

Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB)
December 16th, 2011
Cass County Courthouse, Walker, MN
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing County), Jack Frost (Beltrami County), Davin Tinquist (Itasca County), Dean Newland (Clearwater County), Neal Gaalswyk (Cass County), Lyle Robinson (Hubbard County), Tom Wenzel (Morrison County), Brian Napstad (Aitkin County) and Pam Kichler (Admin. Asst. Staff)

Members Excused:

Others Present: Dan Steward (Board of Water and Soil Resources - BWSR), Todd Holman (The Nature Conservancy - TNC), Lindberg Ekola (Minnesota Forest Resource Council - MFRC), Lori Dowling (MnDNR), Tom Landwehr (MnDNR Commissioner), Senator Bob Lessard, Peter Buessler (MnDNR), Chris Pence (Crow Wing County ESD), Mitch Brinks (Crow Wing County Water Protection Specialist)

9:03 am – Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) called to order the monthly meeting of the Mississippi Headwaters Board at 9:03 am on Dec. 16th, 2011 in Walker, MN. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance.

9:04 am - Agenda (December 16th '11). The Chair asked that discussion on the 'Mississippi River Gathering III' be added to the Agenda and that discussion with MnDNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr takes place when timing allows. **Motion** was made and seconded by Commissioners Brian Napstad (Aitkin) / Jack Frost (Beltrami) to approve the amended Agenda - 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

9:05 am – Consent Agenda (Nov. '11 Minutes and Nov. / Dec. '11 Expenses). **Motion** was made and seconded by Commissioners Davin Tinquist (Itasca) / Lyle Robinson (Hubbard) to approve the December '11 Consent Agenda and the expenses for Dec. '11 (\$3,357.22) – 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) asked Commissioner Tom Landwehr (DNR) whether he would like to move his discussion portion of the meeting earlier on the Agenda. Tom Landwehr thanked the Chair for making the suggestion but that it will not be necessary.

9:07 am – Staff Report (Nov. – Dec.) - Pam Kichler (Admin. Asst. Staff) highlighted several items:

- **#3 (P/B)** - Staff advised that the office received the MCIT '11 Dividend on 11/16/11 for \$1,884
- **#4, #5 (P/B)** – Staff has prepared/mailed the Special District Financial Report for fiscal 7/1/10 to 6/30/11 as well as the Federal Census Bureau Report
- **#2 (P/C)** – Staff has been in contact w/all 8 county ESD to ask whether there has been interest on the Guide Book and if they were in need of more book order forms. Only a couple responded and there seems to be little inquiries and no additional forms were needed. Brian Napstad (Aitkin) asked whether staff has been in contact w/each of the counties to establish a direct WEB link to our home page from their site. Staff has sent an email asking for this but has not heard back on when/if it's possible. The office will make another attempt to contact
- **#4 (P/C)** – The office received a call inquiring about possible volunteering for our board. The call came from Luke Simonette (Crow Wing County Community Social Services). Staff advised that there is nothing currently available for volunteering but that the office will keep his name for the future
- **#6 (P/C)** – The office has received a request for judges & award sponsorship for the '12 Northern MN Regional Science Fair. In the past, the MHB has offered cash awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place science projects. The board asked that this proposal appear on the January 2012 Agenda for consideration
- Staff provided the board members the '12 Meeting calendar and office rotation sheet in their meeting folders. In looking at the By-Laws next rotation line-up, there may need to be board action to re-vamp the noted rotation schedule as currently set. After further discussion, the board asked that this item be added to the January Agenda

9:25 am – Zoning Actions – none

9:25 am – Actions / Discussion Items –

► **State Grant Contract** – The floor was given to Peter Buesseler (MnDNR Reg. Manager – Beltrami). Peter provided a bit of back-ground and advised that he was on the Agenda today to give the board the opportunity to ask questions on the new State appropriations contract for 2012 and 2013. Each of the board members was given a ‘mark-up’ copy to review prior. The following are some discussion highlights:

