

APPROVED

RCWD BOARD OF MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Monday, June 9, 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, Jess Robertson, Marcie Weinandt

3 Absent: Board member Steve Wagamon

4 Staff: Administrator Nick Tomczik, Project Manager David Petry, Lake and Stream
5 Manager Matt Kocian, Program Support Technician Emmet Hurley, Water
6 Monitoring Technician Catherine Nester, Watershed Technician and Inspector
7 Ali Chalberg

8 Consultants: District Engineer Chris Otterness-HEI, District Attorney John Kolb-Rinke
9 Noonan (video-conference)

10 Visitors:

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12 President Bradley requested to remove the ACD 10-22-32 Alternative 4 item from today's
13 agenda, due to Manager Wagamon's absence and the importance of this agenda item to
14 Manager Wagamon.

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16 The board moved to approve the amended agenda.

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18 Manager Weinandt requested an update on where the District is at with Ramsey County Ditches
19 2, 3, and 5 and to potentially discuss how to move forward. Manager Weinandt also inquired
20 about how the Board is going to go about the upcoming semi-annual Administrator review.

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23 **HEI Task Order 2025-10: Regional Pond Dredging Support (Tabled 5/14/25)**

24 Administrator Tomczik introduced the item, stating it was tabled at the 5/14/2025 Board
25 meeting.

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27 David Petry explained that the overall idea of the Task Order is that the District asked their
28 partners "what can we do to be a better partner with you?" David Petry further explained that
29 they heard on a couple of occasions that stormwater pond maintenance has been an issue.

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David Petry elaborated that the point of this task order is not to say “here’s a program to approve,” but rather to come up with options and approach.

Chris Otterness gave context, stating that on the prior task order they had included more engagement with the cities similar to what had been done on the street sweeping feasibility report, but he cut that part out and they are “basically going directly to the development of a policy or a scope of a program,” and that would then be what the Board could consider. Otterness further explained that the policy would be designed to provide assistance in line with what cities are requesting.

David Petry concluded that the overall benefit of a program like this is being able to get a single contract across city boundaries, lumping together more projects under the same contract to get a better rate. Petry gave an example of his discussions with Craig from New Brighton, who has a relatively small annual budget for stormwater pond maintenance that often gets eaten up by another project that comes up. This is one of the first projects that they put off until another year. Having RCWD involved would help as a driving force.

Manager Weinandt asked if this was mentioned in RCWD’s comprehensive water management plan, and/or been identified as a high priority.

Administrator Tomczik clarified that Manager Weinandt was referring to maintenance of facilities itself, and responded the plan addresses the district’s own facilities, but certainly partnering and collaborating with our partners is a strong aspect of the plan. David Petry then added that stormwater ponds provide water quality treatment as well as flood control, which are heavily prioritized in the plan.

Manager Bradley stated that his takeaway from the last Board meeting was that the District didn’t find paying their salaries for doing the work appropriate, but interested in assisting them informationally. Bradley further elaborated that he would be supportive of this task order.

Chris Otterness clarified that what they’re envisioning isn’t necessarily information sharing, but rather working with the cities to develop contracting of this work. Furthermore, the district would be involved with accelerating the work, not necessarily funding the work, and could be classified as “technical assistance” rather than “information sharing.”

Manager Bradley explained that this is basically a program where we arrange all the contracting and then get reimbursed. David Petry replied, explaining that it is one possible solution (and is what they have an example of) but he doesn’t want to focus on adopting one exact program, but rather is requesting that we look into how it can work for RCWD.

Manager Robertson requested clarification from Bradley, if this is the same stance as with street sweeping and further explain that she views those (stormwater ponds and street sweeping) as two totally separate things. Manager Bradley responded, stating that street sweeping is a

precursor to cleaning out ponds, because if you have good street sweeping, you reduce the need to clean out ponds.

Robertson disagreed, giving the example of Blaine, which has hundreds of stormwater ponds that exist mostly to mitigate flooding.

Administrator Tomczik pointed out that not all street catch basins and sewer systems have ponds associated with them, especially in older communities, but a lot of them do have ponds which are a catching sediment. Tomczik further explained that criteria for catching sediment at the source and considering the downstream water is important as it allows us to focus on the bodies of water that need the work.

