



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Administrative Services Committee Meeting Notes

Thursday, October 30, 2014

8:30 a.m.

Golden Valley City Hall, Managers Conference Room
7800 Golden Valley Rd., Golden Valley, MN 55427

Meeting Attendees: Committee Chair Guy Mueller, Commission Chair Jim de Lambert, Commissioner Ginny Black, Alternate Commissioner Dave Tobelmann, Administrator Jester

Chair Mueller called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

I. Review Records Retention Policy and Schedule

The group reviewed the draft records retention policy and schedule the Commission has been using for several years (draft policy 2.6 in the Commission Policy Document), although it was never formally approved by the Commission. Commissioner Black noted the Commission's policy and schedule was not submitted to the State for approval and was developed with help from Commissioner Welch and the recording secretary. Commissioner Black wondered how the Commission's policy and schedule compared with city policies and schedules. Administrator Jester noted the City of Plymouth's records retention schedule included with the meeting materials. She noted that cities have several big program areas that are different from the Commission (such as human resources, fire and police departments, public works documents, etc.). She wondered if it was more appropriate use the schedules of other watershed organizations as examples. She noted she had emailed the Minnesota Historical Society for a records retention schedule template but had not yet heard back from them.

Alternate Commissioner Tobelmann indicated he liked the examples of the Lower Mississippi River WMO schedule included with the meeting materials. Administrator Jester was directed to check with BWSR to see if they recommended a particular schedule. Additionally, she was asked to check with the Mississippi WMO for their schedule.

A revised schedule (in a new template and with any changes needed as recommended by the State) should be reviewed by this committee at their next meeting. The group noted that Counsel LeFevere would ultimately need to review a draft policy and schedule before it's approved.

In reviewing draft policy 2.7 in the Commission Policy Document regarding public access to documents, the group discussed how and where Commission documents are stored and how the public can access them. They acknowledged that printing (copying) charges can be very high as well as staff time needed to gather and supply requested documents. After some more discussion, they agreed the draft policy is okay as written.

The Administrator was directed to determine where Commission documents are stored (Barr Engineering vs. City of Plymouth). The committee noted it would be better for documents to be stored in a public location. Administrator Jester reminded the committee that the 2015 budget includes funding to convert historic paper files to electronic files. There was discussion about the City of Plymouth possibly doing this task for the Commission (for a fee). The committee also wondered if City of Plymouth staff could give a short presentation to the Commission or this committee regarding data and document storage. Administrator Jester was directed to talk with Plymouth staff.

II. Review Fiscal Policies

a.) Closed Project Account Balance

The committee discussed the current Commission policy (Policy 3.4) regarding the capital improvement closed project account. Section 3.4.3 of the current policy states that “money will not be accumulated to an amount in excess of \$250,000 unless a specific use for such funds has been identified.” After discussing the rising costs of projects and other circumstances, the committee agreed to recommend a change in that section of the policy to read “...the accumulation of funds between \$250,000 and \$500,000 is reasonable. Money will not be accumulated to an amount in excess of \$550,000 unless a specific use for such funds has been identified.”

b.) Administrative Fund Balance

The committee agreed with current practice of keeping the general fund balance at approximately 50% of the Commission’s annual operating expenses. However they also asked the Administrator to check with BWSR for a recommended policy.

c.) Maximum Amount Requested through Levy

The Administrator reported that Commission Policy 3.2.2 does not include a cap for the amount the Commission could levy each year through the County. The committee agreed that although current practice is to levy up to \$1M per year, flexibility should be available. The committee discussed the desire to keep a relatively level levy amount across years rather than a highly variable levy. They noted that CIP costs could be spread out over multiple years. They recommended the addition of a strategy to Policy 3.2.2: “The Commission will strive to request a stable levy annually.”

d.) Cost Sharing of CIP Projects

Administrator Jester reviewed the Shingle Creek WMO CIP cost share policy with the committee. The group noted that this policy would not fit well in the BCWMC. The group wondered about the origins of Commission Policy 3.2.2 (7) which indicates that upon ordering a Commission CIP project (among other things) the Commission would specify the percentage of project costs that are to be paid by each member. The group discussed that some project costs could be paid by cities and agreed the Commission policy should be flexible on the proportion of funding the Commission would pay for a project vs. the proportion cities would pay. The committee thought that perhaps the Commission could negotiate with each city regarding cost apportionment on a project by project basis. The committee agreed that Policy 3.2.2 (7) and (8) should remain as written.

e.) Percent to Transfer from Annual Levy to Administrative Fund

Administrator Jester reported that she believes the 2.5% transfer of levy funds to the Commission's general fund to cover administrative expenses for CIP projects was too high. She noted that Counsel LeFevre and the Commission Engineer charge their time spent on CIP projects directly to those project funds. Only the Administrator's time and Deputy Treasurer Sue Virnig's time spent on CIP projects were ultimately charged to the general fund. Administrator Jester noted that in a normal year, about \$25,000 is transferred to the general fund from the CIP funds, lessening the amount available for implementing the project (construction and design costs). She reported this amount was approximately 42% of the Administrator budget annually, but that she doesn't spend 42% of her time on CIP project management.

Administrator Jester was asked to estimate the amount of time spent on CIP projects. She also indicated that she would poll TAC members regarding their preference: slightly more funds available for CIP project with slightly higher annual assessments or vice versa.

III. Discuss Process for Performance Review of Consultants

Administrator Jester reported that the Commission does not have a formal process in place for reviewing consultants. Commissioner de Lambert noted that he sat down with Commission Engineer Chandler earlier in the year to review Barr's performance. However, this was not a formal process nor a formal review of services provided. Commissioner de Lambert indicated he thought it was a good idea to review the performance of consultants and was glad it would be done formally. The group briefly discussed the fact that by State Law, the Commission must solicit proposals from engineering, audit and legal services once every two years and that the Commission needed to do this in 2015. The group agreed it would be good to get baseline information and develop a track record for use during the proposal solicitation process. Alternate Commissioner Tobelmann noted that criteria by which to review each consultant should be developed. Chair Mueller thought the Commission was being well-served by its consultants but wondered if the Commission Engineer should report on new and emerging technologies more often. The group agreed the Commission would be unlikely to actually change consultants in 2015 and might want to consider not soliciting full blown proposals from firms in 2015. The group also agreed the review of consultants should happen with all consultants (legal, engineering, administration, secretarial and audit) and that it should offer two-way communication with feedback from the consultants to the Commission as well. The group agreed that performance criteria should be generated by the Administrative Services Committee - either at a committee meeting in December or prior to that meeting for review at that meeting. Administrator Jester noted that contracts and the Roles and Responsibilities Document would be useful for generating evaluation criteria.

The committee agreed to meet in early December. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.