



2522 Marshall Street NE  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418-3329

612-746-4970  
contacts@mwmw.org

mwmw.org

MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

# MEETING MINUTES

---

**Date:** 14 November 2023

**Attachment 3**

**Time:** 3:00 PM

**Location:** 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

## Commissioners in Attendance

Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis (online); Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; Michael Lukes, St. Paul; and Billy Menz, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB).

**Staff and Guests:** Emmy Baskerville, Adam Flett, Shawn James, Akadia Johnson, Abby Moore, Kevin Reich, Emily Resseger, and Nancy Stowe, MWMO; Bruce Jacobsen, Consultant; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Vice Chair Stille.

## Approval of Agenda

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## Approval of Minutes

Motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## Consent Agenda

No consent agenda items.

## Reports from Staff

Resseger was introduced as a new member of the monitoring and research team.

Staff have been discussing the topics of Operations and Maintenance (O&M), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and Climate Action Framework with Commissioners and staff over the past several months and how these topics are integrated into MWMO's policies and procedures. The 2021-2031 Watershed Management Plan states that MWMO will develop an organizational equity plan. In late 2022 MWMO issued an RFP for consultants to help staff develop this plan and began working with Culture Brokers, LLC in May 2023. Culture Brokers will provide one year of implementation support beyond the contract end date in February 2024. The first step was to develop an equity framework with watershed demographics, create an equity statement, and define organizational commitments. These items were developed by a team of staff and Board members, then shared with city partners with a request for feedback. MWMO also created a Diamond Inclusiveness Assessment which was shared with 132 stakeholders including MWMO staff, partners, grantees, city staff, MWMO vendors, CAC members, and elected officials. The assessment received 64 responses and 30 stakeholders participated in the DIA debriefing and feedback sessions. The assessment revealed that MWMO's perceived strength was natural environment and perceived weakness was financial investment (with most respondents answering "I don't know"). The identified relative dimension of opportunity is built environment.

After reviewing the results, senior leadership chose two areas for improvement, one from the identified area of weakness and the other from the area of opportunity to focus the equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP). The goal is to make the majority of stakeholders see the following two statements as true:

1. The organization consistently spends its money to meet measurable goals that have been broken down by race, ethnicity and language, and
2. The organization's work or services are conducted in locations that experience high interaction and connection among different cultures.

Two ESAP teams have been created, one to focus on each improvement. The next step is to develop a one-year work plan for each improvement and present the work plans to leadership in early December, with a goal of implementing the work plans beginning in early 2024. The teams will share progress with staff and Board members throughout 2024.

Staff are working on developing a tool to help weigh equity implications in decision-making. The main goal for the first year is to determine how equity can be incorporated into MWMO's decision-making process.

[Menz arrived 3:23 p.m.]

Stowe presented on the topic of O&M, which became a main focus because some installed projects are not performing as designed due to lack of maintenance. In 2022 staff launched a

methodical process to identify why projects are not being maintained and potential approaches such as providing project owner support after installation, strengthening agreements, and workforce development. After receiving feedback, staff investigated how to implement each of those three approaches.

Staff performed inspections on 24 installations and contacted seventeen project owners. Every owner was interested in support from MWMO. Most physical issues occurred due to vegetation management. Owners stated lack of coordination/attention, lack of labor availability, alteration or destruction by others, and design for the lack of maintenance. Financial issues were the lowest issue cited.

Past grant agreements usually terminate shortly after installation. However, the first three years of establishment are critical for a project's long-term success. If the contracts were lengthened and reimbursements only paid after performance standards are met, this could ensure project performance. Additional measures may include language requiring the grantee to return funds for non-performing installations. Project O&M manuals are required, but usually the grantee or designer are responsible for writing the manuals. MWMO staff should review and provide feedback on those manuals.

The third approach is workforce development with Green Team and other organizations. The Green Infrastructure Inspection Team (GRIIT) launched in 2023. There are few companies that understand the maintenance of green infrastructure. MWMO staff met with Union 363 to discuss the viability of a green infrastructure career path. The Union requires assurance that there would be enough work in this area in the future to warrant an industry workforce.

