

## **COTTONWOOD-MIDDLE MINNESOTA ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN**

### **POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2024 – 12:30 PM**

***Joined virtually\****



Policy Committee (PC) Present: Larry Anderson-Area II, Bill Eckstein-RCRCA, Jeff Veerkamp-Brown County, Mark Wellner-Brown SWCD, Tom Appel-Cottonwood County, Daryl Tasler-Cottonwood SWCD, Rick Anderson-Lyon County, John Lanoue-Lyon SWCD, \*Jason Miller-Murray SWCD and Ed Carter-Redwood SWCD.

Steering Team (ST) Present: Kay Clark-Cottonwood SWCD/County, \*Craig Christensen-Murray SWCD, Kerry Netzke-RCRCA/Area II, John Shea-BWSR and \*Mark Hiles-BWSR.

Consultant: \*Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering Inc.

Lunch was provided to the Policy Committee.

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 12:33 AM.

There were no additions or corrections to the Agenda. Minutes from the September 18, 2024 Public Hearing and Policy Committee meeting were reviewed. Motion by Larry Anderson, seconded by Appel, to approve the agenda and both sets of minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financials for months-ended September 30 and October 31 were reviewed. Expenses to date include \$138,622.45 for consultant services; \$27,363.14 for administration, and total grant expenditure of \$165,985.59. Remaining grant funds amount to \$87,014.41. Motion by Carter, seconded by Eckstein, to approve the financial reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

#### Plan Approval Update

##### **▪ BWSR Southern Region Committee Meeting**

The TEAMS meeting has been scheduled for Monday, December 9 from 10:30-12:00. BWSR prefers to hear from the local staff rather than the consultant; Netzke agreed to present the PowerPoint that Olm will prepare. Olm will be on hand to answer questions. The Steering Team and Policy Committee will be sent the meeting link.

##### **▪ BWSR Board Meeting**

The BWSR Board will approve the Plan at their meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. More details will be provided when they become available.

#### Remaining Planning Grant Dollars

At the end of October, \$87,014.41 of grant funds remain. HEI estimates coming in about \$10,000 under budget for consultant services with the BWSR Southern Region meeting being remote and no other December meetings. Some administration funds will be needed to cover Netzke's time for the next few months to wrap up the grant expenditures and submit the final report in eLINK. Netzke feels \$68,800 is a safe estimate for remaining grant funds.

The meeting was turned over to Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering.

HEI prepared a memo containing the items discussed with the Steering Team as possible expenditures for the remaining funds. These items include:

***\$7,900 Benefits Estimator and Spreadsheet Tool (BEAST)***

This is a one-time payment for HEI to develop this spreadsheet which allows all partners to calculate reductions the same way. A “How To” manual is provided with the software. The spreadsheet can be printed annually to assist with eLINK reporting. This is not a tracking system. The Steering Team recommends this purchase for consistency between the watersheds and the ease of use.

***\$12,000 MS4Front Tracking System***

The tracking software is a cloud-based system that requires a \$6,000 annual subscription that covers all updates and needed fixes to the software. This subscription is not eligible for Planning Grant funds, however WBIF is currently allowed to pay for this. This policy may be changing according to Shea and would have to be covered by partner dues. This system tracks everything completed by the CWMP, including Education & Outreach, whereas eLINK is for grant tracking only. The two are not the same. The Steering Team recommends this system for consistency between the watersheds and the ease of use.

***\$50,000 Hydrologic Model***

The entire watershed area would be broken into approximately 100 subwatersheds that would be about 15-20 square miles in size. The HEC-HMS model would be utilized to determine which subwatersheds would be advantageous to focus on for floodwater storage as compared to others where work would not reduce peak flows. At a later time, priority subwatersheds could be analyzed even further for more detailed storage locations. The Steering Team sees many advantages to having this information with Climate Resiliency grants and Clean Water Fund Multi-Purpose Drainage grants that require a model. This model would be developed by June 30, 2025 which is the expiration date for the Planning Grant. An extension could be requested to the end date if needed.

***\$1,800 Training***

HEI would provide up to 8 hours of remote training on any of the deliverables mentioned above to increase usability and understanding.

***\$71,700 Total Proposed HEI Services***

Netzke added that the printing of the Plan document and large-scale maps and brochures is not included in this total figure. This would add approximately \$4,000 to the cost.

Discussion followed. Shea noted that the Planning Grant may not cover the cost of training, and it was agreed to remove that deliverable from the list. Netzke explained that the Hydrologic Model could be developed for the High and Medium Planning Areas, leaving the Low priority areas for a later date. This would lower the cost estimate to fall more within our budget and would allow for printing of plans and maps. Policy Members felt that developing the whole watershed was more important and the printing could be done at a later time. Kay Gross encouraged the printing of plans as it makes work plan development much easier with a document in your hands.

Motion by Tasler, seconded by Lanoue, to approve HEI deliverables 1, 2, and 3 for a total cost of \$69,900. Motion carried unanimously.

Olm and Netzke will look at the remaining funds more closely as it may be able to squeeze enough funds to allow for the printing needs.

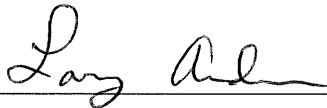
#### Formal Agreement Update

Netzke had a teleconference with Ann Goering and Jordan Soderlind from Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA who worked on GBERBA's joint powers agreement and bylaws. The needed revisions include changing RCRCA's boundary to include the entire 1W1P watershed area and not just the mainstem river watersheds. Bylaws must also be drafted. Netzke spoke to Soderlind this week who did not have anything to provide to the Board but indicated that they have begun working on the revisions and will have them completed by the end of December.

#### Action Items and Next Steps

With BWSR Board approval scheduled for January, the next Policy Committee meeting will be Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 1:00 PM at the Springfield Area Community Center. This will likely be the last meeting for the Policy Committee which will be in-person with a remote link in case of inclement weather.

With no other business to discuss, the chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 1:16 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Anderson", is written over a horizontal line.

Larry Anderson, Secretary  
Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Partnership