



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting
May 21, 2026
8:30 a.m.
7800 Golden Valley Rd., Golden Valley MN

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On May 21, 2026 at 8:31 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	Terri Schultz	<i>Absent</i>
Golden Valley	Paula Pentel	Wendy Weirich	Emma Rakestraw
Medicine Lake	Clint Carlson	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Minneapolis	Jodi Polzin	Nick Minderman	<i>Absent</i>
Minnetonka	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	Eric Eckman online
New Hope	Jere Gwin-Lenth	Jen Leonardson	Nick Macklem and Lola Ellingson-Shuster
Plymouth	Catherine Cesnik	<i>Absent</i>	Ben Scharenbroich
Robbinsdale	<i>Absent</i>	John Ella	<i>Absent</i>
St. Louis Park	<i>Absent</i>	David Johnston	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters, LLC		
Engineers	Stephanie Johnson, Greg Wilson, and Patrick Brockamp - Barr Engineering Co.		
Recording Secretary	<i>Vacant Position</i>		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Guests/Public	None		

Introductions were made around the room and new Alternate Commissioner John Ella was introduced.

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

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

- Approval of Minutes – April 16, 2026 Commission Meeting
- Acceptance of May Financial Report
- Approval of Payment of Invoices
 - Keystone Waters, LLC – April 2026 Administration
 - Keystone Waters, LLC – April 2026 Administrative Expenses
 - Barr Engineering – April 2026 Engineering Services
 - Triple D Espresso – May Meeting Catering
 - City of Plymouth – April 2026 Accounting Services
 - Kennedy & Graven – March 2026 Legal Services
 - Stantec – WOMP Tasks
 - HDR – Website Accessibility Project
 - LB Carlson LLP – Financial Audit
- Approval of Administrative Services Committee Recommendation on Job Posting
- Approval of Agreement with MN Board of Water and Soil Resources for Performance Review and Assistance Program Grant
- Approval of Attendance and Reimbursement of Expenses for MN Watersheds Summer Tour, Detroit Lakes
- Approval of CSAH 102 Douglas Drive Highway Safety Improvement Program Project
- Approval of Theodore Wirth Regional Park Trail Improvements Project
- Approval of Agreement with Bolton & Menk for Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Outreach Project Phase II

5. BUSINESS

A. Review Draft Feasibility Study for Crane Lake Chloride Reduction Demonstration Project (CL-4)

Administrator Jester provided a brief background and noted the final report would be brought to the June meeting where a decision would be needed on the 2027 maximum levy. Commission Engineer Wilson presented results of the study. He reviewed the landuse in the watershed draining to Crane Lake noting that about half (252 acres) of the watershed is commercial and multi-family residential land use that drains to lake through stormwater ponds, with major land holders including Ridgedale Center (77 acres) and Hennepin County (17 acres). He reviewed the monitoring locations and data, the history of increasing chloride levels and reduced zooplankton diversity in the lake, and the fact that the lake is fully mixed (does not stratify like deeper lakes). Engineer Wilson reported that salt application rates were reported by the City of Minnetonka and MnDOT and that private landowners provided information about winter maintenance contractors but do not track the amount of salt applied each year. He noted Hennepin County did not provide data on salt use on roads or at Hennepin County Ridgedale Center. He reported that 60% of the chloride load is coming from the “Ridgedale South” stormwater pond which collects runoff from more than 50% of the mall, the Hennepin County property, the YMCA, and residential streets. He noted a 31% reduction in chloride loading from the watershed is needed to meet state water quality standards in the lake.

Commission Engineer Wilson reviewed various chloride management concepts. He noted structural measures such as altering pond water levels, diverting roof runoff, or treating pond water were assessed but considered not feasible due to high costs and/or an inability to reduce chloride levels enough to meet water quality standards. He noted that source control by reducing salt use is the only viable option. He reviewed various source control concepts that could be plausible in the watershed given the survey results, including tracking

application rates for winter deicing, assisting with winter maintenance contracting, deicing equipment purchase/loan program, providing abrasives to reduce salt use, developing a business agreement for joint winter maintenance, working on alternative salt storage options, developing a Ridgedale smart salting retrofit plan, and regulatory advocacy.

There was a discussion about potential low-hanging fruit (such as helping Ridgedale Mall update their winter maintenance contract and expectations). It was noted that Ridgedale Mall's contractor uses Smart Salting practices with other clients, including using brine. There was a question about why there was a spike in chloride levels between 2016 and 2021 (higher number of snow and ice events in 2021), a question about whether a Metro-wide solution exists, a comment on how equipment cost share might need to be constrained to use in the watershed, and a concern that one landowner is seemingly allowed to degrade a lake without consequence. There was discussion about how a special service district might work between the city and certain landowners to combine winter maintenance under one city contract. Commission Engineer Johnson noted this situation is working in a few cases in Edina and Minneapolis.

