



<b>Title:</b>	Authorization to Apply for Watershed-based Implementation Funding	
<b>Resolution number:</b>	20-064	
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Name: Becky Christopher Phone: 952-641-4512 bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org	
<b>Recommended action:</b>	Authorize staff to apply for grant funding through the Board of Water and Soil Resources Watershed-based Implementation Funding Program	
<b>Schedule:</b>	January 2021 – Budget requests recommended to be completed March 30, 2021 – Deadline for submitting Work Plan December 31, 2023 – Grant agreement expiration	
<b>Budget considerations:</b>	N/A	
<b>Past Board action:</b>	Res # 18-010	Title: Authorization to Submit Letter to BWSR Regarding Watershed-based Funding Pilot Program
	Res # 18-064	Title: Authorization to Apply for Grant Funding Through the Watershed-Based Funding Pilot Program
	Res # 18-100	Title: Authorization to Execute Grant Agreement with the Board of Water and Soil Resources

### **Summary:**

#### Background

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is moving towards providing more systematic Clean Water Funding for local water management authorities on a watershed basis. The watershed-based funding model is intended to provide local governments throughout the state with efficient, transparent, and stable funding. To achieve this, BWSR is transitioning from project by project competitive grants to a coordinated watershed funding approach. This approach will rely on comprehensive watershed management plans developed under the One Watershed, One Plan Program or the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act to provide assurance that actions are prioritized, targeted, and measurable. The concept of watershed-based funding grew out of the Local Government Water Round Table 2016 Fund Policy Paper.

BWSR ran a pilot Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program for the Twin Cities metropolitan area for the 2018-2019 biennium through which local government units (LGUs) coordinated at a county scale to develop a collaborative work plan for the funds. Through the pilot, the District received \$343,030 which was applied toward the 325 Blake Road, Arden Park, and Wassermann West projects.

Following the pilot program, BWSR conducted a stakeholder engagement process to gather input about the future direction of the WBIF Program for the metro area. As part of this process, staff participated in a multi-stakeholder forum group (winter 2018-19) that was charged with developing recommendations. Throughout the pilot program and the subsequent evaluation process, the District has been an active and vocal participant advocating for an approach that is prioritized, targeted, and measurable.

In September 2019, the BWSR Board approved the WBIF allocation amounts and program policy for the 2020-2021 biennium. For this biennium, funds are being allocated based on hydrologic (8-digit HUC) rather than county boundaries. The District is part of the West Mississippi Metro Partnership (Partnership), which has been allocated \$874,153 through a formula based 90 percent on private land area and 10 percent on the amount of public waters.

The District must work with other eligible LGUs within the West Mississippi Metro area, including the counties, soil and water conservation districts, neighboring watershed districts/water management organizations, and two city representatives to develop a collaborative work plan that is prioritized, targeted, and measurable. There have been two meetings to date (May 7, 2020 and June 25, 2020) at which the Partnership has agreed on a method for decision making and established a preliminary set of criteria for ranking and prioritizing projects. At the third meeting, on August 24, 2020, the Partnership will begin to review potential projects and discuss allocation approaches.

#### Recommendation

Staff has evaluated the District's capital improvement plan, as well as responsive project opportunities that are being developed with partners, to determine the best candidate(s) for this round of funding based on the grant timeline and the criteria that have been established by the Partnership.

Staff is recommending that the District submit the Wolsfeld Woods Ravine Stabilization, which is a project in Medina that has been prioritized as part of the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed Assessment. As discussed at the May 28, 2020 Board Meeting, staff has recently completed the process of identifying and prioritizing project opportunities for the subwatershed and is in the process of coordinating with the partners to develop the implementation roadmap. Staff will provide an update on this effort at the August 27, 2020 PPC Meeting.

The Wolsfeld Woods Ravine Stabilization project is estimated to achieve a load reduction of 34.5-57.5 lbs/year, which would benefit the impaired Wolsfeld Lake as well as downstream Long Lake and Tanager Lake. The project cost is estimated at \$290,196, of which 80 percent would be grant eligible. The ravine is located on DNR property within the Wolsfeld Woods Scientific and Natural Area. The City of Medina staff has expressed interest in working with the District to move quickly on the project to pursue this grant opportunity. One of the next steps will be to develop a cooperative agreement with the City outlining roles and expectations for advancing the project.

The West Mississippi Metro Partnership must develop and submit a collaborative work plan to BWSR by January 2021. Each LGU will then be required to complete individual project grant agreements. Expenditures under the grant can begin once the grant agreement is executed, and the grant period extends through December 31, 2023.

**Supporting documents:** N/A



**RESOLUTION**

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**Resolution number:** 20-064

**Title:** Authorization to Apply for Watershed-based Implementation Funding

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is transitioning its Clean Water Funding model from project by project competitive grants to a coordinated watershed funding approach which relies on comprehensive watershed management plans developed under the One Watershed, One Plan Program or the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act to provide assurance that actions are prioritized, targeted, and measurable; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2019, BWSR approved the Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) watershed allocations and program policy for the 2020-2021 biennium; and

WHEREAS, funds have been allocated based on hydrologic (8-digit HUC) boundaries, and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (District) is part of the West Mississippi Metro Partnership (Partnership) to which BWSR has allocated \$874,153 through a formula based 90 percent on private land area and 10 percent on the amount of public waters; and

WHEREAS, the District must work with other eligible local government units (LGUs) within the West Mississippi Metro area, including the counties, soil and water conservation districts, neighboring watershed districts/water management organizations, and cities, to develop a collaborative budget request that is prioritized, targeted, and measurable; and

WHEREAS, Staff has evaluated the District’s capital improvement plan, as well as responsive project opportunities that are being developed with local partners, to determine the best candidate(s) for this round of funding based on the grant timeline and the criteria that have been established by the Partnership; and

WHEREAS, Staff is recommending that the District submit the Wolsfeld Woods Ravine Stabilization, which is a project in Medina that has been prioritized as part of the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed Assessment, for funding consideration by the Partnership; and

WHEREAS, Staff will work with the City of Medina to develop a cooperative agreement that outlines the roles and expectations for advancing the project and managing the grant; and

WHEREAS, the District Board has requested that they be notified of grant opportunities and authorize staff to apply for grants;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorize staff to apply for grant funding for the Wolsfeld Woods Ravine Stabilization project through the BWSR Watershed-based Implementation Funding Program.

Resolution Number 20-064 was moved by Manager \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_. Motion to adopt the resolution \_\_\_ ayes, \_\_\_ nays, \_\_\_ abstentions. Date: 8/27/2020

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 Secretary Date: \_\_\_\_\_