

# Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting Minutes



**Date/Time:** Wednesday January 14, 8:30 am – 10:00 am

**Location:** Rice Lions Building – 101 NW 1<sup>st</sup> St. Rice MN 56379

**Voting members present:** Chuck Rau (Benton SWCD), Ed Popp (Benton County), Arlyn Lawrenz (Stearns SWCD), Joe Perske (Stearns County), Scott Saehr (Morrison SWCD), Randy Winscher (Morrison County).

**Voting members absent:** Kelly Applegate (MLBO),

**Staff/Public present:** Stephanie Hatzenbihler (Stearns SCD), Mike McMillin (Benton SWCD), Destiny McDonald (Morrison SWCD), Zach Guttormson (BWSR), Robert Wall (Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe), Rachel Olm (HEI), Duane Kroll (Ag), Randy Klaphake (Ag)

**Minute taker:** Mike McMillin – Benton SWCD

- **Call to order:**
  - Popp called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. Introductions were made.
- **Approve Policy Committee Meeting minutes from 10/8/25:**
  - Rau moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Lawrenz, motion carried.
- **Public Comment Period:**
  - Kroll mentioned that he had some comments on Plan Section 3: Watershed opportunities that he will address in that section of the agenda.
- **2026 Meeting Calendar and Election of Officers:**
  - 2026 Officers - Rau moved to keep 2026 officers the same as 2025 – Chair – Ed Popp, Vice Chair – Joe Perske, Secretary – Arlyn Lawrenz, Second by Lawrenz, motion carried.
  - Meeting Dates – Discussion on current site and proposed meeting dates. General consensus is that the location will work, November meeting date is moved 1 week earlier to account for Veterans Day and December meeting date will conflict with the MCIT conference. The Steering

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Committee will aim to provide one month notice of meeting cancellation for Policy Committee Meetings when possible. Motion by Saehr to accept proposed meeting dates as presented, seconded by Winscher, motion carried.

- **Fiscal Agent Report on Planning Grant:**
  - McDonald stated that \$73,324.92 has been spent so far and \$187,375.08 remains. LSP will be starting soon and there are no concerns with funding for that.
- **Recent Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries:**
  - Olm gave updates on the November 12<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> TAC meetings.
- **Community Advisory Committee Update:**
  - Hatzenbichler gave an update on the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings in November. CAC comments are included in the board packet. The next meeting is planned for January 28, 2026.
- **Plan Section 2: Land and Water Resource Narrative:**
  - Olm updated PC on changes to the section since that last draft was presented to the PC.
    - Discussion on the value of older/incomplete data and what should be included.
    - Discussion on what the Counties and SWCD's have been doing already with Buffer's, SSTS and improvements to water quality over the years.
    - Discussion on Trout Stream Designations.
    - Saehr would like some separation in the Urban Areas and Towns to separate out the Rural Areas and SSTS.
  - Motion by Winscher to accept the section as a working document, Second by Saehr. Rau commented that this will continue to evolve as a working document. Motion carried.
- **Plan Section 3: Watershed Opportunities:**
  - Olm updated the PC on changes to the section since the last draft was presented to the PC.
    - Kroll commented that what is presented is not what was approved by the TAC. The current location of Environmental

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Justice under the Planning Lens section of the plan is putting it on the same priority level as the Mississippi and not as a statement.

- Discussion followed on what Environmental Justice is, locations in the watershed and how the Environmental Justice statement in the plan can possibly affect future non-WBIF funding.
- Olm recommended moving the Environmental Justice statement to another section of the plan, “Other Considerations”
- Consensus of the Policy Committee was to send Plan Section 3: Watershed Opportunities back to the TAC to move the Environmental Justice summary to the plan subsection “Other Considerations.”
- **Measurable Goals:**
  - Olm introduced the measurable goals framework
  - Motion by Perske to approve the measurable goal framework, second by Lawrenz, motion carried.
- **Introduction to Formal Agreement Structures:**
  - Guttormson (BWSR) presented Formal Agreement Structures and the requirement to have one in place to access funding in the future during CWMP implementation.
  - A brief overview of Joint Powers Collaborative vs. Joint Powers Entity
  - Consensus of the Policy Committee was to have representatives liaison with their respective boards and discuss preferences to share with the group.
- **2019 Little Rock Lake Drawdown:**
  - Perske questioned if drawn results are available and the opportunity to use the results in future planning. Rau commented that additional information is available and a future presentation could be possible.

Popp adjourned the meeting at 10:10 am.

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