

elm creek Watershed Management Commission

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Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes | May 14, 2025

I. A meeting of the **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 10:33 a.m., Wednesday, May 14, 2025, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Chair Derek Asche.

Present: Steven Touney, Champlin; Lauren Letsche, Corcoran; Josh Accola, Stantec, Dayton; Derek Asche, Maple Grove; Michelle Jennings, WSB, Medina; Ben Scharenbroich, Plymouth; Mike Albers, Rogers; Kevin Ellis, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District; Diane Spector and Erik Megow, Stantec; and Judie Anderson, JASS.

Also present: Doug Baines, Dayton; Fintan Lenahan, Plymouth; Jen Dullum, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

II. Motion by Scharenbroich, second by Touney to approve the **May 14, 2025, meeting agenda**.
Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Scharenbroich, second by Albers to approve the **minutes of the April 9, 2025, meeting**.
Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT.***

A. The Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission on April 9, 2025, initiated a Minor Plan Amendment to the Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. This revision would add two projects to the CIP and revise the cost of one existing project. This proposed revision is set forth in the Notice of Minor Plan Amendment on the following page.

The purpose of the May 14, 2025, public meeting is to discuss the proposed minor plan amendment and any comments received prior to or at the meeting. (This is not a formal public hearing.) After that discussion, the Commission may consider a resolution adopting the Minor Plan Amendment contingent on County Board approval of the CIP portion of the Minor Plan Amendment, which will be heard at a County Board hearing in June-July 2025. As of this date, two comments have been received - from the Metropolitan Council, commending the Commission for keeping its CIP up to date, and from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, which had no comment.

B. **Requested Amendments.**

1. The City of Dayton has proposed a revision to a project added to the CIP for 2025: a Diamond Lake drawdown/alum treatment. The revision eliminates the option for a whole lake drawdown and focuses only on alum treatment and associated SAV management and monitoring. The Commission's share in 2026 would be \$330,000, levied in 2025.

2. The City of Maple Grove requests consideration of a project to restore a reach of Rush Creek from Rush Creek Hollow to Fernbrook Lane. This is adjacent to the Rush Creek at Rush

Creek Hollow project ordered in 2024. The Commission's share in 2026 would be \$200,000, levied in 2025.

3. The City of Corcoran has requested adding to the 2025 CIP cost share to purchase a new street sweeper. The Commission's Cost Share Policy allows this if the equipment provides enhanced street sweeping as a BMP. The Commission's share in 2026 would be \$100,000, levied in 2025.

C. Recommendation and Future Actions.

1. A resolution adopting this Minor Plan Amendment is included in the meeting packet.

2. Future actions in the 2025 CIP process include:

a. June: adopt a maximum levy and report that to Hennepin County

b. August: call for a public hearing on proposed 2025 projects

c. September: hold a public hearing to adopt the projects and certify a levy to Hennepin County.

Motion by Scharenbroich, second by Letsche to recommend to the Commission its approval of **Resolution 2025-01 Adopting a Minor Plan Amendment*** as described above. *Motion carried unanimously.*

IV. 2026 OPERATING BUDGET.

A. According to the Joint Powers Agreement, the Commission must, on or before June 15 of each year, adopt a budget for the coming year. The budget must be transmitted along with notice of the apportionment of costs to each city by July 1. The 2026 draft budget* is presented for the TAC's review and discussion.

B. The 2026 budget as proposed is a continuation of the programs and activities undertaken in 2025, with some slight modifications. The overall proposed 2026 operating budget totals \$506,210, about a \$10,300 increase over the 2025 budget, mainly due to some assumptions about project review costs.

1. The budget includes a proposed increase in the administrative budget, which has only been modestly increased in the past several years. In the meantime, there has been an increase in the number of TAC, WBIF, and other meetings and project and grant accounting has become more complex. This is partly offset by eliminating the separate line item for grant writing. In the past, that expense has been funded through the General Technical Services budget.

2. The costs and revenues shown for project reviews in 2026 are based on the revised fee structure and our experience over the last few years. Staff assumes 40 project reviews in 2026.

3. Some adjustments have been made to individual line items based on past experience and based on the increasing cost of doing business.

C. No increase is proposed for 2026 member assessments, which total \$257,000. There was no increase in 2024 and a 3% increase in 2025. The 2026 budget assumes a \$21,910 contribution from cash reserves to limit any increase in assessments.

D. The Commission's Comprehensive Fund Balance Policy requires that the Commission maintain a cash reserve equal to either 50% of annual operating revenues or five months of operating expenses. While the 2024 year-end balance is still under audit, it appears likely that the Commission currently maintains more than adequate cash reserves, especially since it appears at year end the budget ended with a \$79,000+ surplus due to interest earnings.