Commissioner Polzin indicated that there likely is not enough information in the feasibility study to justify a capital project and corresponding levy. There was discussion on whether a non-structural project could be considered a capital project and levied through the county. Attorney Anderson noted there is likely a distinction in law regarding the definition of a capital project. He noted he could do research and bring additional information to the June meeting. There was some agreement that BCWMC and city staff should explore the idea of a special service district for chloride management. Attorney Anderson noted that scenario may work but it would be a policy decision for each city and likely to require much administrative work.

[Chair Cesnik called for a 5-minute break.]

B. Review Draft Feasibility Study of Lagoon Dredging Project Phase II (BC-7)

Chair Cesnik provided some brief background on the original dredging project which resulted in Lagoons D, E, and F being dredged to 4 feet of the designed 6 feet. Commission Engineer Brockamp presented additional background information and reviewed the three alternatives being considered now (dredging the last 2 feet in Lagoons D, E, and F; dredging Lagoon G and returning it to a large open water pond; or dredging two smaller areas in Lagoon G and restoring wetland areas around Lagoon G). He reported that stakeholders, including some members of the public and staff with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) liked the restoration option.

Commission Engineer Johnson reviewed the wetland assessment for Lagoon G noting there are 6 different wetland communities and that restoration would reconnect wetlands to the creek during high water events. She noted that restoration could move the functions and values of the wetland from "low-moderate" to "moderate-high." Engineer Brockamp reported that there would be virtually no change to flood levels with any of the explored alternative. He reviewed a long list of permits needed for the alternatives, including the need for an environmental assessment worksheet as with the original project. He also noted the desire for more outreach and information gathering from indigenous communities as part of work during the final design.

Engineer Brockamp reviewed estimated project costs and cost-benefits in pollution reduction, noting that all alternatives included in the study show lower than normal costs per pound of pollutant removal. He reported that Commission Engineers recommend implementing the wetland restoration option because it aligned with ecological restoration goals in the new watershed plan and the fact that opportunities to improve wetlands are rare within the watershed.

There was discussion about the benefits of removing contaminated sediment including a slight benefit to the benthic community. It was noted that restoring the wetland would not significantly improve water quality beyond the benefits of the dredging, but would improve ecological quality. There was discussion about long term maintenance needs of the wetland restoration. The draft feasibility study assumes 10 years of active maintenance activities as a placeholder, although it's unknown who would perform the maintenance. Further, it was noted that typical BCWMC CIP projects only pay for 3 years of vegetation management. It was noted that

more clarity is needed on which jurisdiction (city of Golden Valley, MPRB, BCWMC) would have ability and funding to perform long-term maintenance.

Commission Hauer asked how much methane would be released during construction of the project. Engineer Johnson noted that calculation was not part of the scope of work for the study and is unknown. It was also noted that the wetland could be restored without any dredging in Lagoon G but that would remove water quality benefits and improvements to fish habitat.

There was discussion about wetland buffer requirements, concerns about project cost, and a note that there is no urgency to implement the project. It was noted that, historically, BCWMC does not pay for long term maintenance of CIP projects; that those costs are borne by the city who implements the project. If the BCWMC were to pay for long term vegetation maintenance with this project, it could set a precedent for future projects. It was noted that there is a possibility of levying for CIP maintenance and that wetland restoration could be viewed as the exception to the long-term maintenance responsibilities.

Engineer Johnson noted that the final study will be brought to the June meeting and will be updated to not include long term maintenance costs beyond the 3-year establishment period. However, she noted that long-term maintenance is critical to the reported ecological benefits of the project, if the restoration alternative is chosen.

C. Consider Approval of Updated Scope and Budget and Direct Staff to Start Task 1 of Hydrologic & Hydraulic Conversion and Update Project

Administrator Jester noted that at the meeting in March, the Commission reviewed a recommendation from the TAC on a revised budget and timeline for the Hydrologic and Hydraulic Conversion and Update Project. She reviewed her memo with options and implications of continuing to wait for a FEMA grant and reported that she reached out to congressional representatives to request assistance with moving the grant application forward. She recommended that the Commission approve the TAC-recommended revision to the project scope and budget and direct the Commission Engineer to implement task 1 of the project while waiting for additional information on the grant.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the updated project scope and budget and to direct the Commission Engineer to implement task 1 of the project. Commissioner Gwin Lenth seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

D. Review Budget Committee Recommendation on 2027 Operating Budget

Budget Committee Chair Polzin reviewed the committee-recommended 2027 operating budget, noting the activities reflect the new 10-year plan. She reviewed the recommendation related to the fund balance noting that the Special Projects fund should be considered accessible for purposes of the fund balance as its real cash on hand. She noted the committee will closely review the fund balance and Special Projects fund each year. She noted the proposed budget includes a modest increase in city assessments of 1.1%. TAC Chair Scharenbroich noted the budget to address aquatic invasive species (AIS) may need to be increased and that Plymouth will want to understand the value gained from the additional \$10,000 in Plymouth assessment.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlon moved to approve the proposed budget as presented and to send it to member cities for input. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: It was noted that cities have until August 1st to provide comments on the proposed budget and that more clarity on funding needed for AIS should be gathered in the interim. Chair Cesnik noted that the budget should reflect the intent to address Medicine Lake issues.

