

One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato

STEERING TEAM MEETING MINUTES

February 28, 2024

The One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato Steering Team met at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at the Nicollet County Government Center. Present at the meeting for Nicollet County: Kenny Famakinwa and Crystal Madden; Nicollet County SWCD: Blake Honetschlager and Mackenzie Bratsch; City of North Mankato: Luke Arnold; City of Mankato: Jeff Johnson; Blue Earth County: Scott Salsbury; Blue Earth County SWCD: Jerad Bach; Le Sueur County: Holly Bushman; Le Sueur County SWCD: Mike Schultz; City of Lake Crystal: Angela Grafstrom; City of St. Peter: Curtis Thompson; BWSR: Jeremy Maul and Adam Beilke.

Introductions & Agenda Review

Introductions were made, and the meeting agenda reviewed.

Policy Committee Meeting Updates

The Policy Committee made the decision to meet on the second Monday of the month from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. At their last meeting held on Monday, February 26th, they approved the Policy Committee By-Laws. The Policy Committee requested changes to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) dates. The Policy Committee officers include: Marie Dranttel with Nicollet County as Chair; Mike Laven with the City of Mankato as Vice Chair, and Steve “Gump” Rohlfing with Le Sueur County as Secretary.

The Steering Team requested that the Policy Committee be reminded that only one person per entity may vote on a motion. Voting by members of the Policy Committee may only take place in-person, and it will be stressed to the primary and alternate Policy Committee members that their in-person attendance is required.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) & Work Plan Update

After a requested change to the MOA, it was suggested by Jeremy Maul with BWSR that the document go back to the respective boards for final approval with MOA submission to BWSR before the end of March.

Maul requested an updated Work Plan from Kenny Famakinwa with Nicollet County. Maul also suggested that the consultant presentation date be moved from mid to early May, allowing the Policy Committee to vote to recommend one consultant during their May 13th meeting. It was agreed that moving the date was acceptable in keeping pace with the project timeline, as well as the fact that the majority of potential consultants are currently involved in water planning projects and have experience with the process.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) & Consultant Interviews

Suggested edits to the RFQ by the Policy Committee were discussed. The changes included:

- The Policy Committee requested to be represented by members of the group during the consultant interviews: One (1) county, one (1) SWCD and one (1) city member – totaling three (3) representatives from the Policy Committee.

- Revised target dates

Scott Salsbury with Blue Earth County, offered to send a list of consultant questions and a rubric for scoring consultant interviews. Holly Bushman with Le Sueur County, suggested that consultants send examples of other watershed projects they have worked on for review before the interview date. Bushman recommends the consultant interview group contact the watershed project administrative support staff for their opinions concerning the consultant's responsiveness and project management skills. Discussion also took place concerning defining consultant deliverables. Bushman offered to share a draft of deliverables which Le Sueur County has used.

Maul assured the Team that the majority of consultants have already gone through an initial "surge" of water projects, and that they will have the added experience, resources, and time to dedicate to this project. ISG, Barr Engineering Co., and Houston Engineering, Inc. are three potential water plan consultants.

Advisory Committee Membership, Public Kick-Off Meeting & Plan Notification

Famakinwa requested members send him entity and member contact information to begin compiling a list of potential Advisory Committee members. Maul suggested that Team members have a conversation with their Policy Committee representatives to compile one individual list, before sending them to Famakinwa.

There was discussion on the public kick-off meeting. Use of surveys and potential secondary meetings for public feedback coordinated by board/councils was also discussed. It was suggested that the public kick-off meeting be scheduled in a central location within the watershed. Feedback from the public kick-off meeting, surveys, commissioners and council members, and individuals will help give direction on project priority.

Maul clarified that the plan notification process provides entities a sixty (60) day window to respond with feedback concerning the plan. Information included in the notification: Work Plan, timeline, project priorities, use of additional funding and resources. The current notification list includes: MN Board of Water & Soil Resources; MN Department of Agriculture; MN Department of Health; MN Department of Natural Resources; MN Environmental Quality Board; MN Pollution Control Agency; Brown County & Brown County SWCD; Sibley County & Sibley County SWCD; Watonwan County & Watonwan County SWCD; Renville County & Renville County SWCD.

Maul did remind the Team that entities not included on the list may request to be added to the notification list. Maul also suggested that once feedback from the plan notification is received and compiled, the Team may request a meeting with the Policy Committee members to go over feedback and finalize higher level plan project priorities so that everyone is on the same page.

Schedule Next Steering Team Meeting

The next scheduled Steering Team meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27th at the Nicollet County Government Center Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Next Steps

Holly Bushman with Le Sueur County requested that the Policy Committee & Steering Team meetings be offered over Zoom for administrative staff to listen in on meetings, and for the purpose of

drafting meeting minutes. Bushman also offered to submit a list of draft deliverables for the Team to review.

It was suggested that the Nicollet County Government Center EOC room seating be rearranged for future meetings to allow for more meeting participants. Due to a second-floor remodel taking place from March 11th – July, the EOC is currently the largest space available within the Nicollet County Government Center. Famakinwa will proactively find alternate meeting space for use if the remodel interferes with Policy Committee and Steering Team meetings. Famakinwa alerted the group that his office space is temporarily located in the Health & Human Services building for the duration of the remodel.

Famakinwa will submit an updated Work Plan and Plan Development Timeline to BWSR for review. The draft budget was submitted to BWSR on January 25. Famakinwa will reach out to Policy Committee members to ensure that the May 2nd date is available to schedule the consultant interviews. Famakinwa will ensure that the consultants are aware that the satisfaction of deliverables will be required to receive payment. Maul will share contact information for Barr Engineering with Famakinwa. Famakinwa will complete Plan Notification, and update the Team at the next meeting. Famakinwa will notify the Team once the Policy Committee decides on their three (3) representatives for the consultant interviews, so that the Team may choose their three (3) representatives for the group.

Steering Team members are to consult with their Policy Committee representative to create a master Advisory Committee member contact list - sent to Famakinwa, as well as identify potential project priorities to share with the Team.

Team members should come prepared to the next meeting to discuss: Advisory Committee members, consultant interview questions, scoring and deliverables, any identified future projects and their priority, and will have also emailed Famakinwa their final approved MOAs.