

Sauk River Watershed – 1 Watershed 1 Plan Policy Committee

Meeting #13 Notes

May 22nd, 2020 from 9am-noon; Zoom Meeting

In attendance were:

Policy Committee:

Randy Neumann (Todd County Commissioner)
Tyler Carlson (Sauk River Watershed District Manager)
Tom Williamson (Todd Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor)
Ken Rutten (Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor)
Cody Rogahn (Pope County Commissioner)
Steve Notch (Stearns County Commissioner)
Gary Reents (Pope Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor)
Chuck Uphoff (Stearns Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor)
Jerry Rapp (Douglas County Commissioner) – joined meeting partway through

Absent:

NA

Advisory Committee:

Brad Wozney (Board of Water and Soil Resources)
Jason Weirnerman (Board of Water and Soil Resources)
Becky Schlorf (Stearns ESD)
Sarah Boser (Sauk River Watershed District)

Consultant:

Julie Blackburn (RESPEC)

Supervisor Uphoff called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Commissioner Rapp was not present. Went through role call to ensure all participants were able to participate without technical difficulties.

Supervisor Uphoff asked all Policy Committee members to review the agenda. Commissioner Rogahn made a motion to approve the agenda, Supervisor Williamson seconded the motion, the motion passed with all in favor.

The Policy Committee members reviewed the February 21st minutes and provided no changes or corrections. Supervisor Williamson made a motion to approve the February 21st meeting minutes as presented, Commissioner Rogahn seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Discussion on organizational structure – Supervisor Uphoff initiated this discussion. Julie asked if anyone was only on the phone to ensure that they would be able to follow the discussion through the PowerPoint presentation. Supervisor Williamson is participating without visual. Julie talked through her presentation, reiterating the organizational framework options for the partnership moving forward. Commissioner Rogahn made a motion for the Joint Powers Collaboration. Manager Carlson seconded the motion. Commissioner Rogahn asked if the JPC means they are not the final decision maker, that the SRWD would be. Julie clarified that this was not entirely correct. The JPC means that each agency retains their individual decision making authorities. Jason provided additional clarity, explaining that the JPC would provide recommendations to all entities, but each individual board would retain their abilities to formalize decisions. Commissioner Rogahn asked if the recommendations needed to be unanimous. Jason clarified that this would need to be decided by the Policy Committee. They could determine majority vote, 8-1, unanimous, etc. These details will be developed later. Motion to accept the JPC: motion passed with all in favor. This was verified by a roll call vote.

Julie provided an update on the Advisory Committee progress, explaining that we may want to identify a Public Outreach person throughout this process based on the work the AC has been doing. Right now, we need to decide on a fiscal agent and a plan coordinator.

Manager Carlson asked about having the fiscal agent and the plan coordinator be different entities and if that would cause cumbersome tracking and communication bridging. Jason provided some insight that yes, this would add additional need for communication, but that it would provide a separation of duties. Commissioner Rogahn stated that he could see going either way - having separate entities would require more communication but we should be communicating more anyway. Supervisor Uphoff mentioned that Stearns County would be willing to do the fiscal coordination if the Stearns SWCD would be the plan coordinator. They do not want to hire another staff member to do this work, they would hire a firm to do this, or, would be interested in asking Cole to be the plan coordinator. Approximately 20% of the BWSR block grant could be used for administration, which could pay for that position. Commissioner Rogahn thought this was a great proposal. Becky expressed some concerns with filling Cole's other duties if he would be spending his time doing this. She does not have 50% of Cole's time to do this work, this would require further discussion. Manager Carlson asked why we would pay someone to do the work when we have SRWD staff that could do this work. Sarah was asked to provide insight whether they have the staff capacity to take on the plan coordinator role. Sarah explained that the plan coordinator role would require her role to shift, not hire an additional SRWD staff member using 1W1P funds. Discussion regarding whether the SRWD

could be the plan coordinator or the fiscal agent followed. Commissioner Rogahn expressed concerns and stated that Pope County does not want the SRWD to take either of these roles due to the lack of positive image with the public and how this could hurt the partnership. They would like the SRWD to work on their image within the public prior to adding this workload to their plate. Commissioner Notch recommended Stearns County being the fiscal agent, SRWD being the plan coordinator, knowing that this could shift in either direction in the future. Supervisor Uphoff asked if we have an idea of how much staff time it would require to be the coordinator, and if we would have to ask the SRWD if they would be ok with this. Manager Carlson mentioned that his stance and understanding is that this would be acceptable to the SRWD. For the time commitment, Jason explained that this depends on the needs and goals of the partnership. Julie pointed out that Sarah is currently doing the 1W1P Coordination, and that she is doing the WRAPS Coordination, and that she is essentially doing all of this work right now. Supervisor Reents said he would support SRWD being plan coordinator, prefer someone else to be fiscal agent for separation of duties. Commissioner Neumann would like to nominate Stearns County to be fiscal, Ken Rutten would second that. Clarification requested regarding if Stearns County would require the SWCD to be coordinator if they were fiscal, think they would be willing to do fiscal management if SRWD was plan coordinator. Supervisor Williamson asked for clarification regarding paying the fiscal agent and plan coordinator via the block grant, Jason said it was acceptable. The motion to have Stearns County as the fiscal agent passed with all in favor.