Asche proposed supporting the Stormwater Research Council in the amount of \$25,000 in 2026.

After discussion, motion by Asche, second by Scharenbroich to recommend adding this expense as a line item to the proposed 2026 Budget. *Motion carried unanimously.* Monies to fund this line item would be taken from the unrestricted fund balance.

V. FOURTH GENERATION WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN.

A. At last month's TAC meeting the members discussed some outstanding issues for consideration in the Fourth Generation Plan Rules and Standards update. Based on this discussion, Staff incorporated the following into the review draft, which can be found on the website ([Minutes & Meeting Packets - Elm Creek Watershed](#)):

- 1.** The thresholds for triggering Rule D Stormwater Management have been revised to:
 - a.** Eliminate the requirement that projects of any size that are adjacent to or contain lakes, streams, or wetlands, or that impact floodplains must meet all the volume management, rate control, and water quality requirements of Rule D. Smaller projects that propose floodplain, wetland, crossings, or buffer impacts will still be regulated under Rules F, G, H, and I.
 - b.** Explicitly exempt stand-alone single-family houses from Rule D. Other rules would still apply; for example, if there was a wetland or floodplain impact proposed.
- 2.** Members also discussed pulling some more technical, design detail-like language out of the rules and into a separate guidance document. There was some concern that doing so might imply that those standards were voluntary guidance rather than expectations or requirements. Staff suggested tabling this idea to a future date to gather input and feedback from other WMOs who have similar guidance documents, and learning from their experience.

B. CAC Meetings. Staff have met with every city. In general, these meetings have been well received. There were a few questions about the upcoming chloride management plan and the proposed resiliency study. The CACs were encouraged to use the comment form on the website to convey questions and provide input.

C. Public Survey. As part of the public outreach for the Plan, the first online survey is now available. Staff will be sending out a press release and requests to the cities to post the link. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JZZG92V>. Members recommended creating a social media post for the survey.

D. Informal Review Draft. A second draft of the plan and the appendices is available and has been uploaded to the website at elmcreekwatershed.org/watershed-management-plan.html. It is now ready to be sent out to the cities for INFORMAL review. This is an opportunity for cities to submit comments for consideration before the formal 60-day review period begins in June. A copy of the **press release*** that is proposed for this announcement is included in the meeting packet.

Motion by Scharenbroich, second by Touney to recommend that the Commission send out the Plan for Informal Review. *Motion carried unanimously.*

VI. WEBSITE PLATFORM.

The Commission's website host, Weebly, is focusing on its e-commerce operations and its e-commerce platform and will, in the future, provide limited support for its "traditional" website builder. The websites for Elm Creek, Shingle Creek/West Mississippi, Pioneer-Sarah Creek and WMWA are over ten years old. They are functional and have served their purpose but are missing some elements that users expect of modern websites, such as searchable document libraries and calendars. They are also not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - compliant nor generally user-friendly. It is Staff's recommendation that the Commissions use this opportunity to not only move the sites over to a new platform but also to revitalize and modernize them.

Staff have received quotes anywhere from \$10,000 to \$25,000+ each, depending on how much site redesign is involved and how many files are stored in each library that need to be brought over. These quotes do not include any cost for staff time to assist on the project or other costs such as branding or logo development. Staff suggest the Commissions consider the following process:

1. There is some benefit for the watershed sites to be completed in tandem, by the same vendor and using the same platform. **Decision #1: Do you want to work in tandem with the other two watersheds in this process?**

2. If the decision is made to proceed as a group, each WMO should designate one to two Commissioners and one to two TAC members to serve as a **Steering Committee** that will be coordinated by Staff. The primary function of the Steering Committee is to develop the website Requirements and review the resulting RFP that Staff will develop. There will be an opportunity mid-process for the Steering Committee to review and comment on the work in progress. **Decision #2: Do you wish to participate in a joint Steering Committee, and who are your designees?**

3. Staff envision a stepwise process where the Steering Committee would prepare and send out an RFP by the end of summer, contracting with a single vendor, with an estimate completion date of 3-6 months. **Decision #3: Any comments on the proposed process?**

4. The attorney would also draw up a Memorandum of Understanding between the Commissions, outlining the various components of the process and the individuals responsible for them, etc.

It was a consensus to advise the Commission to move forward with this project.

Scharenbroich volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

The **next meeting** of the Technical Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 11, 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judie A. Anderson, Recording Secretary