

One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato
PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2024

The One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato Policy Committee met at 3:11 p.m. on Monday, April 8, 2024 at the St. Peter Community Center Senior Center Room #219. Present at the in-person meeting: Blue Earth SWCD – Jacob Quade; BWSR – Jeremy Maul; City of Lake Crystal – Gina Cooper; City of Mankato – Mike Laven, Vice Chair; City of North Mankato – Scott Carlson; City of Saint Peter – Darrell Pettis; Le Sueur County – Steven Rohlfing, Secretary; Le Sueur SWCD – Earle Traxler; Nicollet County – Kurt Zins; Nicollet SWCD – Don Hermanson; Facilitator: Kenny Famakinwa; and Recording Secretary: Crystal Madden. Staff present virtually: Blue Earth County – Kevin Paap; BWSR – Adam Beilke; City of North Mankato – Kevin McCann; Nicollet County – Marie Dranttel, Chair. Steering Team members present: Blue Earth County – Scott Salisbury; City of Saint Peter – Curtis Thompson; Le Sueur County – Holly Bushman; and Le Sueur SWCD – Mike Schultz.

Approval Agenda

A motion was made by Quade and seconded by Traxler to approve the meeting agenda. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed 9-0.

Approve Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Rohlfing and seconded by Zins to approve the February 12, 2024 meeting minutes. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed 9-0.

Planning Grant & Grant Agreement

Famakinwa and Maul updated the Committee that the grant application for \$242,880.00 was approved by BWSR, and the Grant Agreement sent to Nicollet County for approval.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Famakinwa reported that the consultant interview date is Thursday, May 2nd. The time will depend on how many consultant firms are interviewed. ISG has opted-out, and Famakinwa is waiting to hear back from Barr Engineering and Houston Engineering, Inc. The RFQ was amended at the last Steering Team meeting to allow fifteen (15) minutes for the firm's presentation, and thirty (30) minutes for a question and answer period. The interview panel will recommend a consultant for hire to this Committee, and this Committee will vote at the next meeting on Monday, May 13th.

Consultant Interview Group & Interview Questions

Famakinwa reported the six (6) person consultant interview group membership. Three (3) Policy Committee representatives: Marie Dranttel with Nicollet County, Earl Traxler with Le Sueur SWCD, and Mike Laven from the City of Mankato. Three (3) Steering Team representatives: Blue Earth County – Scott Salisbury, Nicollet County SWCD – Blake Honetschlager, and City of North Mankato – Luke Arnold.

Interview questions are currently in-process, and Famakinwa will send out a copy of the questions and rubric to the consultant interview group for review before interviews held on Thursday, May 2nd.

60-Day Notice & Intent to Plan

Famakinwa sent Intent to Plan notice out to agencies on Monday, March 4th with the sixty (60) day response deadline of Friday, May 3rd. Vice Chair Laven asked the Committee what we can expect for feedback from agencies, and Maul responded that agencies will provide specific issues or items which are important to the agency to include in the Plan.

Advisory Committee Member List

Famakinwa is compiling an Advisory Committee member contact list, and requests members send him their recommended contacts. The Steering Team will narrow Advisory Committee member list down at their next meeting on Wednesday, April 24th. Famakinwa requested Committee members work with their Steering Team members to send him recommended contacts.

Maul expanded upon the role of the Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members will be comprised of groups with special interest in certain water related priorities, and will help focus and prioritize projects. Members may have experience with: Sportsman's clubs, water treatment facilities, lake associations, local colleges and universities, city and township boards, conservation clubs and environmental health groups.

The Advisory Committee will look at ALL the issues within the watershed, and then prioritize the most important projects. Maul recommended that Policy Committee members reach out to their contacts within the watershed to gauge their interest and availability to participate in the Advisory Committee. Maul stated that the Advisory Committee will typically meet two (2) to three (3) times. Secretary Roling commented that the consultant firm will work with the Advisory Committee to manage these projects. The consultant firm will break down the projects into timeframes and action tiers, and act as the project manager.

Holly Bushman, Steering Team member representing Le Sueur County, further explained to the Committee that the Advisory Committee are the "experts" or technical advisors with special interest in the watershed. Bushman recommended inviting members who can view broader issues that affect the watershed as a whole. Mike Schultz, Steering Team member representing Le Sueur SWCD, stated that existing plans will be combined to elevate priorities and fill any existing gaps.

Zins asked Maul whether all watershed plans have similar projects and priorities. Maul explained that there are some overarching priorities with watersheds that are geographically similar. Two examples of common priorities in agricultural areas are water drainage management and soil health. With that said, each watershed will have specific projects which are unique to the watershed. This Plan has representation from numerous cities, and city priorities will differ from rural. Zins also asked Maul for an example of an issue that will be brought before this Committee. Maul stated that high nitrates in the City of St. Peter's drinking water supply is one example. Maul named erosion, run-off, and excess water as additional examples.

Kick-Off Meeting Locations

Famakinwa updated the Committee that there will be two (2) public kick-off meetings. The Steering Team recommended meeting locations near a watershed water feature, including shelter in the event of inclement weather. Kick-off meetings will be held mid-July through early-August with one (1) meeting during the work week from 4 – 7 p.m., and one (1) meeting held on the weekend. The Minnesota

State University's Water Resources Center (MSU-WRC) will spearhead these public events. Kimberly Musser, MSU-WRC Assistant Director, has been invited to the next Steering Team meeting.

The Policy Committee recommended the following meeting locations: Nicollet Conservation Club, Lake Washington Park, Sibley Park, Seven Mile Creek, St. Peter Community Center, Minnesota Square Park pavilion, as well as St. Peter and Mankato water treatment plants as possible locations.

The Policy Committee discussed more kick-off meetings, but recommended that two (2) kick-off meetings with the addition of a virtual meeting for those that cannot attend the in-person meetings. It was recommended that priority be given to more central locations.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 13th.

Final Discussion

Maul encouraged Committee members to continue attending these meetings, since future meetings will be more substantial.

Salsbury asked Maul if there was a central location to view other watershed plans. Maul said that there is a map on BWSR's One Watershed One Plan website where you can view all the other plans and websites. Maul did stress that this plan will differ with as much city involvement as it has. bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan-participating-watersheds: Approved Plans & Interactive Map

Next Steps

Policy Committee members are to meet with their Steering Team staff to compile an Advisory Committee member contact list, and submit that list to Famakinwa by Tuesday, April 23rd.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.



Marie Dranttel, Policy Committee Chair
One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River - Mankato



Date