

Policy Committee for Root River One Watershed One Plan
Monday, January 29, 2018, 9:00 am
Room 108, Fillmore County Office Building, 902 Houston St. NW, Preston, MN
MINUTES

Policy Committee members in attendance: Rodney Peterson (Dodge County), Glenn Hahn (Dodge SWCD), Matt Flynn (Olmsted County), Marcia Ward (Winona County), Jerry Mueller (Winona SWCD), Fred Arnold (Houston County), Duane Bakke (Fillmore County), Brian Hazel (Fillmore SWCD), Jim Kellogg (Mower SWCD), Paul Fruechte (Crooked Creek Watershed District). Not present: Matt Feldmeier (Root River SWCD), Polly Glynn (Mower County), Steve Connelly (Olmsted SWCD). Also attending: Bridgette Timm (SEMWRB), John Helmers (Olmsted County), Adam Beilke (BWSR), Sheila Harmes (Winona County), Daryl Buck (Winona SWCD), Justin Hanson (Mower SWCD), Skip Langer (Olmsted SWCD), Bob Scanlan and Dan Wermager (Root River SWCD), Donna Rasmussen (Fillmore SWCD).

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bakke at 9:06 a.m. Those present introduced themselves.

Jerry Mueller moved to accept the agenda; Marcia Ward seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Election of officers: Marcia Ward nominated Duane Bakke for Chair; Jerry Mueller seconded and moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot; motion carried unanimously.

Marcia Ward nominated Jerry Mueller for Vice Chair; Jim Kellogg seconded and moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot; motion carried unanimously.

Jerry Mueller nominated Marcia Ward for Secretary; Brian Hazel seconded and moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot; motion carried unanimously.

Marcia Ward moved to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2017, Policy Committee meeting; Glenn Hahn seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Report on the Planning Work Group (PWG) meetings: The November 28th meeting included a discussion with MPCA regarding Cycle 2 Intensive Watershed Monitoring, HSPF modeling updates and scenarios, and funds for increasing readiness for implementation. The PWG had no more changes for the plan summary and recommended it for action at the next Policy Committee meeting. The subcommittee will work on an expanded summary with more technical information and a civic engagement /education/outreach plan. Fillmore SWCD has submitted a Noxious Weed Grant application to MDA and a Conservation Corps Minnesota crew application for Japanese hops treatment along the Root River corridor from Preston downstream. At the January 9th meeting, revisions were made to the work plan and budget. Some activities were lumped together for easier reporting in eLINK and more flexibility with any changes to the work plan or budget. An Advisory Committee meeting is planned for late February/early March. A city representative is needed, and Brian Burkholder from Chatfield is suggested because of his work on Chatfield's wellhead protection plan. The PWG supports including the Local Work Group process with the Advisory Committee meeting to set priorities for EQIP funds recently approved for the 1W1P pilot watersheds. It was suggested that a list of grants be developed to track grants for the watershed both directly through the 1W1P and through partners.

ACTION: Glenn Hahn moved to approve the Root River 1W1P summary document; Brian Hazel seconded.

Discussion: Glenn reported that the Dodge SWCD reviewed the document and liked the format and pictures. Jim asked about how it will be distributed. In addition to being on the LGUs' websites and Facebook pages, it was suggested to provide it to the township boards and to direct the PWG to come up with a plan for distribution.

Motion carried unanimously.

The committee was reminded that some LGUs still need to sign the bylaws. Signatures were obtained from those that were present.

Adam Beilke reported on watershed funding and timelines. The BWSR Board approved \$8.75 million for 1W1P

watershed-based grants; the Root River 1W1P will receive \$851,301 with four years to spend the funds. Grants will be awarded every two years. Metro watersheds receive a base amount that will remain the same. BWSR funding will shift toward more watershed grants will increase as competitive grants decrease. The grants require a 10% match. Work plans are due by March 12th. Eligible activities include cost share, technical and engineering assistance, project development and administration. The state was awarded \$2.5 million from USDA for a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant for the 1W1P pilot watersheds. At a minimum, we should expect to have \$500,000 available for the 1W1P area. The federal and state funds can be used to match each other. Funds can be targeted to priority areas in the work plan or used in other areas. BWSR has draft policy developed for the watershed-based grants which should be approved in February.

The Policy Committee reviewed the draft work plan and budget recommended by the PWG. A question was asked about use of the grant funds for disaster response; the state would likely allocate other funds for disasters. Measures of success will be predicted in the work plan with more accurate measurements calculated after installation. In addition to objective measurements, subjective measurements, such as how well we work together to accomplish our goals, may also be used. The Crooked Creek structure was not funded before through EQIP because it was considered a flood control structure; it wasn't until the severe flooding in 2016 created large gullies that EQIP funds could be used because of the water quality benefits provided by the structure. Jim Kellogg moved to approve the work plan and budget for 2018-2019; Rodney Peterson seconded; motion carried unanimously.

The Root River 1W1P Joint Powers Agreement states that the Policy Committee shall appoint the fiscal agent annually. Jerry Mueller moved to acknowledge the Winona SWCD as the fiscal agent in 2018; Glenn Hahn seconded; motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Report from Policy Committee member re: feedback from their respective boards: Glenn Hahn repeated that the Dodge SWCD Board had reviewed the plan summary. Duane Bakke reported that the Local Government Round Table will meet, and ongoing funding for 1W1P will continue to be discussed.

Partner project updates: Olmsted SWCD is submitting a Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) in cooperation with Root River and Fillmore SWCDs to conduct monitoring at 14 sites in the watershed for 2018-2019. Fillmore SWCD is applying for funds for Japanese hops treatment along the river corridor.

Upcoming meetings: The Advisory Committee will meet in late February/early March. Marcia moved to schedule the next Policy Committee for Monday, July 30, 2018; Jerry Mueller seconded; motion passed unanimously. Agenda items will include a presentation about the economics of trout angling in southeast Minnesota and an update on progress with implementation of the watershed plan.

Rodney Peterson moved to adjourn at 10:48 am; Glenn Hahn seconded; motion carried.

Marcia Ward, Secretary