



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Minutes of Regular Meeting & Plan Development Workshop

Thursday, May 15, 2025

8:30 a.m.

7800 Golden Valley Rd., Golden Valley MN

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On May 15, 2025 at 8:32 a.m. Chair Cesnik called the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (Commission) to order.

Commissioners, city staff, and others present

City	Commissioner	Alternate Commissioner	Technical Advisory Committee Members (City Staff)
Crystal	Joan Hauer	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Golden Valley	Paula Pentel	Wendy Weirich	Eric Eckman
Medicine Lake	Clint Carlson	Shaun Kennedy	<i>Absent</i>
Minneapolis	Jodi Polzin	<i>Vacant</i>	Liz Stout
Minnetonka	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Absent</i>	Leslie Yetka, <i>online</i>
New Hope	Jere Gwin-Lenth	Jen Leonardson	Nick Macklem
Plymouth	Catherine Cesnik	<i>Absent</i>	Ben Scharenbroich and Finton Lenahan
Robbinsdale	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	Jenna Wolf
St. Louis Park	RJ Twiford	David Johnston	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters, LLC		
Engineers	Stephanie Johnson, Barr Engineering Co. Josh Phillips, Barr Engineering Co. (partial) Jim Herbert, Barr Engineering Co. (partial, online)		
Recording Secretary	<i>Vacant Position</i>		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Guests/Public	Jen Dullum, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources		

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Gwin-Lenth moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda.

- Acceptance of April Financial Report
- Approval of Minutes – April 17, 2025 Commission Meeting
- Acceptance of May Financial Report
- Approval of Payment of Invoices
 - Keystone Waters, LLC – April 2025 Administration
 - Keystone Waters, LLC – April 2025 Administrative Expenses
 - Barr Engineering – April 2025 Engineering Services
 - Triple D Espresso – May Meeting Catering
 - City of Plymouth – April 2025 Accounting Services
 - Kennedy & Graven – Legal Services
 - Stantec – WOMP Services
 - Bolton & Menk – Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Outreach Project

5. BUSINESS

A. Receive Update on Double Box Culvert Repair Project Feasibility Study (FCP-1)

Commission Engineer Johnson noted the final feasibility study for this project would be presented in June. She introduced Commission Engineer Josh Phillips who provided an update on the feasibility study. Engineer Phillips reminded commissioners about the tunnel location, the three different tunnels sections, and a basic description of each section. He noted the furthest upstream section was constructed as a double box culvert in 1992. The end of this section is a 30-foot drop structure into the deeper 3rd Avenue Tunnel section. He noted the city of Minneapolis owns the tunnel while the BCWMC inspects and performs significant maintenance when needed. He reported the double box culvert has been inspected at least 6 times since the completion of construction. He noted that based on Barr's inspection there is no risk of critical failure at this time, but that regular upkeep and maintenance is needed to keep the tunnel in good working condition. He described the various types of repairs needed and showed corresponding photographs from within the tunnel.

Engineer Phillips noted the significant mobilization cost of the repair project which includes water management and safety and security measures. He gave a preliminary budget estimate of \$850,000 to \$1.4M. Administrator Jester indicated the final project budget should include estimated commission engineer and attorney expenses.

Engineer Phillips noted this project is not like others where there are various alternatives to consider; the only alternatives are to do the repairs or do nothing. There was some discussion amongst the commissioners about any prior maintenance to the tunnel. Minneapolis TAC member Stout indicated the city had not completed any significant maintenance because it had not been needed to date. Commission Engineer Johnson noted that the city and BCWMC are following the operation and maintenance plan that was developed for the tunnel, along with nationally-approved structural engineering guidelines. She indicated this project is a proactive maintenance project to help prevent future critical, structural failures.

Commissioner Gwin-Lenth noted the repairs represent money well spent due to the increased severity of storms and potential for issues in the future.

B. Consider Approval of Recommendations from Budget Committee

- i. Memo on Budget Tracking and Transparency
- ii. Proposed 2026 Operating Budget

Budget Committee Chair Polzin reviewed the Budget Committee recommendations noting the committee met three times so far this year to discuss ways to improve budget processes and transparency, and reduce uncertainty

with budgets. She noted the committee may meet quarterly in the future.

Committee Chair Polzin reviewed the first quarter budget status report noting that everything is on track – including expenses and income. She noted that this is a new report format and welcomed feedback.

