



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Administrative Services Committee Meeting
Wednesday November 15, 2017
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Golden Valley City Hall, Managers Conference Room

Attending: Committee Chair Mueller, Commission Chair Jim de Lambert, Commission Secretary Scanlan, Commission Treasurer Harwell*, Commissioner Prom, Alt. Commissioner Crough, Commissioner Carlson*, Administrator Jester *denotes partial attendance

On Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at 8:57 a.m., Committee Chair Mueller called to order a meeting of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission’s Administrative Services Committee.

I. Evaluation Procedure for Staff

Committee Chair Mueller noted that in the last few years Commission staff have been evaluated through surveys that offered numeric scores. He noted he was hoping the Commission could strategize more broadly with a more meaningful approach to staff evaluations. He distributed a draft evaluation form with questions meant for staff responses regarding their own performance, their view of their most important job functions, their views on the direction of the Commission, etc. Committee members liked the new approach and noted that self-evaluations are common in the “human resources world,” and that it would be good to understand what’s working well and where improvements are needed. Committee members noted it would be important to also get feedback from Commissioners and TAC members specific to the Administrator’s and Engineer Chandler’s performance. Administrator Jester also noted her appreciation for the new approach.

Committee Chair Mueller agreed to develop a separate, shorter evaluation form for TAC members and Commissioners. The group agreed evaluations should be returned and responses compiled in time for presentation at the December Commission meeting.

II. Update on Records Retention and Management

Administrator Jester gave an update on her latest work to digitize paper records and organize and secure electronic records. She noted that:

- iDrive backup software is being used to regularly back up and securely store the Commission’s electronic files that are in the care of the Administrator.
- The Administrator is working with other Commission consultants (engineering, legal, finance) to ensure that official documents in their care are secure and regularly backed up, or regularly transferred to the Administrator for storage.

- The Administrator is working with Plymouth staff and their volunteers to scan historic Commission documents so they can be stored electronically and paper copies can be destroyed. (This practice is allowed under the records retention schedule.)

Administrator Jester also reported that the City of Plymouth has requested that all physical files of the Commission be removed from their basement by the end of the year. She noted that the City of Plymouth offered to facilitate contracting with an offsite storage company in Plymouth (Advanced Records Management) for \$15/month.

Committee members requested that the electronic files “in the Administrator’s care” (which constitutes the vast majority of the files) be accessible to multiple people including the Commission’s Legal Counsel and possibly the chair or vice chair. Committee members also noted that there should be written documentation regarding the electronic file system. Administrator Jester indicated she would work toward that goal.

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Committee recommends that the Commission contract with Advanced Records Management for the storage of the Commission’s paper files.

Update: Since the committee meeting, the City of Crystal offered to house the Commission’s paper files and three file cabinets at their Public Works Facility. Administrator Jester recommends moving files to Crystal rather than using Advanced Records Management because there is no expense to the Commission and the records would be easily accessible. (Access to documents at the private offsite facility would cost \$5.00/visit in addition to the \$15/month fee and would likely be less convenient to access and manage.)

III. Commission Role and Ability to Lobby

Administrator Jester reminded the committee that at the October Commission meeting there was a brief discussion about the Commission’s ability to lobby elected officials and/or be a member of an organization that lobbies. The committee reviewed Attorney Gilchrist’s analysis on the question:

- The initial question is whether the commission has the authority to spend money to become a member of any outside organizations. This is an issue cities have dealt with over the years and there are opinions out there indicating that cities can only spend money to be members of organizations if there is statutory authority for such membership. That is why you see statutes such as Minn. Stat. § 465.58 expressly authorizing cities to be members of the League of Cities.
- There is no express statutory authority for WMOs to be members of outside organizations (like the statute cited above for cities to join the League). However, you must also look at the Commission’s Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to determine the scope of the commission’s authority.
- Chapter VI of the JPA which deals with the powers and duties of the board contains the following provision among the list of the board’s powers:

- Subdivision 18. It may make contracts, incur expenses and make expenditures necessary and incidental to the effectuation of these purposes and powers and may disburse therefor in the manner hereinafter provided.
- My position is that this authority includes the authority for the Board to vote to become a member of specific outside organizations, provided it determines that such membership will assist it in effectuating the commission's purposes. This may mean access to information important to its work, reduced rates on training sessions, the benefit of the lobbying efforts of the organization, etc.

The committee discussed the pros and cons of the Commission's involvement in lobbying legislators on topics specific to its mission and work and noted that direct lobbying and paying dues to organizations that lobby are two different actions. It was also recognized that providing information, data, and testimony to legislators is different from lobbying for or against specific legislation. Some committee members felt strongly that the Commission should stay away from the political arena while others noted there are instances where contacting legislators would be completely in line with the Commission's mission.

[Commissioner Harwell departs.]

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Committee recommends that since the Joint Powers Agreement allows for expenditures necessary to implement its purposes and powers, that the Commission discuss and seek legal advice on any lobbying or related membership requests that come before the Commission on a case by case basis.

IV. Monthly Administrator's Report

Administrator Jester requested feedback on her monthly report asking if the report is useful in its current form, if there's anything missing from the report or too detailed in the report. Committee members agreed the report is appropriate as presented and did not recommend changes.

[Commissioner Carlson arrives.]

V. Ideas for Celebrating/Recognizing Commission's 50th Anniversary in 2019

Administrator Jester reported that since the Commission turns 50 years old in 2019, the committee could consider and offer ideas for celebrating the anniversary. She noted that it may be valuable to capitalize on the landmark year by disseminating information about the Commission, its history, successes, and on-going work, as well as the challenges still facing surface waters. She reviewed some of her ideas including extra tours, events, creek clean ups, presentations, reports, videos, etc. Administrator Jester noted that most activities will have budget implications for 2019 and that planning should get underway before the 2019 budget is set. The committee agreed that some level of celebration was warranted and offered additional suggestions including getting groups like scouts and community organization involved and possibly seeking partnerships and funding from large corporations housed in the watershed.

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Committee recommends that the Commission's Education Committee develop plans and budget recommendations for anniversary events.

VI. Process for Discussions and Recommendations on Future of Storm Water Management Projects

Administrator Jester noted that the committee may wish to discuss the process by which the Commission review its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and general implementation of the storm water management projects. For instance, she reported that the TAC is interested in addressing how CIP projects are chosen and scheduled and that some commissioners have expressed interest in developing a grant program for the implementation of BMPs. Further, she noted that she would like the Commission to consider a strategy for engaging private businesses to incorporate "above and beyond" storm water management during redevelopment.

Committee members agreed that better prioritization of the Commission's capital projects is needed in order to better evaluate what CIP projects should be implemented and when. It was recognized that most CIP projects are scheduled according to opportunity and in order to avoid large swings in the levy amount from year to year. Committee Chair Mueller noted that the original source of pollution should be abated whenever possible. Administrator Jester noted that subwatershed analyses and water quality impairments should be used to target projects where the need is greatest.

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Committee recommends that the Technical Advisory Committee draft a process to evaluate and prioritize projects as a first step in refining the implementation of the Commission's Capital Improvement Program.

VII. Adjourn

The committee meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.