

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Wednesday September 9, 2026, 8:30 am – 10:34 am

Location: Rice Lions Building – 101 NW 1st St. Rice MN 56379

Voting members present: Ed Popp (Benton County), Arlyn Lawrenz (Stearns SCD), Joe Perske (Stearns County), Dave Huber (Morrison SWCD), Randy Winscher (Morrison County)

Voting members absent: Kelly Applegate (MLBO), Chuck Rau (Benton SWCD)

Staff/Public present: Roxanne Achman (Benton County), Stephanie Hatzenbihler (Stearns CD), John Maile (Stearns CD), Becky Schlorf (Stearns County) Emily Forbord (Stearns County), Mike McMillin (Benton SWCD), Shannon Wettstein (Morrison SWCD), Zach Guttormson (BWSR), Brad Wozney (BWSR), Robert Wall (Mille Lacs Band Ojibwe), Rachel Olm (HEI), Duane Kroll (Ag)

Minute taker: Mike McMillin – Benton SWCD

1. Call to order:

- Perske called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

2. Approve Agenda:

- Motioned by Lawrenz, 2nd by Winscher, all in favor, motion carried

3. Approve Policy Committee Meeting minutes from 6/10/26 Policy Committee Meeting

- Motioned by Lawrenz, 2nd by Winscher, all in favor, motion carried

4. Public Comment Period:

- Popp entered the meeting at 8:35 am and relieved Perski as meeting chairman.
- No Comments

5. Timeline Update

- SAM Subcommittee - Olm provided a summary of the SAM subcommittee meetings.
- TAC – Olm provided a summary of the July 8th and August 12th Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings.
- CAC – Hatzenbihler provided a summary of the August 28th Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. Hatzenbihler highlighted that the CAC identified top priority topics of surface water quality, ground water quality and ground water supply with priority practices being irrigation and soil health.
- LSP – Hatzenbihler provided an update on the status of Landscape Stewardship Plan (LSP) with the final meeting scheduled on September 15th.
- Overall timeline - Olm and Hatzenbihler provided an update on the overall timeline of the plan development process and the first available round of funding through WBIF FY27. Currently there is a 1-month buffer in the plan development schedule to meet the FY2027 funding cycle request deadline of April 30th, 2027. If more time is needed, then the planning partners can request BWSR shifts the watershed

to the FY28 funding cycle, otherwise the watershed would need to wait until the FY29 funding cycle. Discussion was had.

6. Fiscal Agent Report on Planning Grant:

- Wettstein stated that as of 9/1/26, \$178,973.51 (69%) of the grant has been spent.
- The 10% contingency (\$23,700) has not been touched yet and there are no plans to use it at this point.
- HEI Services Amendment – the proposed contract amendment covers additional services provided by HEI including additional meetings for \$23,000.00 HSPF SAM revisions for \$4,000.00 and ADA compliance for \$2,500.00 for a total of \$29,500.00. This will increase the engineering costs from \$157,614.00 to \$187,114.00, still under the \$200,000.00 that was originally budgeted for engineering. Motioned by Winscher, 2nd by Perske to recommend that the fiscal agent, Morrison SWCD Board, move to approve the HEI services amendment 1. All in favor, motion passed.

7. Implementation Agreement Decision Procedure:

- Hatzenbihler provided an update on the discussions held by the attorneys representing the planning partners. The attorneys would like direction from the Policy Committee and their respective boards/councils on which type of Joint Powers Organization will be formed for implementation. Policy Committee members were encouraged to discuss with their respective boards, staff leadership, and attorneys.
- Discussion was held on the timeline for this decision. The BWSR representative had stated that the decision of which type of organization is intended should be included in the draft CWMP for the public comment period. Planning partners expressed that more time was needed and the BWSR representative offered to check on any flexibility with timing.

8. Draft Plan and Internal Review:

- Information internal review comments submission window was August 19 through September 9. Many comments were received and will be reviewed and discussed at the TAC meeting following the close of the PC meeting. Discussion was held on if additional review time was needed. The PC directed the TAC to aim to finish review work today and bring a draft CWMP to the October 14 PC meeting that is ready for formal review. PC directed TAC that if there was a lack of consensus on any plan content items, to present those to the PC on 10.14 for their decision. PC members and their respective boards are invited to provide comments on the draft plan either as part of the internal review period or during the upcoming formal review period.

Popp adjourned the meeting at 10:24 am.