

**Meeting of the Policy Committee for Root River One Watershed, One Plan**  
**Monday, August 28, 2017, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**  
**Room 108, Fillmore County Office Building, 902 Houston Street NW, Preston, MN**

**Minutes**

In attendance: Fred Arnold (Houston County), Jerry Mueller (Winona SWCD), Tim Gabrielson (Mower County), Brian Hazel (Fillmore SWCD), Rodney Peterson (Dodge County), Glenn Hahn (Dodge SWCD), Marcia Ward (Winona County), Duane Bakke (Fillmore County), Matt Flynn (Olmsted County). Also present: Caleb Fischer and Donna Rasmussen (Fillmore SWCD), Adam Beilke and Shaina Keseley (BWSR), John Helmers (Olmsted County), Skip Langer (Olmsted SWCD), Dan Wermager (Root River SWCD), Daryl Buck (Winona SWCD), Adam King (Dodge SWCD), Justin Hanson and Tim Ruzek (Mower SWCD).

1. Open meeting: The meeting was called to order by Chair Duane Bakke at 9:05 a.m.
2. Approve Agenda: motion by Marcia Ward, second by Matt Flynn to approve the agenda; motion carried unanimously. Copies of the Joint Powers Agreement approved at the December 19, 2016, meeting were provided to the members.
3. Approve minutes of the March 20, 2017 meeting: motion by Rodney Peterson, second by Marcia Ward to approve the March 20, 2017, meeting minutes; motion carried unanimously
4. Old Business
  - a. Report on Planning Work Group and Advisory Committee meetings
    - i. Plan summary brochure (draft)
    - ii. Funding update
    - iii. Factors considered for project recommendations
    - iv. PTMApp maps
    - v. Staffing discussion

The latest draft of the plan summary brochure was reviewed to show the format and general content. Typographical errors still need to be corrected, and it was suggested to have a picture of a feedlot on page 1 with the bacteria statement rather than the pasture picture. The Policy Committee will review the final version before it is publicly available.

The factors considered in making the project recommendations for the 2018-2019 work plan were reviewed as well as the information about funding known at this time. If the funding appropriated by the legislature for One Watershed, One Plan implementation is divided evenly among the eligible entities, about \$650,000 could be available over the next two years, which is what the draft budget is based upon. Final decisions about funding allocations will be made at the December BWSR Board meeting. Chair Bakke reported that the term “performance-based grant” was changed by the Local Government Round Table at their last meeting to “watershed-based grant”. The other factors considered for the project recommendations, which are listed in the watershed plan, include:

- Watershed Plan “A” Priorities: Drinking Water, Rivers and Streams, Landowner Engagement, Livability
- Landowner cooperation, e.g. Rush Pine Farmer Led Council
- Partnerships, e.g. Field to Stream Partnership watersheds
- Distribution of funding among the counties: attempt to have projects in each county; projects ready. The money may not be evenly divided every year with projects in every county, but over the long term each county should be able to take turns to get projects funded.
- PTMApp data: Utilize preliminary web-based maps to estimate reductions. The web-based version is usable but limited in scope, so GIS expertise may be needed for the desktop version in which data can be added for more detailed modeling. The current web-based version is housed on Houston Engineering’s website which bogs down easily with many users, so the program is being shifted to the state system to alleviate this problem with heavy use. Example maps of the project watersheds created using the web-based version were shown.
- Streams that are nearly or barely impaired
- Opportunities for civic engagement, outreach, education, and research

Staffing needs were discussed with both the Planning Work Group and the Advisory Committee, and it was the consensus of both that it is important to continue to fund, at least in part, the Nutrient Management Planner and the Soil Health Technician, because their activities are key to implementation of the plan related to nitrates and sediment. GIS services could be contracted out to Winona County, Olmsted County or St. Mary's University, or possibly the WSU Water Resources Center. Regional coordination of several watersheds could be in the future. The question was raised concerning who is responsible for long term maintenance of flood control structures in Crooked Creek Watershed District. The watershed district is responsible and has levy authority to generate funding for that purpose.

- b. Member signatures on bylaws adopted at March 20, 2017 meeting: The final version of the by laws were approved in March, but members did not sign them. A signature sheet was passed around to those in attendance. It was noted that Crooked Creek Watershed will be designating a new representative at their next meeting in September.
- c. Conflict of interest forms: At the March meeting, there was discussion about getting conflict of interest forms signed by the Policy Committee members. However, it is the opinion of the Winona County Attorney that the members have already signed them for their respective boards, and so, it should not be necessary. BWSR has no specific guidance about this and defers to the attorney's opinion.

5. New Business

- a. Review draft work plan and budget for 2018-2019: The proposed projects include nitrate reduction activities in the Utica, Lewiston and Chatfield wellhead protection areas (including staff time for the nutrient management planner and the soil health technician), Rush Pine Farmer Led Council support, farm walkovers and project implementation in the headwaters of the South Branch and Middle Branch, Crooked Creek Watershed District flood control structure, and project development in Riceford Creek watershed. BWSR hourly rates are used to calculate the staffing costs to include overhead. Some action items, such as the activities in the wellhead protection areas, need more research to get more accurate budget figures before review by the Policy Committee at a later date.
- b. Report from Policy Committee members re: feedback from their respective Boards: Chair Bakke had reported on the Local Government Round Table. Dodge did approve the JPA, which occurred after the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- c. Partner project updates: This report will help to track activities not funded by the watershed grant but help to implement portions of the watershed plan. For example, Trout Unlimited has several projects either in progress or to be implemented that will utilize LCCMR, Lessard-Sams, and USDA Regional Conservation Partners Program (RCPP) grants. There is also the possibility of utilizing online software to create a joint database where partners can add their projects for easier tracking. John Helmers spoke about how the SE MN Water Resources Board could serve as a regional coordination entity, especially in the long term once all the watersheds in the region have completed plans. This generated extensive discussion and more discussion is planned about that which will also include the Technical Service Area Joint Powers Board.

6. Next meeting

- a. Review dates for upcoming meetings: Pending approval of funding levels by the BWSR Board in December, it was decided to schedule the next Policy Committee meeting for Monday, January 22, 2018, at 9 a.m. in Room 108 of the Fillmore County Office Building.
- b. Agenda items:
  - i. Presentation re: economics of trout angling in southeast Minnesota: Schedule this as a program after the business meeting of the Policy Committee.
  - ii. 2018-2019 work plan and budget

7. Adjourn: motion by Rodney Peterson, second by Glenn Hahn to adjourn at approximately 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Ward, Secretary