

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

#### Committee Members Present:

Sandra Rummel-Chair, Lona Schreiber, Harry Melander, Marie McCarthy; Wendy Wulff-Vice Chair, Edward Reynoso

#### Committee Members Absent:

None

#### CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Rummel called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, 2016.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Lona Schreiber seconded by Wendy Wulff to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Edward Reynoso seconded by Lona Schreiber to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, February 9, 2016 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motion carried.**

#### CONSENT BUSINESS

It was moved by Edward Reynoso, seconded by Wendy Wulff to approve consent business items 2016-36 and 2016-52. **Motion carried.**

##### 1. **2016-36: Authorization to Amend the 2016 Unified Budget – Carry-Forward Amendment**

That the Metropolitan Council amend the 2016 Unified Operating Budget for wastewater operations to increase expenses by \$2,664,480 and revenues by \$1,864,480.

##### 2. **2016-52: Authorization to Acquire Permanent/Temporary Easements and File Condemnation Petitions for 2016 Blue Lake Interceptor Rehabilitation, Project No. 802880, Resolution 2016-5**

That the Metropolitan Council pass Resolution 2016-5 that authorizes acquisition of permanent and temporary easements necessary for the 2016 Blue Lake Interceptor Rehabilitation Project and authorizes Council legal staff to initiate condemnation proceedings for those parcels that staff cannot acquire by negotiation.

#### NONCONSENT BUSINESS

##### 3. **2016-53: Ratification of Emergency Declaration for Pump Flow L-35 Lift Station and Forcemain 4-NS-524**

It was moved by Edward Reynoso, seconded by Wendy Wulff that the Metropolitan Council ratifies the attached *Emergency Declaration* for repair of a broken valve at L-35 and plugged forcemain at 4-NS-524 located in Moundsview, MN. **Motion carried.**

##### 4. **2016-55 - SW: Approval of 2016 Targeted Stormwater Grants Program**

It was moved by Marie McCarthy seconded by Lona Schreiber that the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to approve the process identified in Attachment A for

the 2016 stormwater grant program and authorize staff to advertise the availability of funding and solicit applications for 2016 grants. **Motion carried.**

## INFORMATION

### 1. Governor's Water Summit Update

Sam Paske, Assistant General Manager, Environmental Quality Assurance provided a summary of the Governor's Water Summit which occurred on Saturday, February 27, 2016.

The purpose of the Governor's Water Summit was to create an event for the people of the State of Minnesota so the Governor, agencies and stakeholders can truly listen to those who care and know the most about water challenges and solutions.

- Shine a bright light on water and what is working
- Get input that can be put into immediate action
- Take responsibility at all levels and areas
- Engage those who have the best knowledge

Success:

- Governor would know where to focus
- People would see new ways
- Not a rehashing of the problems

Preparation: Representatives from the Governor's office and state agencies have been planning since January

- MN DNR
- MPCA
- EQB
- MN Department of Health
- MN Department of Agriculture
- MN Department of Management & Budget
- Met Council
- Investment by non-profits and help from E/I, Jeremy Lenz

Topics Included:

- Investing in clean water (future/technology)
- Living cover to protect water quality & quantity
- Sustainable water supply
- Severe climate/resiliency
- Managing water in the rural environment
- Managing water in the built environment
- Water and wastewater infrastructure funding (fiscal sustainability)
- Aquatic Invasive Species

Event Day Summary:

- Over 900 attendees including members of the public, private industry and government representatives
- The Governor attended (almost) the entire summit
- High energy
- Groups were small enough for honest, engaged discussion
- Facilitated for fair participation
- All comments were captured

### Key Takeaways:

- Emphasize and leverage our state water ethic including state coordination & leadership, education & awareness and local action/benefits
- Greatly increase outreach/education on the value of water and things people can do every day
- Communicate the true cost/value of water – more information at hand for the public
- Recognize that broad interests in water sustainability must align with a focus on action and leadership at the local level (collaboration)
- Broad desire for local summits
- Research investment into uses for better cover crops, conservation and protection
- Make multiple benefit investments whenever possible
- Remove barriers to water reuse such as lack of understanding and prohibitive regulations
- Improve messaging from water leaders and champions including modeling actions
- One watershed/one plan – better integration of players and desired outcomes

### What it means for the Council:

- Validation
- Continue increasing our outreach to customers and stakeholders
- Focus on the potential for future investments that keep more clean water in the region
- Work locally, avoid a one size fits all approach
- Support research into drought resistant landscaping and science
- Focus on water efficiency and getting the most from our resources
- Partner/collaborate as a primary way to make progress

### Next Steps:

- The notes are being compiled and will be condensed into a public report
- Identify how we can improve our approach based on the input from the report
- Identify how we can create more regional conversations that lead to real action

The Met Council received valuable confirmation to continue working with communities and stakeholders as a valued leader and partner in water sustainability.

### Comments/Questions

- One watershed, one plan? Could you explain a little more what that is? Staff stated it is meant to simplify the process where cities would only be to complete one document instead of multiple.
- Question for Chair Rummel - You are on the Clean Water Council. It seems the path in the past was multiple research studies versus projects? We are spending less on research studies. Most dollars go to point-source projects.
- Any chance they will consider funding I&I problems on house pipes since we can't use bonding money for that? We are trying to find a way because it has to do with using state funding for private property. It's on private property, but public pollution. Need more conversations to get it higher on the list.
- Staff stated the water summit felt like it was a once in a generation event. Another attendee said this was done 30 years ago. The time we will be spending will hopefully make it feel not so sporadic.

## 2. General Manager's Report –

The recent NACWA conference yielded items that connect well with the water summit.

- There was a message of “when water is in trouble, everything is in trouble.” This connects strongly with Thrive principles. The Clean Water Act has been around for quite a while and was characterized by getting at point sources, litigation, and regulation. There is now discussion about a new Clean Water Act that was re-written to get more at the non-point source solutions. We have done a lot, however, we need to get at the remaining problems. Non-point is difficult to determine effective solutions.
- There is raised consumer consciousness and are becoming more aware of the water needs, challenges, and being willing to pay more for certain things if they know how it is beneficial toward water in the future.
- *Campaign Across the Nation* has been looking in to what can we flush and not flush. Legislation is being discussed at the federal level.
- More was shared on the one water concept. Everyone is working together in order to have a healthy water shed, we need to continue working together.
- GM Thompson has been named to the Board of Directors for NACWA. They talked about Flint, MI and what we can learn from that situation. She has joined her first subcommittee which will be addressing how larger utilities can help the smaller utilities. Chair Rummel stated she is proud we have someone on the Board. CM McCarthy stated to have someone be invited to participate in the Board of Directors, shows the caliber of the department we have.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Susan Taylor  
Recording Secretary