

# elm creek Watershed Management Commission

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## Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes | June 12, 2024

I. A meeting of the **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 12, 2024, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Chair Derek Asche.

Present: Heather Nelson, Champlin; Josh Accola, Stantec, Dayton; Derek Asche, Maple Grove; Rebecca Haug, WSB, Medina; Diane Spector and Erik Megow, Stantec; Kevin Ellis, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District TRPD); Brad Wozney, BWSR; and Amy Juntunen, JASS. Also present: Doug Baines, Dayton.

Not represented: Corcoran, Plymouth and Rogers.

II. Motion by Haug, second by Nelson to approve the **Agenda** as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. Motion by Nelson, second by Haug to approve the **Minutes** of the May 8, 2024, meeting. *Motion carried unanimously.*

IV. **2025 OPERATING BUDGET.\*** Included in the meeting packet were three documents relating to the Commission's 2025 Operating Budget: (1) Staff's May 2, 2024, memo\* from last month's TAC meeting outlining a proposed draft budget for 2025, (2) Staff's June 5, 2024, memo\* describing a final proposed 2025 budget, and (3) Staff's June 5, 2024, memo\* with preliminary 2023 year-end fund balances.

The proposed budget shown in **Table 1** of the second memo reflects the discussion that occurred at the May TAC and Commission meetings.

A. The 2025 budget as proposed is a continuation of the programs and activities undertaken in 2024, with some slight modifications. The final proposed 2025 operating budget is about a \$1,800 increase over the 2024 budget, with some modifications to the May proposed expenses:

1. The lake and stream monitoring costs for 2025 have been updated by Three Rivers Park District. This added about \$3,600 to the proposed budget expense. USGS bills biannually but expects full payment at time of invoice, thus their erratic expenditure history.

2. West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) proposes to increase its budget in 2025 from \$44,000 to \$60,000, which increases each partner's share to \$15,000. The additional budget reflects the increased Watershed PREP activity as well as potential additional outreach, especially concerning chloride use.

3. The budget includes a proposed increase in the administrative budget, which has only been modestly increased in the past several years. The proposed increase has been reduced

\$2,000 from the draft budget shown last month to partially offset the increase in monitoring and education costs.

4. The costs and revenues shown for project reviews in 2025 are based on the revised fee structure and Staff experience over the last few years.

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

6. One source of revenue that has, in the past, helped to subsidize the member assessments is investment interest. A combination of higher interest rates and a significant fund balance resulted in significant interest income in past years. As projects are completed and the Commission pays out levy and grant funds for those projects, interest earnings will fall.

The 2025 budget as proposed includes a 5.0% increase in city assessments, compared to the 4.7% increase proposed last month. There was no increase in 2024. The proposed 2025 budget assumes a \$20,000 contribution from cash reserves.

While the 2023 year-end balances are 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 \$58,000+ surplus due to interest earnings. Staff expect to have updated balance figures at the June meeting.

**B. City Assessments.** Table 2 details the proposed member city assessments for 2025 compared to previous years. The 2025 assessments are based on the revised legal boundary. It is not possible to do an apples-to-apples comparison of 2024 to 2025 to evaluate the impact of the boundary change on the assessments. There were 1146 acres (600 parcels) that moved out of West Mississippi and into Elm Creek, mostly from Champlin, and only 52 acres that moved from Elm Creek into West Mississippi. Shingle Creek gained 60 acres from Elm Creek, but 627 acres moved from Shingle Creek into Elm Creek, mostly in Plymouth. About 550 acres moved out of Elm Creek into Bassett Creek, mostly from Plymouth. The net impact was an increase in the Elm Creek watershed legal boundary area of almost 0.4 square miles. Table 3 shows the area by city before and after the boundary change. The percent of watershed area changed slightly, most notably in Champlin, but that is still less than one-half percent.

Assessments are based on share of taxable market value. The table shows the taxable market value within each city's share of the watershed for 2024 compared to the 2023 value prior to the boundary change. While there is some variability year to year in market value and that variability is uneven across the cities, it is likely that a good share of the annual change this year was from the boundary revision.

**C. Discussion.**

1. Two things could happen to decrease interest earnings – cities can begin collecting on levied projects, interest rates could go down.

