee and citizens what the options are and what the
259 pros and cons of each option are in a proactive way, rather than being reactive. Mr.
260 Erdahl said that the committee and citizens are still brainstorming ideas and so far staff
261 has taken a somewhat passive role, trying to avoid squashing any ideas or creativity. He
262 noted that staff he and staff will connect soon with city staff. Manager Loftus suggested
263 that Mr. Erdahl and District staff make a presentation to the committee. Manager Olson
264 underscored his feeling that Mr. Erdahl should indeed get directly engaged in the
265 development of ideas for Big Island. The managers directed Michael Welch to provide
266 the memo recent prepared on the topic, along with the easement, to all managers.
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268 **ADJOURNMENT**

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270 There being no further business, the meeting of the Board of Managers adjourned at 9:00
271 p.m.

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273 Respectfully submitted,

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275
276
277 Kurt Rogness
278 Secretary