Next steps include reviewing agreement language and exploring an enforcement or reward system. Staff time for inspection and project owner outreach will need to be increased. MWMO may partner with other organizations like Minnesota Water Stewards or offer project maintenance support grants. Staff will develop an organizational programming framework to ensure maintenance of projects MWMO invests in. There are about 200 total physical projects that MWMO has invested in. Staff will continue to pursue inspections of those projects.

Bruce Jacobsen presented on the topic of climate action framework. Science focuses more on adaptation than mitigation. This piece will overlap again with DEI and O&M, integrating those topics with shared outcomes and measurable benefits. The main call to action is to build on existing partnerships and project initiatives. The framework will be created over the next year and identify MWMO's role in adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The Board consensus affirmed the direction and goals presented for all three topics.

## **General Business**

### **2023-029: Green Central Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and 2023-030: Phillips Traffic Safety Improvements GSI**

Minneapolis Public Works has applied for a Capital Project Grant to implement GSI within its Green Central Safe Routes to School and Traffic Safety Improvement projects. These are two separate projects along roadways. The City's stormwater ordinance is not triggered by this project, so all proposed stormwater capture is voluntary. Both projects create bump-outs, making it safer for pedestrians and bikers to navigate traffic. These bump-outs create room for green space and infrastructure. Both projects are in the South Green Zone identified by the City a few years ago. These are two separate funding requests and projects, though currently on the same timeline.

The Green Central project will include a total of two GSI basins and one sustainable landscaping area. The Phillips project adds nine green stormwater infiltration basins and two sustainable landscaping areas. The Phillips project will remove 219 lbs. of TSS/year and 1.21 lbs. TP/year, as well as add 3,451 SF of pollinator and wildlife habitat. The Green Central project removes 216 lbs. of TSS/year and 1.19 lbs. TP/year, as well as add 4,495 SF of pollinator and wildlife habitat. The projects include two years of vegetation establishment followed by three years of vegetation maintenance. Final design is planned for early 2024 with construction spring-fall 2024 and vegetation establishment/maintenance 2024-2029.

[Dains departed 4:25 p.m.]

Motion by Menz, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2023-029 approving funding GSI as part of the Green Central Safe Routes to School project at a cost not-to-exceed \$202,205. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Buesgens, second by Menz to approve Resolution 2023-030 approving funding GSI as part of the Phillips Traffic Safety Improvements project at a cost not-to-exceed \$315,350. Motion carried unanimously.

### **2023-031: One Southside Capital Project Grant**

Southside Community Services, a non-profit, has applied for capital project grant funding for a redevelopment project at 1010 Lake Street with a goal of improving life for South Minneapolis residents. This will be a 40,000 SF community clinic and wellness center for low income and uninsured residents. The site has been designed to collect all rainwater from the property to a multi-tier terrace water feature with constantly flowing water and an underground storage tank for irrigation reuse. The water feature will run alongside the main entrance and courtyard. This

project will reduce 200 lbs. of TSS/year and 0.61 lbs. of TP/year to the Mississippi. The project will also provide 2,300 SF of pollinator and wildlife habitat. Construction is expected April 2024-June 2025. The total project cost is \$2.2 million with a grant request of \$275,000 for final design and installation of green infrastructure.

Motion by Lukes, second by Menz to approve Resolution 2023-031 approving a grant to Southside Community Health Services for a series of stormwater management features and native vegetation at the new Southside Community Health Services facility in Minneapolis in an amount not-to-exceed \$275,000. Motion carried unanimously.

### **2023-032: Levy Certification for 2024**

The Board reviewed the 2024 budget and levy at the September meeting. The amounts discussed then have not changed. This is a 6.3% increase over the 2023 budget.

Motion by Menz, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2023-032 approving the MWMO levy amount for FY 2024 of \$7,407,700. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Board Updates and Announcements**

Menz noted that MPRB has a new Commissioner, Charles Rutger.

Commissioner Stille did not win the Mayoral election. It is unclear whether the City will reappoint him as MWMO Commissioner.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024.

## **Open Public Input**

None.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further business, motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.