

YELLOW MEDICINE **ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN**
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2016
BWSR Conference Room – 1400 East Lyon Street -- Marshall MN

Members Present:

Ron Antony, Tim Buysse, Joe Drietz, Tim Dritz, Gary Johnson, Jeff Johnson, Luke Johnson, Roy Marihart, Rodney Stensrud and Hollis Weber.

Planning Work Group Members Present:

Jason Beckler, John Biren, Mark Hiles, Jolene Johnson, LouAnn Nagel, Kerry Netzke, Pauline VanOverbeke, and Terry Wittnebel.

Chairman Stensrud called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A quorum was present and introductions were made.

Agenda

Motion made by Antony, seconded by Drietz, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

Motion made by Luke Johnson, seconded by Roy Marihart, to approve the February 10, 2016 Policy Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Netzke presented the Treasurer's Report for the months of February, March and April 2016. Expenses for the period were \$19,558.35. Remaining grant funds on hand are \$5,328.52. With the 10% retainage, \$24,489.52 remains in the grant. Bills for payment approval totaling \$68.42 include: Area II (*February*) \$29.05; Area II (*March*) \$23.20, and Area II (*April*) \$16.17. Motion made by Drietz, seconded by Marihart, to approve the bills for payment. Motion carried unanimously. Motion made by Jeff Johnson, seconded by Drietz, to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried unanimously.

YMRWD Operations Update

The District Administrator position was offered to Emily Javens who began her new position with YMRWD on February 29. Netzke added that her contributions to the Planning Work Group have been an asset. Her knowledge of the 1W1P development, in addition to her watershed district perspective, have made good conversations and created realistic action items for implementation. Buysse added that the transition has been smooth and the managers are certainly more organized than ever before.

Progress since February 10th

Since the last meeting, the Change Order with RESPEC has been executed not to exceed \$20,900. The Memorandum of Agreement between the ten partners has been extended to December 31, 2016. The grant agreement has also been extended until June 30, 2017. The Planning Work Group has met five times (February 24, March 17, April 6, April 19, May 4) and the Advisory Committee met on May 4, 2016. The draft Plan has undergone two 30-day informal reviews plus the ongoing development of the Implementation Plan. RESPEC's technical editors have reviewed the draft Plan and are awaiting final edits stemming from today's meeting to prepare the document for public review.

Review, Discuss and Approve DRAFT Plan

A handout was prepared by Emily Javens that nicely summarizes the Plan contents chapter by chapter. (*Javens was unable to attend today due to a family emergency.*) This handout is intended to be used by the MOA partners to review and discuss the draft Plan. Committee members were also provided a copy of the Executive Summary and the entire Implementation Plan. In the Implementation Plan, anything shaded or highlighted in grey reflects changes since the May 4 meetings. Netzke recapped these documents with the Committee.

Netzke noted that lakes had not been specifically addressed in the Implementation Plan which was heavily discussed by the Planning Work Group on May 4. A sentence has been added underneath the Objective statements giving first priority to practices within lakesheds for lakes identified as a priority. Some PWG members feel that the sentence is not enough and individual action items are necessary. Consensus was to review the Implementation Plan and determine the need for action items at that point.

Weber noted that streambank sloughing of ditches is not included in the Plan as a concern. Netzke responded that log jams and subsequent streambank sloughing of the watercourses were identified as a missing item in the Implementation Plan by an Advisory Committee member. As a result, two action items were added to the Operation and Maintenance section (page 14) addressing debris removal from the watercourses (which includes ditches) causing erosion, and the removal of beaver dams. Weber added that he has seen ditches burned to the water level this year which is a concern for the plastic tile that may be outletting into the ditch systems.

Dritz asked about the landowners' anticipated costs which are not specified in the Implementation Plan. The narrative before the action item table notes that the landowner's cost is generally figured at 25% of the practice cost and is not included in the tables. The landowner's contributions to incentive-based actions (reduced tillage practices and cover crops) are variable depending upon the practice and are included in the table. Dritz feels that landowners/farmers may be alarmed with the cost-share/funding source column and assume that amount is expected from them alone. Explanation followed that this amount is a combination of all the funding sources listed. These action items are all voluntary with no mandate for landowners/farmers to undertake them. The estimated number of acres targeted, and/or number of BMPs needed, are based on HSPF/SAM modeling results coupled with the technical knowledge of the SWCD/NRCS staff in the partner counties who base future participation on the past/current participation in these programs.

