

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

March 5, 2015

1. Committee Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call

The Committee meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM at the District offices by Manager William Olson

Committee Members Present:

Jeffrey Casale and William Olson.

Other Managers Present:

Sherry White and James Calkins

Staff Present:

Lars Erdahl, District Administrator; Craig Dawson, Director of Research and Monitoring; Eric Fieldseth, AIS Program Manager; Jillian Bjorklund, AIS District Representative, Brett Eidem, District Cost Share Grant Administrator.

2. Matters from the Floor: None

3. Approval of Agenda: Approved

4. Information Items/Correspondence: None

5. Discussion Items

5.1 Lake Nokomis Neighbors for Clean Water Cost Share Project- Eidem

Eidem explained that through the new evaluation criteria, the Nokomis Neighbors for Clean Water Project received 95 of 100 possible points and should receive 75% funding, not to exceed \$100,000. Manager Olson questioned the deadline for completing the project. Eidem responded that there is a 4 year timeline for completion. Manager White asks if the City of Minneapolis is contributing to the funding. Eidem responded that, no, additional funding is coming primarily from a BWSR grant and Hennepin County.

Committee recommended the item be placed on the Board's Consent Agenda. A public hearing will be held on March 26th.

5.2 MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Delegation Agreement- Fieldseth

Fieldseth explained that this is a renewal for 2015-2016 as the previous agreement has expired. Having a delegation agreement allows us to hire DNR trained watercraft inspectors if we so choose. There is no cost obligation in the agreement.

Committee recommended the item be placed on the Board's Consent Agenda.

5.3 2014 Watercraft Inspection Cost-Share Grants- Fieldseth

MCWD has established a 50% reimbursement rate for watercraft inspections and has budgeted \$215,000. Expected level of funding in 2015 will be around \$200,000. Manager Casale stated concern with improving watercraft inspections at Christmas Lake and suggested a penalty clause be written into contract to insure quality service/supervision of inspections.

Committee recommended that the item return to workshop or Board meeting as a discussion item.

5.4 Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Freshwater Scientific Services to Complete Aquatic Plants Surveys on MCWD Waterbodies- Fieldseth

Fieldseth stated that Freshwater Scientific would complete summer plant surveys on the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes (Calhoun, Harriet, Isles, Cedar, and Brownie) for two goals: to assess plant communities/current AIS populations and as a tool for early detection. Historically, plant surveys have only been done sporadically on the Chain and this would allow for a better overall assessment. Manager White questioned why Nokomis was not included. Fieldseth responded that yearly plant surveys are already being completed on Nokomis.

Committee recommended that the item be placed on the Board's Consent Agenda.

5.5 Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Blue Water Science to Complete Aquatic Plant Surveys and Flowering Rush Assessment on MCWD Waterbodies- Fieldseth

Fieldseth stated that plant surveys would be completed on Crystal, Black, Seton, and Emerald as well as a flowering rush assessment on Minnehaha Creek. Manager Calkins questioned why both Freshwater Scientific and Blue Water Science need to be used. Fieldseth responded that the work load needs to be spread out but that both firms follow standard protocols.

Committee recommended that the item be placed on the Board's Consent Agenda.

5.6 Discussion of AIS Grant Opportunities- Fieldseth

Hennepin County AIS Prevention Grants:

1. Clean Access Pilot- By reducing the amount of vegetation that gets attached to exiting boats and trailers, we could greatly reduce the spread of zebra mussels from Lake Minnetonka.
2. Occurrence and Distribution of Eurasian, Northern, and Hybrid Watermilfoil in Lake Minnetonka and Christmas Lake- Proposed partnership with Ray Newman and Ryan Thum to study milfoil genetics in relation to herbicidal and biological control. Will be used to inform management strategies.

Hennepin County staff recommendation was to fund #2, but not #1.

Initiative Foundation – Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Grant Funds:

-MCWD proposes an alternative way to implement watercraft inspections: A letter of inquiry has been submitted to the Initiative Foundation for consideration. Fieldseth explains that with this proposal, we would shift watercraft inspections from on-site at public accesses to off-site locations. This inspection protocol would be enforced by requiring a parking permit to park cars with trailers at and near the public access. Manager Casale believed the District could gain leverage with cities through parking fine revenue and asks staff to look into who has the authority to set parking fines. Fieldseth stated that a program like this would require a lot of partnerships and that a meeting is scheduled March 9th to discuss the proposal with the West Metro AIS Committee. Staff has heard that the District's proposal was received favorably by the Initiative Foundation review panel, and that the District will be asked to submit a full proposal, which will be due March 30th.

6. Staff Updates: None

7. Adjournment: 7:56 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jillian Bjorklund, Recorder