Committee Chair Polzin then moved on to review the committee-recommended 2026 operating budget. She pointed to the lower total expenses over 2025 for several reasons: 1) the watershed plan development will be complete, 2) the surveys and studies line item is zeroed out because the Special Projects fund can be used for unforeseen expenses, and 3) there is no transfer of funds into the Flood Control Project Long Term Maintenance account because that account's balance does not need to be as high as it currently stands. Committee Chair Polzin explained that additional staff are likely needed for implementation of the new plan, hence the budget includes funds for approximately a half-time person for half the year. She went on to describe that because the fund balance is below optimal levels and the Special Projects fund is not being used this year to augment the operating budget, city assessments in 2026 are proposed to be about 5.4% higher than this year.

There was some concern among commissioners about federal funding cuts eventually impacting city and/or commission budgets and funding. Plymouth TAC member Scharenbroich noted the Commission could consider a financial contribution to support the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council similar to some other watershed organizations.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the proposed 2026 operating budget and directed staff to submit the proposed budget to member cities for comment by August 1st. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

C. Consider Approval of Recommendations from Education Committee

Education Committee Chair Leonardson review the committee's recent work and recommendations. She noted that committee members and Administrator Jester continue to distribute the watershed map and are working on developing educational signage for places around the watershed, likely starting with Utepils Brewery. There was a brief discussion about donations to the Commission. Commission Attorney Anderson noted the Commission cannot solicit donations but it can accept donations.

Committee Chair Leonardson reported that the Committee received a request for \$1,000 from the organizers of the Ĥaĥá Wakpádan Water Blessing event to help cover stipends for the cultural advisors, presenters, and event planners. She reported the Education Committee recommends approving this funding request. Commission Attorney Anderson noted the event organizers should prepare and submit an actual invoice for the funds with a description of how they would be used. Plymouth TAC Chair Scharenbroich noted that some materials incorrectly indicate the City of Plymouth is an event sponsor and should be updated.

Committee Chair Leonardson went on to review a committee recommendation for website updates including basic ADA compliance, technology update due to the site's age, and some minor formatting or content updates. Administrator Jester briefly reviewed the proposal for this work submitted by the Commission's website contractor, HDR, Inc. She noted the 2025 budget includes funding for this work and that the Commission Attorney had reviewed the contract and terms.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the Education Committee's recommendations for \$1,000 toward the Ĥaĥá Wakpádan Water Blessing event (with Commission Attorney approval of the invoice), and approval of the contract with HDR, Inc. for website updates. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

D. Consider Approval of Resolutions for Minnesota Watershed 2026 Legislative Session

Administrator Jester noted that at the April meeting, commissioners were asked for thoughts or ideas for possible resolutions for the MN Watersheds (MW) 2026 legislative platform which are due June 2. She noted Commissioner Polzin expressed two ideas for potential resolutions, drafts of which are provided today. Alternate Commissioner Kennedy reviewed the updated timeline for the MW's resolution and legislative process and reported that he is on the MW's Resolutions and Legislative Committee. Administrator Jester reviewed the first proposed resolution

which seeks a revision to MN Statute 383B.79 to include watershed management organizations among the list of entities that can officially participate in a Hennepin County multijurisdictional reinvestment program. There were no concerns or questions about that resolution.

Administrator Jester then reviewed the second potential resolution seeking a revision to MN Statute 275.066 to include joint powers watershed management organizations as special taxing districts along with watershed districts, school districts, other special districts, and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. There was considerable discussion including a question on whether submitting the resolution circumvents the city input process or presumes the outcome of the BCWMC organizational assessment. Commissioner Polzin indicated that it often takes several years of lobbying to get legislative action and that it does not assume there would be a reorganization of the Commission but might, instead, offer a real option for moving forward with a change, if desired and warranted, rather than waiting even longer for legislative action. There was further discussion about the need for transparency and communication and collaboration with member cities, and more education on the subject, in general. There was acknowledgement that MW shouldn't be asked to advocate for a change to statute that isn't supported by the member cities.