Manager Waller commented, stating that at the previous meeting, that Administrator Tomczik pointed out that the responsibility for cleaning the stormwater ponds belongs to the cities. Additionally, pertaining to information about stormwater ponds, the cities know where they are, how many there are, the depths of them, etc., so this information already exists. Manager Waller also added that we already have a program that covers cost for this, and that it is the cities responsibility to acquire contracts. Because we already have a program that provides funding to cities for various projects, Manager Waller doesn't see the need for this.

Manager Weinandt moved to approve Task Order 2025-010 -Regional Pond Dredging Support, as revised on May 15, 2025 by Houston Engineering, Inc., not to exceed \$6,000. Manager Bradley seconded the motion.

Manager Robertson stated that she was unsure how she feels about the TO. Robertson understands that this is just to develop some ideas and guardrails but she also doesn't like the cost. She also stated that she doesn't know how you could equally apply any baseline rules around a program that wouldn't benefit one city over another.

Manager Bradley responded to Robertson's comments, stating that we are always looking for ways in which we provide benefit to our partners, and one of the things we provide value through is as a centralized source of information. To that end, Bradley does not think spending \$6,000 to see if there was something there would be unreasonable, which is why he would support the approval of this TO.

Manager Robertson posed a question for Manager Waller, asking which kind of maintenance he is referring to the District as being responsible for. Manager Waller responded by stating that the District is not responsible for any of the maintenance on the stormwater ponds, and that this is a proposal to start making the District responsible for those ponds. Waller further explained that we have a program that's already in existence, and he doesn't see the need for a study.

Motion to approve Task Order 2025-10: Regional Pond Dredging Support. Motion denied 2-2.

Monitoring Program Review & 2025 Forecast

Administrator Tomczik introduced the item as part of RCWD's annual budget work.

Matt Kocian introduced the presentation and the water monitoring team, Ali Chalberg and Catherine Nester, who were all in attendance.

Catherine Nester began the presentation with a tools and equipment update. These tools are used to collect flow measurements and water level data. Catherine explained the use of a FlowTracker acoustic doppler velocimeter to measure stream flows. Catherine also provided an update on the District's new water quality database software, the WISKI database.

Ali Chalberg began the Golden Lake project presentation. She gave an overview of a thermistor chain deployed to monitor water temperatures throughout the lake's depth.

Matt Kocian talked about one of the primary purposes of the District's monitoring program: Diagnosis. Monitoring data – such as those collected by the aforementioned thermistor chain – help the District properly diagnose water quality problems and select the correct management tool for mitigation.

Matt Kocian then gave an overview of the RCWD fund 90-04 budget for 2025-2026. The budget has been approximately \$200,000 since 2008, but saw a 14% increase in 2024 to the amount of \$240,000. The largest costs include: Laboratory Analysis of Water Samples, Equipment, and Contracted & Engineering Services. Matt explained that it has been increasingly difficult to forecast this budget, partly due to volatile pricing, and that some budgets can swing wildly based on periodic equipment costs and repairs.

Matt Kocian proposed a flat 2026 budget for funds 90-09 (Monitoring) and 90-26 (Carp Management), and a reduced 2026 budget by 20% for fund 90-27 (Curlyleaf Pondweed Management).

Anoka County Ditch 53-62 Branch 5 & 6 Water Management Charge Memo

District Engineer Otterness presented the proposed water management district charges for the 53/62 repair project, explaining the 60/40 split between the local property owners and District, respectively, and the three-year payment structure for properties with charges over \$300. The charges are based on updated land use data, including recent residential development north of Main Street, and exclude certain statutory exemptions like common areas and park land.

Manager Robertson stated that the City of Blaine has updated zoning maps which should be considered.

The board discussed the timing of charge approval, with Tom clarifying that it should be done after project selection but before September 30th for 2026 billing.

Administrator Updates

Administrator Tomczik noted the email he sent; Minnesota Watersheds at 2025 resolutions and the new schedule seeks comments from individual managers, and requested that Managers let him know of any.

Manager Robertson asked if we are pulling the ACD 10-22-32 item out of the June 11 Board meeting as well, and Manager Bradley confirmed yes.

Administrator Tomczik gave an update that they are continuing to explore the facility decommissioning process and has engaged Attorney Kolb to hopefully have some dialog with the previous attorney, as there was a lot of past research that was done.

The workshop was adjourned at 11:13 a.m.