VOTE: Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

E. Consider Administrator Recommendation to Resolve Conflict of Interest

Administrator Jester reported that Barr Engineering was recently selected by the City of St Louis Park to assist

with developing the city's Surface Water Management Plan update which presents a conflict of interest because as the Commission Engineer, Barr would also be charged with reviewing the city's plan. Administrator Jester recommended that, as with similar conflicts in the past, she be appointed to review the city's plan on the Commission's behalf. Alternate Commissioner Schultz asked about the potential for Administrator Jester to retire before the city's plan is submitted. TAC Member Francis noted that the plan should be submitted in 2027, ahead of the Administrator's likely retirement.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to avoid the conflict of interest by directing the Administrator to review the St. Louis Park Surface Water Management Plan on the Commission's behalf. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

F. Discuss Possible Development of Medicine Lake Task Force

Administrator Jester noted that the Commission's CIP includes \$2M for implementing recommendations from the Medicine Lake TMDL Assessment Study starting in 2028. She recommended that in preparation for that project, the Commission consider convening a task force of experts and key lake residents in cooperation with the City of Plymouth. She reported the task force would help develop plans for a project that improves water quality while also addressing aquatic invasive species (AIS) and other aspects of lake ecology and function. She noted that Commission Engineers would be a key part of this task force and asked for approval to begin the work of convening a task force, gathering partners (including potential funding partners), and requesting a potential budget from the Commission Engineers to be considered at a future meeting. TAC Chair Scharenbroich indicated that the City of Plymouth would do the bulk of the outreach and messaging. Commission Attorney Anderson noted that if the Commission creates a formal task force and appoints commissioners, it would likely be subject to open meeting law. There was consensus that convening a task force is appropriate, that the Commission Engineers should develop a proposed budget for their participation, and that a timeframe for the task force's work be developed.

[Commissioner Carlson and Alternate Commissioner Schultz leave the meeting.]

G. Consider Resolutions from MN Watersheds on Policy Recommendations or Legislative Action

Administrator Jester noted that at the April meeting commissioners were asked if they had ideas or recommendations for potential resolutions for MN Watersheds to consider, that no ideas were presented, and that resolutions are due June 2. Commissioner Gwin-Lenth asked about a potential resolution regarding the plumbing code outlined in Item 6Ai. Administrator Jester reported that Capitol Region Watershed District is developing a resolution on that issue. She was directed to inquire about co-sponsoring that resolution.

[Commissioner Pentel leaves the meeting.]

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Administrator's Report

- i. **Proposed MN Plumbing Code Changes on Stormwater Reuse for Irrigation** – Noted that this was a big discussion item at the Metro Watersheds quarterly meeting and that many watersheds are extremely concerned about the issue.
- ii. **Update on Proposals Received for Organizational Assessment** – Reported that only one proposal was submitted and the Administrative Services Committee will review.
- iii. **Update on Linear Projects Checklist and Requirements Document** - Reported final minor edits to the Requirements Document were reviewed and approved by the TAC, were posted online, and became effective May 1st.
- iv. **Update on WMWA Coordinator Position** – Ms. Barcelow is leaving this position; county staff and WMWA partners will determine a path forward, hopefully filling the position this summer.
- v. **Turtle Fest Volunteers** – Chair Cesnik and Commissioner Hauer have volunteered to far; additional volunteers being sought.
- vi. **[Smart Salting for Community Leaders Workshop](#)** – Good opportunity for 2-hour, online workshop on Smart Salting.

- B. **Engineer** – Commission Engineer was requested to sample for harmful algal blooms in Parkers Lake and Westwood Lake by city staff.
- C. **Legal Counsel** – No report.
- D. **Chair** – No report.
- E. **Minnesota Watersheds**
 - i. **Report on Metro Watersheds Quarterly Meeting** – Meeting included a long discussion on potential revisions to the MN plumbing code and impacts to stormwater reuse.
- F. **Commissioners**
 - i. **Report on Nibiwalk Event** – Chair Cesnik tabled at this event; it was a hot day with low attendance.
- G. **TAC Members** – Plymouth is hosting a shoreline restoration workshop on June 4th, there is room for 5 additional attendees; register online.
- H. **Committees** – No report

7. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

- A. Administrative Calendar
- B. CIP Project Updates www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects
- C. Grant Tracking Spreadsheet
- D. Article on Joel Bassett
- E. WCA Notices Golden Valley, Minneapolis, and Plymouth

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.