

APPROVED

RCWD BOARD OF MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Monday, April 7, 2025

Rice Creek Watershed District Conference Room
4325 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE, Suite 611, Blaine, Minnesota
and

Meeting also conducted by alternative means
(teleconference or video-teleconference) from remote locations

1 The Board convened the workshop at 9:00 a.m.

2 Attendance: Board members Mike Bradley, John Waller, Steve Wagamon, Jess Robertson,
3 Marcie Weinandt

4 Absent:

5 Staff: Administrator Nick Tomczik, Drainage & Facilities Manager Tom Schmidt,
6 Communications & Outreach Manager Kendra Sommerfeld, Program Support
7 Technician Emmet Hurley, Office Manager Theresa Stasica (video-conference)

8 Consultants: District Attorney John Kolb – Rinke Noonan, District Engineers Chris Otterness
9 and Adam Nies – Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI)

10 Visitors:

11

12 **Administrator Review Process**

13 District Attorney John Kolb began the meeting discussing the Administrator Review Process. John
14 Kolb mentioned materials for the review process, as well as other organization's review process
15 for comparison. He also stated that the quarterly review doesn't need to involve all board
16 members and asked the question of 'How does performance review translate into pay?' John
17 Kolb stated that this is just the start of the process and doesn't know exactly what the board is
18 looking for, but this is a really good starting point. He also talked about the importance of
19 objective performance standards.

20

21 Manager Wagamon asked if the Board is allowed to get together for a pre-performance review
22 meeting. John Kolb stated that there are some open meeting laws related to that issue, and that
23 he would have to look into it more. Manager Wagamon clarified that it's just a preparation
24 meeting to come up with a coherent consensus between the managers, to which John Kold
25 responded "You really have no safe space to do anything" because of the open meeting law.

26

27 Manager Weinandt stated that she sees goals as, for example, "working this year to see that
28 every position is filled" or "working this year to get the first steps on the bond package," and
29 whether or not they met those objectives, "Yes/No." Manager Weinandt asked Administrator

Tomczik if he meets with staff every quarter, to which he replied that he meets with each program manager and his direct reports.

Attorney Kolb suggested that the board could close the meeting or workshop for ~5 minutes each time (quarterly, etc.) to briefly discuss with the administrator the review and process.

Manager Bradley asked if anyone has any ideas about objectives/goals. Manager Robertson responded by stating that she would like to see goals to be set for the year. Manager Waller stated that the course of a year is a long time and that things change over the course of the year, and suggested that the Administrator reports on a regular basis. Manager Bradley requested that each Manager thinks about “the 1-5 things that should be considered for the review process” in preparation for the May workshop.

Outreach and Communications Program Review and Forecast

Outreach & Communications Manager Kendra Sommerfeld began the presentation at 9:45am.

Kendra Sommerfeld stated that RCWD has updated its website and presented metrics surrounding website engagement, top visited pages, etc., and then went over articles that are submitted to MN Watersheds and/or posted to the RCWD website.

Another electronic aspect of the Outreach and Communications program is social media. Sommerfeld stated engagements are really good. Outside of electronic media, RCWD also produces various signs. Some signs include QR codes.

Kendra Sommerfeld stated that she has been really focused on targeted outreach such as post cards and that it has been going well. She also stated that events/workshops have been focused on Raingarden maintenance, and that events help people learn interactively. Another workshop type is about Aquatic Plants, and the Outreach and Communications program has partnered with the UofM. A focus for the future is in-person workshops. Last year there were two, but there are five planned for 2025.

Kendra Sommerfeld discussed various new partnerships, such as Hazel Elementary and Highview Middle School, as well as continued partnerships with Friends of the Mississippi River. Highview Middle School is going to collaborate with Christ the king Church on their new Raingarden.

Also discussed was the use of GIS tools to help with storytelling (signs/visuals, story maps), targeting (MS4 Front), etc. District Administrator Nick Tomczik elaborated on the potential budget increase, saying that the GIS expenses are not insignificant, yet are to some degree transferable across issues, programs.

Looking to 2026: more in person events/workshops, more collaboration with WQG projects, more use of social media and GIS technology, among other goals. Budget outlook: slight increase

(new technology/tools such as GIS), expecting more projects and opportunities, new partnerships/opportunities.

MN Watersheds 2025 Request for Resolutions

District Administrator Nick Tomczik began this item by stating that there is an early deadline of June 2nd for resolutions, and that there are several items on the existing MN Watershed's resolution list that the District previously expressed interest in, such as open meeting law and others.