Commissioners asked about additional county resources needed as the costs in the Implementation Plan list Counties as a funding source. Will additional funding be needed by SWCDs or for additional staff? The costs listed consist of existing county/SWCD staff time to do the activities listed for the 10-year period. Any additional staff would be acquired through grants.

Discussion involved the action item: *"Review 100% of new ditch, lateral, and improvement project, during early coordination, for opportunities for large-scale multi-purpose drainage projects that mitigate the impacts of altered hydrology."* Some members felt this was an additional layer of review or oversight that would add additional cost to the petitioners. Biren explained that this is not the intent – this item allows drainage authorities to work with the petitioners prior to the petition being filed, to examine the proposal for alternative designs that may incorporate off-channel storage, wetland restoration, and other environmental benefits which may also reduce the cost of the overall proposal.

Clarification was provided for the action item: *“Work with landowners to buffer 250 acres along watercourses through voluntary participation in easement programs and other measures when funds become available such as CREP, CRP, RIM, etc.”* This action item targets watercourses that are not mandated to be buffered such as private ditches.

The last item of discussion was under the Operation and Maintenance section addressing inspection and maintenance of drainage systems annually. Some drainage authorities do this annually, however not all. Consensus was to change the language to “a minimum of once every 3 years”. If an authority conducts this action more often, that exceeds the expectation which is good.

Returning to the lakes issue, it was the consensus of the Committee for the Planning Work Group to draft some additional action items specifically for the protection of Lake Shaokatan, and the restoration of identified water quality impaired lakes. It is easier to include the items now than to incorporate the items by amendment in a few years. Amendments to the Implementation Plan will require noticing and a public hearing in similar fashion as existing water plans. The Planning Work Group will draft these items following the meeting today.

Motion made by Buysse, seconded by Drietz, to approve the draft Plan document, including the Implementation Plan as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Authorize 60-Day Public Comment Period and Public Notice

There is no requirement to provide notice of the 60-day comment period, however it is recommended. The 60-day comment period for Plan Review Authorities (State agencies, counties, cities/towns, SWCDs) will be May 16, 2016 through July 15, 2016. Written or electronic comments are to be provided to both Netzke and Beckler. Netzke provided a draft Public Notice that could be published in the Ivanhoe Times, Marshall Independent and Canby News, consistent with the publishing for the kick-off meetings. Motion made by Antony, seconded by Drietz, to authorize the 60-day comment period of May 16 through July 15, and to publish the Public Notice as presented once in the newspapers listed. Motion carried unanimously.

Set Date and Location of Public Hearing

As part of the submittal letter to the Plan Review Authorities, the Public Hearing date, time and location is recommended to be included. The hearing cannot be held any sooner than 14 days following the end of the comment period, or August 1st in this situation. Netzke recommends the Southwest Sportsmens Club in Minneota at an evening time to allow working people to attend. Netzke inquired about the location and it is available any weekday evening in August except for August 8th or 27th. Motion made by Luke Johnson, seconded by Drietz, to set the Public Hearing for the draft Plan for 7:00 pm on Monday, August 1, 2016 at the Southwest Sportsmens Club in Minneota. Motion carried unanimously. Comments provided on the draft Plan will be presented at this meeting. Consensus of the Committee was to provide beverages only.

Next Meeting

The Policy Committee will need to meet following the end of the 60-day comment period, yet prior to the Public Hearing, to review the comments received and determine necessity to amend the draft Plan. Motion made by Luke Johnson, seconded by Jeff Johnson, to set the next Policy Committee meeting for Wednesday, July 27, 2016 at 9:00 am at the BWSR Conference Room – Marshall, MN. Motion carried unanimously.

With no other business to address, motion made by Gary Johnson, seconded by Drietz, to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 am. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Netzke, Area II Executive Director

UNAPPROVED