Commissioner Rogahn would support the SRWD and Sarah being the plan coordinator. Supervisor Rutten asked Becky if she would support that, she said she would and thinks it would be a great fit. Clarification was provided that by using existing staff only their billable time would be paid out of the grant. Supervisor Rutten wants to ensure that this would be an acceptable workload for Sarah and the SRWD and if so he would support this. Supervisor Reents asked for clarification if Sarah would be the coordinator or if it would be the SRWD with Sarah doing the work. Julie clarified that it would be the SRWD with Sarah doing the work. Commissioner Neumann mentioned that he had heard from Commissioner Rapp, who had not received the meeting information. Commissioner Neumann sent it to him so he could join the meeting. Jason clarified that this would be a recommendation to bring back to the SRWD board for them to accept. Commissioner Rogahn would move to nominate the SRWD with Sarah as the plan coordinator. Commissioner Rapp joined the meeting. Supervisor Uphoff provided an update for him on what had been done in the meeting and what the existing motion would be. Discussion regarding job duties, would be best to have BWSR, Stearns County (fiscal) and Sarah/SRWD staff sit down to determine who does what and how to navigate this partnership and ensure that job duties are assigned appropriately. A role call vote was taken on the motion to make the SRWD with Sarah doing the work as the plan coordinator.

Rutten – aye

Rapp – yes

Rogahn – aye

Reents – aye
Neumann – aye
Williamson – aye
Notch - aye
Carlson – aye
Uphoff – aye

The motion passed with all in favor.

The SRWD could have a decision regarding their acceptance of this role following their June 16th meeting, Stearns County could have a decision after their June 26th ? meeting. Julie asked if Stearns Attorney, Brenda, would be willing to work on the agreement document for the JPC. This will likely involve coordination with Sarah/SRWD and Stearns County.

The group took a five minute recess.

Julie provided a review of the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) document and the project team framework. Talked through the different roles in this, how the project team would assist the SRWD with this process, providing input, guidance and feedback. Emphasized the importance of the partnership, support, and moving forward together. Worked through the entire document, providing clarification as questions came up, discussing that public involvement early on, having them on the project team framework if possible. Criteria/metrics for evaluating projects including: alignment with plan goals, cost, funding, support and regulatory requirements. Commissioner Rapp feels like this might be getting too involved. Commissioner Rogahn thinks this paperwork addition makes sense to do our due diligence. Julie clarified that the SRWD is still going to do its work, and this process was created to help alleviate some of the tension and frustration surrounding the CIPs that the SRWD will be doing. The PC does not have to adopt this, it would be a tool to collaborate and help move forward as partners. Commissioner Neumann has some significant concerns with funding moving forward due to the changes seen as a result of COVID-19. Supervisor Uphoff asked BWSR (Jason and Brad) about the impacts BWSR will see. Brad explained that the impacts are unknown at this time, related to the state CWF. Commissioner Notch mentioned that it makes sense to move this forward and adjust accordingly as funding issues become more tangible, with the understanding that it may mean not pushing projects forward as quickly as a result. Julie explained that the PC supporting the project team framework for CIPs would send a strong message of partnership and willingness to partner and collaborate with the SRWD. Supervisor Uphoff supports CIP document and plan for moving forward, Commissioner Rogahn also supports it, Supervisor Reents also supports it, Supervisor Rutten thinks some edits are needed but in favor, Manager Carlson is in favor of this – really likes the multiple benefits component of the criteria. Discussion about doing a tabletop exercise of how these criteria would fit for an existing project to try this out. Supervisor Williamson supports this. BWSR thinks it would be

reasonable to have guidance for this in the plan without having it fully fleshed out per Brad and Jason.

Progress of the plan update from Julie – the implementation table has been difficult, first table was not acceptable as completed for BWSR’s need of prioritization. We have made a lot of progress since then, and are looking at a much better plan as a result even though it has taken more time. Julie needs to review the most recent submittal of the implementation tables, then will be able to dive into writing the plan.

Supervisor Uphoff commended the PC members for their communication and work through this process, and for the work today.

Next meeting for the Policy Committee: likely early July, to be scheduled at a later time. Manager Carlson mentioned that this would be his last 1W1P meeting due to his term on the SRWD board ending.

Meeting adjourned 11:54am

Upcoming Meetings for the Advisory Committee:
Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 from 9am-noon via Zoom