



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 15, 2021
8:30 a.m.**

Via video conference due to the COVID-19 global pandemic

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 8:32 a.m. via video conference. Chair Cesnik brought the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) to order.

Commissioners and city staff present: 23

City	Commissioner	Alternate Commissioner	Technical Advisory Committee Members (City Staff)
Crystal	Dave Anderson	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Mark Ray
Golden Valley	<i>Absent</i>	Jane McDonald Black	Jeff Oliver RJ Kakach
Medicine Lake	Clint Carlson	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Minneapolis	Michael Welch	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Liz Stout, Katie Kowalczyk
Minnetonka	Mike Fruen	<i>Vacant Position</i>	<i>Absent</i>
New Hope	<i>Absent</i>	Patrick Crough	Megan Hedstrom
Plymouth	Catherine Cesnik	<i>Absent</i>	Ben Scharenbroich
Robbinsdale	Wayne Sicora	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Marta Roser, Richard McCoy
St. Louis Park	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters		
Engineer	Jim Herbert and Karen Chandler, Barr Engineering		
Recorder	Dawn Pape, Lawn Chair Gardener		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Presenters/ Guests/Public	Chris Gise, Ryan Atwell, Anna Peterson, McKenzie Erickson		

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No members of the public were present for the public forum.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Items 4D (Acceptance of FY 2020 Financial Audit) and 4H (Approval of Barr Engineering Service Agreement) were removed from the consent agenda and added to the meeting agenda. The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

Approval of Minutes –March 18, 2021 Commission Meeting; Acceptance of April Financial Report; Approval of Payment of Invoices; Approval of Hennepin County AIS Prevention Grant Agreement; Approval of Agreement with Met Council for (CAMP) Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program; Approval of Hennepin County Opportunity Grant Agreement

The general and construction account balances reported in the April 2021 Financial Report are as follows:

Current Assets	CIP Projects	General Fund	TOTAL
Checking	\$395,929.81	\$210,657.65	\$606,587.46
4MP Fund Investment	\$3,501,239.06	\$0	\$3,501,239.06
4M Fund Investment	\$1,483,511.82	\$0	\$1,483,511.82
Total Checking/Savings 3/31/2021	\$5,380,680.69	\$210,657.65	\$5,591,338.34

MOTION: Commissioner Welch moved to approve the revised consent agenda excluding items 4D and 4H. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote.

4H. Barr Engineering Service Agreement

Commissioner Carlson commented that he likes working with Barr Engineering but is concerned about the budget and hoped to see a comparison of rates over the years. Commission Engineer Herbert explained the changes made in the service agreement from the previous version included language regarding conflict of interest, coordination of budgeting with Commission, fee rate sheet for Engineers Chandler and himself. The new agreement has a 2-year term. Commissioner Carlson asked about the percent increase in fees. Engineer Herbert explained that this varies by individual. An individual’s rate increase depends on staff performance and remaining competitive with other firms. An overall increase was not calculated.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the Barr Engineering Service Agreement. Alternate Commissioner Crough seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote and the city of Minneapolis abstaining.

4D. FY 2020 Financial Audit

Administrator Jester indicated that there were no findings in the audit. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black added that the nonprofit audit board meets with the auditor separately without staff present and that the Commission could consider having an audit review committee. This layer of independence might be considered for review of this year’s audit in early 2022.

MOTION: Commissioner Welch moved to accept FY2020 financial audit and directed the administrator to file it with the state. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote.

5. BUSINESS

A. Consider Approval of BCWMC Education Committee Recommendations

Chair Cesnik reviewed the Education Committee's recommended 2021 work plan and education budget. She introduced members of the Bassett's Creek Park Volunteer Stewardship Group: Anna Peterson and Ryan Atwell, group coordinators, and Alex Roth, ecologist with Friends of the Mississippi River. They joined the meeting to describe their vegetation restoration project and answer questions. They explained the relationship between buckthorn, erosion, and water quality. They also explained that they "inherited" the group's coordination from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). In short, they are seeking funding to create a long-term restoration plan and lead a volunteer effort to help manage and restore areas of Bassett's Creek Park that spans the Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods. They noted they already received some funding from the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association and will be seeking a grant from Hennepin County.