2. The Commission could amend its Comprehensive Fund Balance Policy on minimum balance.

3. The fact of a zero assessment increase in 2024 should be included in the letter to the cities.

4. Don't complicate the letter with verbiage regarding the impact of the boundary change.

Motion by Asche, second by Haug to recommend to the Commission a 3% increase in member assessments and an adjustment to the interest income line to account for that change.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

## **V. FOURTH GENERATION WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

**A.** Minnesota Rules 8410, which governs Metropolitan Water Management, sets forth the process for undertaking a Metro watershed management plan update and specifies the minimum content of those plans. The process begins with the notification of interested planning parties and a request for information and input into priorities to consider during the planning process. At their April meeting the Commissioners authorized that notification and input was received from eight agencies. A summary\* of their responses was included in the meeting packet. Their full submittals, which are quite lengthy, have been posted on the website, <https://www.elmcreekwatershed.org/watershed-management-plan.html>.

Today's regular meeting will be the official "kick off" of the Fourth Generation Plan where Staff will provide a brief review\* of project schedule and the focal areas already identified, discuss the agency input and how it might be incorporated into the Plan, and start the self-assessment process by reviewing the Commission's success in achieving Third Gen priorities.

**B.** Also included in the meeting packet is a draft summary of Third Generation Plan actions that will serve as self-assessment incorporated into the Plan. The first half of that document is a listing of actions and achievements, followed by a review of Third Generation priorities and goals and a Staff assessment of the Commission's success at achieving those objectives. Following the discussions today Staff will add any additional comments and information provided and complete the Assessment of Performance. This section should be an honest examination of the successes and challenges of the last ten years, and how that will inform the Fourth Generation Plan.

Table 1 of the June 5, 2024, memo\* shows the expected sequence of activities to be undertaken over the next 15 months. The actual plan development process will take about a year, with the final three months being the informal and formal review and approval process. As discussed previously, the Commissioners will ask each city to designate an existing Citizen Advisory Commission or their City Council to serve as their CAC and Commission staff and the Commissioner/TAC member will meet with each once to facilitate discussion and obtain citizen input. Those meetings are likely to be September-October 2024.

### **C. Discussion.**

The Fourth Generation Plan will not be a complete reinvention but will be an update that will focus mainly on new or enhanced initiatives. The scoping document identified these key issues such as increasing education and outreach, addressing the impact of continued build-out of watershed, and adding climate resilience. The Plan will focus on implementation and things that have

changed since the Third Generation Plan. The rest of the required content will be in the background – in the land and Water Inventory appendix and references to the Third Gen Plan.

The implementation section will be organized geographically – watershed-wide, then by subwatershed.

1. Complete self-assessment and start goals process at July meeting. The TAC spent some minutes brainstorming on “hits and misses” over the last ten years.

a. Do more with Chloride/Winter road/Parking Lot management

b. Look more at Fish/microinvertebrate impairments, too focused on TSS/TP.

c. Look at stream restorations to add habitat restoration.

d. Fell short on gathering water quality data on some lakes due to lack of volunteers.

e. Develop goals to limit discharge. We assumed infiltration would be met, but not true since so many projects weren’t able to meet infiltration requirements. Do more in infiltration-able areas, less with clay. Regional infiltration.

f. Cities must incorporate new climate resiliency into upcoming plans. Watershed can partner with cities on that.

g. Water reuse. Less strain on municipal water supply. Don’t need to reuse when already wet. Partnership cost-share program. Get developers to think about that.

2. Develop options for Education and Outreach, September – October.

a. Haven’t done a good job educating HOAs about water conservation, what “reuse” means. Next MS4 permit will place more emphasis on this.

b. Targeted fertilizer goal never came to fruition – owners were interested, but nobody was identified to implement it.

3. October – February, develop and discuss resiliency/build-out approach.

4. January-February, develop proposed implementation plan.

5. Preliminary draft at March 12, 2025 meeting.

6. Review process thereafter, with Commission adoption of the plan at its October 8, 2025, meeting.

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS.

A. **Next WBIF Convene Meeting** will be scheduled for mid to late July via Zoom.

B. **The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting** is tentatively scheduled for August 14, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. The next Fourth Generation discussion will occur at the regular July meeting.

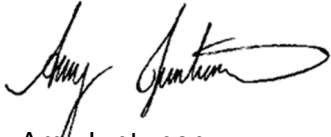
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Juntunen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Amy Juntunen  
Recording Secretary

AAJ:tim

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