- 1) Formerly this grant was administered through the Division of Waters and has since been handed over to regional oversight (Division of Ecological Water Resources out of Bemidji) however the Grants intent remain unchanged
- 2) There has been an entire State fiscal system change, that included increased scrutiny of funding sources, along with the need for language clean-up to some of the long standing contracts
- 3) The prior Agreement was one page. Now the contractual portions has been pulled out and made into a separate document. The new agreements focus is driven more toward ‘outcomes’
- 4) Future quarterly reimbursement paperwork will remain much the same, however the State is looking for more specificity as to how the costs directly correlate to Work Plan elements
- 5) There have been no statutory changes to how/where this money comes from and through. The MnDNR is still considered the ‘pass-through’ agent. The change is in the ‘Grant Manager’
- 6) The board is asking the MnDNR to recognize that requiring additional information (#4 above) may entail additional hours for part-time staff to complete and will this board have a dispute resolution process if it becomes an issue. Peter will look into this provision
- 7) **Motion** was made and seconded by Commissioner Neal Gaalswyk (Cass) / Brian Napstad (Aitkin) to adopt the revised contract. Discussion: There was some concerns w/regard to specific language being removed. Are Legal fees reimbursable and/or do they fall under Administrative fees? Currently MCIT covers board expense if pulled into court but if this board pursues legal action on another, costs would have to come out of board reserves. Peter will check on this issue w/the business office.
- 8) If the board approves the contract, and seeks to amend later, is there a process? Yes
- 9) Lyle Robinson (Hubbard) suggested a possible tabling motion until the newly revised contract can be reviewed by an attorney on behalf of this board
- 10) Brian Napstad (Aitkin) pointed out (as an example) that any zoning action denied by this board, that an applicant then proceeded with regardless, would also be in direct violation at the county level and any corrective action would commence through the county authority
- 11) **Motion** was made and seconded by Jack Frost (Beltrami) / Tom Wenzel (Morrison) to table the ‘12 contract adoption until the January meeting – 4 ayes, 4 nays. Motion was defeated due to lack of majority ayes. **Motion** recurs (#7 above) on the adoption of the contract as submitted - 7 ayes, 1 nay. Motion carried.

9:52 AM – Immediately following the State Grant discussion, Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) opened the floor to MnDNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr and Senator Bob Lessard. Each provided history. Some of the following was also noted:

- 1) Tom Landwehr shared that he has been in his present role (MnDNR Commissioner) for close to a year but has over 30 yrs. of Minnesota Environmental Conservation experience, much of it includes the Mississippi River.
- 2) All sectors of employment has been in decline in Minnesota but there are existing opportunities right here that are fundamental tied to natural resources without bringing in new business. Minnesota has 3 key primary industries: Timber, tourism and taconite

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- 3) There is renewed enthusiasm to collaborate with this board and now new resources are available as well i.e. Lessard Sam's Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund and various Small Sportsmen Grant programs. The Commissioner would be delighted to discuss those and any others with the eight counties
- 4) Although the DNR is coming in with a leaner budget in recent years, Commissioner Tom Landwehr wants to ensure his commitment to this board. When the State puts together the next budget, it will reflect his and the Governor's emphasis on the MHB and the river.

After some further exchange, the Chair thanked the Commissioner and Senator for attending and moved to the next item on the Agenda

► **BWSR Grant Update** – Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) explained that the MHB was successful in getting a \$100k – 3 year Grant. A copy of the Crow Wing County Grant Administration proposal was forward to the board members prior to the meeting and was reviewed for comment/questions today with Chris Pence (CWC Land Service Supervisor) and Mitch Brinks (CWC Water Protection Specialist). The following are a number of items specifically noted:

- 1) The Project will go into the Work plan development phase and must be completed by 3/30/12
- 2) This Grant is a great opportunity to get all 8 county water planners and environmental service personnel together
- 3) The Grant will supplement a study to identify, assess and help each of the 8 headwater corridor counties to develop and benchmark conservation activity. It will also create a unified data set that can be easily accessed, and provide the framework for development/placement of new corridor language into each county water plan
- 4) The \$45,000 CWC proposal for administration allots \$15,000 for administrative and \$30,000 for GIS analysis/modeling
- 5) This Grant is also an opportunity to dovetail with the MPCA state-wide watershed based sampling as well as streamline water quality data and foster inter-county collaboration w/other agencies/organizations
- 6) This Grant should also help the MHB define staffing needs for the future

