

## **Water Consortium Meeting Notes**

December 7, 2011

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Washington County Government Center, 14949 62<sup>nd</sup> St. N, Stillwater,

Lower Level Room 14

### **Welcome**

Jessica Pilarski, Washington County PHE

### **Purpose of Our Meeting**

Jessica

- To explore and identify the current situation and possible future directions.

### **Introductions**

- Everyone introduced themselves with their name and organization they represent.

### **Guidelines for Our Time Together**

Facilitator: Lisa Hinz, U of MN Extension

- Reviewed a short list of guidelines for how we can work together during this meeting. All agreed to support the guidelines.

### **Context – Why We Are Meeting Now**

Amanda Strommer, Washington County PHE

Jay Riggs, Washington Conservation District

- When we have a purpose we are more successful.
- State is using watershed base approach; BWSR is looking at using a plan-based process for the 81-basin scale. Our group could potentially help take the lead on this.
- Washington County is far ahead.
- Aquarius study: we are ahead of others in the state because we talk to each other.
- Opportunity to stay ahead and move forward by finding a purpose in the consortium.
- Want to make meetings useful, make it worth your time.

### **Success and Accomplishments of the Water Consortium's 12-year history**

Amanda Strommer

Craig Leiser, Browns Creek Watershed District Board

1. "Comparative Review of Watershed District Rules and Recommendations for Standardization," Spring 2003.
2. "Incorporating Groundwater Protection into Watershed District Rules," December 2004.
3. Successful grant awards for and completion of the studies "Integrating Groundwater and Surface Water Management, Northern Washington County" and "Integrating Groundwater and Surface Water Management, Southern Washington County."
4. Creation of a standardized chart of accounts for watersheds.
5. Spearheaded the effort to incorporate water resources into comprehensive plans.
6. MS4- collaborate with cities, education, which turned into EMWREP.

### **Poster summarizing and adding to Amanda's list**

Items 1 through 6 are from the Washington County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, page 6-43

<http://www.co.washington.mn.us/asset/1vyz6u/ADM-CP6NatI-Resources-3-2-10-.pdf>

Items 7 through 14 came from meeting participants

1. Standardized chart of accounts
2. Guidelines for standardizing watershed district rules
3. Adjustments to watershed district boundaries
4. County-wide groundwater monitoring network
5. Groundwater studies/standards
6. Countywide water resource education program
7. Talking to each other across jurisdictions, hearing about and touring projects
8. Communication
9. Natural resource info comp. planning
10. Grant applications – cooperation
11. NLCCS mapping, GIS data
12. Large scale governance
13. Demo projects - Future
14. County admin/board knows who we are

### **Poster of LESSONS /INSIGHTS from Successes and Accomplishments**

Lisa asked the group to reflect on:

*What insights or lessons you draw from what you've heard so far? What do these successes and accomplishments suggest to you about potential for the future?*

1. Collecting outside information
2. Open communication between organizations
  - a. Coordinate and collaborate
  - b. County help with logistics
  - c. Make county board aware of us
3. People working together have more voice
4. Born of controversy – working together better

### **Additional comments during discussions about success and accomplishments:**

- We have been talking for 10+ years which is a great way to make better and more informed decisions.
- There was an agenda years ago about how the natural resources were involved. Still thinking of a way to incorporate into the future.
- Grant application success- building relationships.
- Demo projects: Hearing other organizations specific topics, taking a tour of all the BMP projects, or touring sites.
- Groundwater studies/standards.
- Larger scale of governance study model, maybe managed on a smaller level?
- National speakers of what other parts of the country are doing.
- Project performance- follow up on how projects have held up over the years. What worked? What didn't?
- County administration and board who knows who they are. Can add awareness and value would be a benefit to everyone.

- What does it tell you on what you've been able to get done? Lessons?
- Find out what others are doing in the country and collecting outside information.
- Efficient systems in the state because we coordinate so well. Little inefficiencies. We have open communication. How is that able to happen? The county provided an umbrella to facilitate the meetings and then distributed the ideas. Reaping the fruit under the umbrella and logistics. There is a value at project and process at this level of the county.
- By working together people realized they have more of a voice, not that they will always agree, but have power in numbers.
- Good example is?
  - o County governance study
  - o Focused on standardized accounting and where the expenditures are spent
- This whole group was born out of controversy. The group saw the value in keeping the meetings running. There are a number of people currently who have been at the consortium from the beginning and see the value of continuing to come to the table to keep learning and being aware at the local level of each organization and county.

Discuss topics, opportunities, and focus for the future

Lisa led a process for individuals to write down their ideas on ½ sheets of paper, one idea per sheet, and then share them in small groups to discuss, clarify and add topics as needed in response to this question which had been shared in the meeting invitation:

***What are the top 3-5 water management topics and opportunities that your organization thinks should be addressed by the Water Consortium?***

Once small groups had shared and discussed amongst themselves, Lisa asked each small group to share their ideas with the large group and post them on the blue sticky wall, clumping similar ideas together. There were 12 clumps created and the large group gave topic headings to each.

These topics along with the individual ideas that fall under them are on the attached 11x17 table. (They are in no particular order.) Each individual was asked to take this information and discuss it with their larger organizations and bring their feedback to the January meeting so the group can use it to help focus and decide on a shared direction for the water consortium.

Closing – Next Steps

- Jessica asked participants to share today's discussion with their organizations to get feedback to bring forward at the next meeting.
- Next meeting: January 4, 2012, 2-4 p.m. Purpose: decide on shared direction and determine commitment to move forward.
- Jessica thanked everyone for making the time and effort to do this important future work together.