Chair Cesnik added that developing ambassadors and using the activities to also incorporate education should be components of the project.

Commissioner Welch expressed his concern with lack of support from the MPRB. Alex Roth said he has a positive relationship with the MPRB. He reviewed former work with MPRB and stated that the MPRB supports volunteers if they are guided by a restoration plan with long-term maintenance.

MOTION: Commissioner Welch moved to approve the BCWMC Education Committee recommendations with the condition of securing written commitment from the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board to implement the woodland restoration work for the Bassett's Creek Park Project in the Bryn Mawr/Harrison Neighborhoods. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote.

Further discussion continued about education consultant's Dawn Pape's "Water Heroes" program geared for children ages 6-11. She mentioned that it is fun, unique, and that the BCWMC may want to consider hosting their own week-long summer camps to educate more children—and their adults.

Commissioner Welch commented that he is interested in the Water Heroes program and suggested that it could be done in the Harrison neighborhood where the Commission have done a fair amount of work already. Ms. Pape expressed enthusiasm for being connected with the Harrison neighborhood. She suggested instead of using the \$1,000 to explore what other partners are doing as far as water education, use that money to hold a camp in the Harrison neighborhood. Resident McKenzie Erickson spoke up and offered to make introductions in Harrison and Bryn Mawr Neighborhoods.

B. Receive Update on Twin Lake Riparian Condition and Discussions

During the public open forum at the March meeting, the Commission heard concerns from Golden Valley residents about Twin Lake water quality, the condition of the riparian area and the unlawful expanded beach area. Administrator Jester was directed to learn more about the issue and discuss it with Golden Valley staff and other stakeholders. Since then, she participated in considerable correspondence among Golden Valley staff, MPRB staff, and residents. She toured the site this week and participated in a meeting among city and MPRB staff.

Administrator Jester shared photos of erosion and reported that a couple of issues had been resolved already. For example, there was concern that the white powder residue left on ski trails was ski wax and could contain PFAS. It was found to be minerals left over from snowmaking along the trails. Since the water for making snow comes from a deep well, there are a lot of minerals.

The second resolved issue was the question about whether MPRB completed work for the \$600,000 Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant they received in 2014. The project was indeed completed, but the project location changed to another part of Wirth Park.

As noted in March, Administrator Jester reported the problems stem from a lot more people using the area now. Beyond erosion concerns, this area is also a public safety concern. MPRB will add Community Connections and Violence Prevention staff rotations to this area to keep an eye on illegal activities including vegetation removal.

In addition, the City of Golden Valley reported that beavers are removing a significant number of trees along the shore and that the area hasn't been stabilized for a long time. It was noted that no entity (city, Park Board, BCWMC) has funding for the large-scale project that would be needed to stabilize the eroding slope. Golden Valley TAC member Jeff Oliver commented that if this were an easy issue, it would've been taken care of already. But there are lots of "moving parts" and weekly conversations are ongoing. Golden Valley wants to see the environmental issues addressed, but underlying issues need to be addressed first, and protocols for emergency response need to be established.

Commissioner Welch noted his surprise at the amount of erosion/bare soil in the photos and indicated this issue should be a high priority for BCWMC to address. He noted that we should seek opportunities for partnering and collaborating on grant applications.

Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black added that she frequently visits the park. She noted the stairs are dangerous because they are old and falling apart and she has seen used syringes. She noted it's a difficult situation for Golden Valley because they aren't the property owner and have no representation on the MPRB.

Administrator Jester noted there will be a future meeting with leaders of the Sweeney Lake Association, among other groups. MPRB is coordinating that meeting. She noted she would make sure Chair Cesnik and Golden Valley commissioners are invited.

[5 minutes break] 10:05

C. Discuss Possibility of Creating BCWMC Internship for Dougherty Family College Student

At the March Commission meeting and at the Education Committee meeting, the idea of creating a paid internship for a student of the Dougherty Family College (part of St. Thomas University) was briefly discussed. The Education Budget has up to \$3,770 available for such a position if internship activities centered on education.

Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black thanked the Commission for their support of the equity issue. She noted that inequity is a created system and that many underserved populations don't even know about opportunities they may be missing. The fact that unemployment for Blacks is twice the rate of Whites shows racial disparities. And Minnesota has the largest education gap between races of any state.

The students at Dougherty Family College are Pell Grant (federal subsidy) recipients and these students have gone to the worst schools. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black described the college as a special place where students are educated about what kinds of possibilities might exist for them. The college is a 2-year program and many students go on to 4-year programs. She noted that internships are an important way for the students to gain new experiences. These students are working full-time jobs to pay rent. They are looking to work about 200 hours in a semester and make \$15-20/hour. Their mentors will need to be flexible in accommodating their schedules and the demands already on them.

Commissioner Anderson asked what the intern would do, who would supervise the intern, and whether other watersheds have done something similar. He also pointed out collateral costs besides the \$3,700 in wages, such as the time it takes for someone to oversee the intern. He also asked about the application process for finding the right intern, and wondered about the benefits an intern would provide the Commission. Administrator Jester noted that the Commission could learn a lot from the intern.

Dawn Pape stated she would be happy to be a mentor an intern who is interested in education. She prides herself on being a teacher, so she wouldn't require any special skills of an intern, but a good attitude would be helpful. As far as the work to be done by an intern, she suggested Water Heroes programming in the Harrison Neighborhood.

Commissioner Anderson asked why this was limited to Dougherty Family College. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black responded that it isn't limited, but that is where she has connections. Chair Cesnik added that we should work to answer Commissioner Anderson's questions as we move through the process and not after the fact.

Commissioner Welch supports moving forward and appreciates Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black's connection. He added that the intern would definitely need support and the Commission will incur additional costs. He noted that his wife budgets 1/3 of her time to mentoring one student. He added that equity is a larger topic to address in our next watershed management plan and that BCWMC should look at the work Capitol Region WD has done in incorporating equity issues into its plan.

Chair Cesnik added that this is new territory for the Commission, that we need good justification and to make sure the program aligns with our plan and goals. Commissioner Carlson noted that he likes the idea and that it would result in a contribution to the BCWMC in addition to benefitting the student.

MOTION: Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black moved that the Commission further explore the development of an internship position through the Dougherty Family College in conjunction with the Education Committee. Commissioner Welch seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of St. Louis Park absent from the vote.

D. Review Updated CIP List and Project Costs

Administrator Jester reported that at the March meeting, the Commission approved the 5-year CIP as recommended by the TAC and requested the CIP table be updated to include city and grant contributions for a more complete picture of total project costs. Administrator Jester reviewed the new table which incorporates those revisions. She noted the 30-day comment period for the proposed minor plan amendment to add five projects to the CIP ends on May 7th and that the Commission will hold a public hearing on May 20th, and will set a 2022 maximum levy at their June meeting.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Administrator's Report

- i. Reminder to complete PRAP Survey – April 22nd deadline
- ii. Noted that May and June meetings will be long

B. Chair - no comments

C. Commissioners

Commissioner Carlson thanked Ben Scharenbroich, city of Plymouth, for coordinating the joint agreement facilitating street sweeping in the city of Medicine Lake

Commissioner Welch urged commissioners to attend the upcoming Metro MAWD meeting

D. TAC Members

Ben Scharenbroich showed photos of debris collected by different street sweepers, noting how effective the mechanical broom (leaves, grass clippings) v. regenerative air (finer material). He is working on a report to detail how much debris and pollution is being diverted from entering our waters.

E. Committees

- i. Budget Committee will present draft 2022 operating budget in May

F. Education Consultant

No video this month because waiting for education plan to be approved

G. Legal Counsel

Nothing to report

H. Engineer

- i. Thanked commission for approving service agreement
- ii. Update on 2021 Monitoring Activities
 - Ice-out monitoring is done on Crane, Westwood, and Parkers Lakes

- Storm event monitoring on Sweeney Branch
- WOMP station flows at temporary station

7. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

- A. BCWMC Administrative Calendar
- B. CIP Project Updates <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects>
- C. Grant Tracking Summary and Spreadsheet

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Signature/Title Date

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