Motion was made and seconded by Commissioners Tom Wenzel (Morrison) / Neal Gaalswyk (Cass) to accept the CWC Grant Administrative proposal subject to language adjustment and Work Plan development - 8 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

Lindberg Ekola (Minnesota Forest Resources Council – MFRC) asked for a moment to also state that the MFRC would be in support of sharing their data sets for this above grant project as well

► **Mississippi River Northwoods Land Acquisition** – This item appears on today's Agenda as a follow-up to discussion from last month. Todd Holman (TNC) took the floor to say the LSOHC unanimously recommended the entire Lessard package, which included the Northwoods Land Acquisition. This board finalized the Resolution (Letter of Support) after conversation today. A **motion** was made and seconded by Commissioners Neal Gaalswyk (Cass) / Lyle Robinson (Hubbard) to approve the Letter of Support - 8 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

► **Mississippi River Gathering III (Dec. 10th '11)** – Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) described his and Commissioner Tom Wenzel's (Morrison) recent attendance to the Mississippi River Gathering III. At that meeting Paul offered to have the MHB host the Gathering IV and was immediately told that the Initiative Foundations would support this board via a \$5000 grant to help with set-up/hosting. The responsibilities would include: Agenda and speaker set up, invitations mailing and organize refreshments. Paul expressed that it would serve as a perfect backdrop to assemble all 40 county commissioners prior by inviting them to an MHB monthly meeting with the

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Gathering to immediately follow. If it is the will of the board, Paul will continue his discussions w/Don Hickman (Initiative Foundation) and bring further event detail to this board at the Jan. 20th MHB meeting.

Prior to the Annual Staff Review agenda item, Chair Paul M. Thiede (Crow Wing) briefly explained a recent correspondence from Chip Borkenhagen (River Place Marketing) re: possible concerns with the marketing of the GuideBook. Asking: What direction would this board like to take for future marketing of the book? The Board agreed to 'stay the course' for the time being. Staff also provided a copy of a draft 'fundraiser' flyer to be sent out to Agencies/organization within the corridor that may find the GuideBook as a means to raise organization money. Staff will allow the sub-committee to review/consider, and contact after today for further comment on any edits. A cover letter for this mail piece has also been drafted and is ready to mail once the flyer is finalized.

► **Annual Staff Review** – Too little time remained to conduct the '11 Employee staff review. The item will appear on the January Agenda

Staff provided a 'working list' of board accomplishments and goals as something for the board to reflect on going into the New Year and in anticipation of the new opportunities that may arise through the BWSR Grant

There was no further business, **motion** was made and seconded by Commissioners Brian Napstad (Aikin) / Jack Frost (Bemidji) to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 am - 6 ayes, 0 nays, Motion carried.

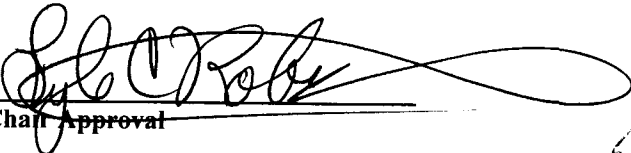
Meeting Adjourned

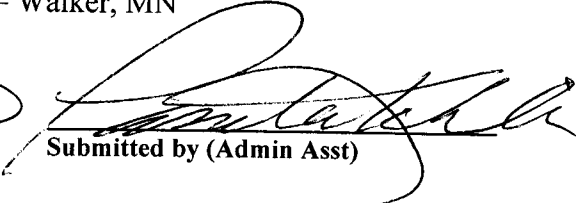
11:47 am – Misc –

☼ **Legislature Update** – none

☼ **County Updates** – none

Next MHB meeting: Friday, January 20th, 2012 – Walker, MN


Chair Approval


Submitted by (Admin Asst)