Nick Tomczik stated that, of the resolutions that are set to sunset, included is the DNRs public water designations, and that he doesn't expect this to be problematic. Attorney John Kolb added that the DNR will do a re-inventory but isn't aware of when this will happen. He says that his understanding is that they will follow the same process as before.

Nick Tomczik asked Managers to think about any issues that they would like to bring attention to. Managers made note of the cost allocation for ditch repair, the Wetland Conservation Act and its 25-year threshold, and tax forfeit wetland bank maintenance issues.

5-minute break

Anoka County Ditch 53-62 Branch 5 & 6 Draft Repair Report

The board reconvened at 10:38am

Drainage & Facilities Manager Tom Schmidt began the item stating that the next major system repair in the queue is ACD 53-62 Branches 5 & 6.

District Engineer Adam Nies began the presentation with a map of the District, highlighting where we are and where the ACD 53-62 Branches 5 & 6 are located. Components of the proposed repair include open channel excavation and culvert replacement. Environmental considerations include wetlands, public waters, and threatened and endangered species.

Adam Nies noted the DNR NHIS Review. There was a requirement of a rare plant survey, and stated that the survey revealed there were Swamp Blackberries, Bristle-berries, and Tubercled Rein-orchid within the proximity of the drainage system, each of which are on the state threatened and endangered species list.

Conclusions on current system performance include that the ditch continues to deteriorate over time and that the use of the ditch is becoming more urban. Primary needs of upstream landowners are predictability of drainage function and conveyance of high-magnitude events.

The Engineer described three alternatives:

- 1) Do nothing, let conditions continue to degrade
 - a. Only viable if system is no longer providing useful purpose

115 2) Full repair/ACSIC

116 a. Excavation of the entire length of open channel

117 b. Lowering Culverts to the ACSIC

118 3) Selective Repair

119 a. Large segments of ditch repaired to ACSIC

120 b. Some segments partially leave ditch as-is and do not replace culverts

121 c. Avoid impacts to public waters runoff elevations

122 d. Consider abandonment of Branch 5 Lateral 1

123
124 Manager Robertson asked if abandoning the portion of the ditch would create problems for the
125 homes in the area, to which District Engineer Chris Otterness noted that the lateral proposed to
126 be abandoned (Branch 5 Lateral 1) does not currently convey water from these homes and that
127 it provides no functional purpose.

128
129 Manager Weinandt asked if the purpose of the repair is for more land to be developed.
130 Administrator Tomczik clarified that the purpose is to address the district obligation to manage
131 the system, function, and board consider function and balance the costs, including the
132 regulations today.

133
134 District Engineer Otterness stated that the proposed development on the Gun Club Property will
135 be mostly unaffected by the repairs as that property drains to the North and East, toward
136 branches of the ACD 53-62 system that have been cleaned already.

137
138 Manager Wagamon inquired about the effect of the repair on 100-year events, and District
139 Engineer Otterness responded by stating that ditch repairs generally have much less of an effect
140 in that type of event, compared to smaller magnitude, higher frequency events.

141
142 Manager Robertson left the meeting at 11:17am

143
144 District Attorney Kolb clarified that the WCA 25-year rule still applies in certain situations.
145 Discourse took place regarding the effect ditch has/will have on properties and the District's
146 responsibility/non-responsibility to those properties.

147
148 The Board discussed the proposed charge to the Water Management District. – and the
149 assumption of a 60-40 split between the water management district and ad valorem as in past
150 repairs. Timeline includes a public information meeting in the near future, public hearing (Spring
151 2025), board considerations of resolution/order to establish a repair and WMD charge (following
152 hearing), plan development/project bid (Summer 2025), meeting with landowners in
153 construction zone (Fall 2025), and construction (Fall/winter 2025).

154
155 **Administrator Updates**

- 156 • Working with HEI on task order for municipal BMP maintenance criteria from which to
- 157 define the criteria for potential actions

- City of Columbus greatly appreciated RCWD's assistance to finance its trail associated with Clear Lake, extended their appreciation and consider the past MOU matter resolved
- Working to renew contract with Pitney Bowes (postage machine); engaging Rinke Noonan
- State administered grants are including verification of felonies/financial crimes, so the District's self-certification process will likely be an annual event
- Ramsey County 2, 3, and 5 project – House bill 204

The workshop was adjourned at 11:45am