

Pursuant to notice and due call, a regular meeting of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers was held Tuesday May 14, 2024 at the district office located at 211 2nd Street SE in Ortonville, MN. Board members present were Radermacher, Meyer and Bork. Executive Director of the UMRWD, Amber Doschadis, facilitated the meeting with Board Manager Jon Bork.

Wade Athey representing Big Stone County Commissioners attended the meeting. There were no members of the public present during this meeting.

Bork called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Minutes and Expenses

A motion was made by Radermacher, seconded by Meyer to approve minutes from the previous meeting, as well as authorize payment of submitted expenses, as presented by Doschadis. Motion Carried: 3-0

Rinke Noonan - BV Diversion Meeting Support/ Attendance	\$2,100.50
Rinke Noonan- General Contract Support	\$166.00
Big Stone Highway- Dry Lake Support	\$330.00
Houston Engineering #70360 Whetstone	\$6,518.50
MPCA - Whetstone Loan Payment #1	\$21,262.65

Whetstone River Restoration

1. Waste Removal with Hedge FLP

A motion was made by Meyer, seconded by Radermacher to initiate the waste effort with the Hedge Family Limited Partnership, including additional testing to assist in defining the project extents with Big Stone County as local permitting authority. Motion Carried: 3-0

Fish Passage in the Upper MN River Watershed

1. National Fish Passage Program Award, Doschadis reporting on the award of \$3.3 million for the combined Little MN River and Whetstone Restoration Project. The grant will provide \$3 million for the Whetstone Phase and the remaining \$300,000 needed for the Little Minnesota Phase.

2. SWO Application to America the Beautiful. Doschadis will continue to coordinate with Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate on the supplemental application to the America the Beautiful Program.

Browns Valley

1. Sediment Removal Project. Doschadis met with the contractor, site is wet from spring run-off and rains but will ideally dry up for a removal project in late June or July of this year.

2. Diversion Benefits Roll. HEI task order was executed and HEI will work with Doschadis on revisions to their original engineers report to assist the board in defining benefits.

One Watershed, One Plan

1. Signature Cards are ready to be signed at CenBank.

2. Doschadis reports that the funding request was approved, now working on a work plan with BWSR staff and the planning group.

Upper Big Stone Lake

1. Climate Resiliency Grant Agreement. Doschadis reports that the HEI Task order was approved at March Meeting, now seeking approval to execute the grant agreement with MPCA. A motion was made by Bork, seconded by Meyer to execute the grant, as presented by Doschadis. Motion Carried: 3-0

Big Stone Lake Levels and Mowing at the Dam

Doschadis reports that Big Stone County will mow the grounds surrounding the dam this summer.

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Manager Bork discussed allegations circulating on social media about the operations of the Big Stone/Whetstone Dam. Doschadis reviewed her daily operations of the 8 slide gates to manage Big Stone Lake, aiming for an average summer lake level ranging from 968 to 968.35 project datum. Discussion centered around the size of the watershed and the frequent fluctuations in the lake's levels, which can well exceed one foot depending on the rain. The board concurred with Doschadis' current operational approach and acknowledged that as of now, no one has made an effort to reach out to District staff with lake level concerns. Doschadis discussed creating a Big Stone Lake informational sheet to include in future public outreach that could also raise awareness of the fluctuating lake levels, including special attention on spring flooding.

Administrator's Report

A motion was made by Radermacher seconded by Meyer to approve the report, as submitted by Doschadis.
Motion Carried: 3-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 am.

Amber Doschadis, Administrator

Gene Meyer, Secretary