MOTION: Commissioner Hauer moved to approve the submittal of the resolution seeking revision to MN Statute 383B.79 regarding multijurisdictional programs. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

- E. Consider Approval of Commissioners and Administrator Attendance at Minnesota Watersheds Summer Tour**
Administrator Jester reviewed information on the MW's Summer Tour in Roseau, MN and the costs associated with registration and lodging. She requested approval to attend the event, which includes a quarterly meeting of watershed administrators. She also recommended approval for commissioners and alternates to attend the event with funding coming from the Education Budget.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve Administrator Jester and any commissioners or alternates attendance at the MN Watersheds Summer Tour event. Commissioner Twiford seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 7-0. The cities of Minnetonka and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Administrator's Report
 - i. Update on Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Outreach Project – Administrator Jester reported that the contractors (Bolton & Menk) had been able to visit only one of the four sites but that additional outreach will be scheduled for the fall. She indicated she is waiting for a report on the one site visit.
 - ii. Update on Potential Maintenance Levy – Administrator Jester reported that Commission Attorney Anderson had provided research and information related to potentially requesting maintenance levy funding through the County. She noted that because the Commission does not currently have a project identified that needs specific maintenance, she does not recommend pursuing a maintenance levy in 2026.
- B. Engineer – No report
- C. Legal Counsel – No report
- D. Chair – No report
- E. Minnesota Watersheds – No report
- F. Commissioners – Commissioner Carlson asked about wetland impacts due to changes in federal protections. Staff indicated that the MN Wetland Conservation Act continues to be enforced in Minnesota despite changes at the federal level.
- G. TAC Members – Plymouth TAC member Scharenbroich reported that the city is hosting an Environmental Academy with two sessions concentrating on water quality and stormwater management. The sessions are geared towards city residents but commissioners or alternates are welcome to register. Robbinsdale TAC member Wolf reported that she will be giving tours of the floc plant on Crystal Lake every other Friday during the summer. Anyone can register online.
- H. Committees – No report

3. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

- A. Administrative Calendar
- B. CIP Project Updates www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects
- C. Grant Tracking Summary and Spreadsheet
- D. WCA Notice, Plymouth
- E. [Minneapolis Park and Rec Board 2024 Annual Report](#)
- F. Watershed Partners 2024 Annual Report
- G. West Metro Water Alliance 2024 Annual Report
- H. Clean Water Fund Fact Sheet
- I. [Minnesota Stormwater Research Council Annual Report](#)

[Chair Cesnik called a 5-minute break. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth and Alternate Commissioner Leondarson depart the meeting.]

4. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

- A. Review Plan Content and Draft Table of Contents
 - i. Section 4.0 Implementation Program – Tools, Policies, Activities, Projects
 - ii. Revisions to BCWMC Requirements for Development and Improvement Projects

Plan Steering Committee Chair Kennedy, Administrator Jester, and Commission Engineer Johnson gave a presentation with an overview of the proposed implementation section of the draft plan, including a description of implementation tools, new policies and activities, proposed updates to the BCWMC Requirements for Developments.

The group then broke into two smaller groups to further discuss components of the draft plan.

B. Participate in Small Group Discussions

The following summarizes input from each group:

Table of contents looks good. Make sure the executive summary is written in plain language as a public facing document. The first paragraph should sum up the work and purpose of the commission in plain language. While there are requirements for exec summary content in MN Rules, BWSR staff noted they are discussing the exec summary requirements and may be open to more flexibility so that the exec summary can be the public facing document. Noted that PSC has considered having an even more succinct document summarizing the plan for public use. Be sure to note the commission works on surface waters rather than groundwater. When speaking with the public they often assume the commission deals with drinking water.

When asked about concerns: There was a comment that the plan IS aggressive and it will be interesting to see city's appetites for higher budgets and assessments that will ultimately be needed.

Lost and Northwood Lakes are specifically called out for studies. What if something comes up in another lake and/or in another city? Staff shared the Activities Table and noted the placeholder for subwatershed analyses in other areas of the watershed.

Interesting to see the public-private partnership line item. We will need to be careful about that. How will we be sure that developers aren't just taking advantage and using as another funding mechanism? How will we ensure that it's actually providing real benefits? Staff responded: this is less hard than you might think. City of Plymouth already does this through agreements. And, other watershed organizations (e.g., Shingle Creek WMC) are doing this so there are good examples out there. Staff also noted the first steps and work of the Commission would be to have those types of conversations and think through the necessary policies and practices associated with a new program.

When asked how folks are feeling about the draft plan, is it too much? Are we overcommitting? Commissioners (and a TAC member) noted plans are meant to be aspirational, the activities seem appropriate, and that it's better to be aggressive than just staying status quo.

C. Report Out and Next Steps

The groups came back together to briefly report on their discussions.

7. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.