

**Rainy River-Rainy Lake Watershed Planning Group
Minutes of the Policy Committee**

Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 at 2:00 pm

Location: County Courthouse Board Room
715 4th Street, International Falls, MN 56649



Policy Committee Members Present:

Destry Hell, Koochiching County
Eldon Voigt, Koochiching SWCD
Jenn Lahmayer, City of Ranier
Pete Kalar, City of International Falls

Steering Committee Members Present:

Pam Tomevi, Koochiching SWCD
Jeff Hrubs, BWSR (Teleconference)

Others Present:

Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering, Inc. (Teleconference)
Jolen Simon (Koochiching SWCD)

Chair Kalar called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

**2023/7-1 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lahmayer to approve the agenda with addition.
Voting yes: Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer, Kalar. Motion carried.**

**2023/7-2 Motion by Lahmayer, seconded by Hell to approve the minutes dated
6/12/2023 as presented.
Voting yes: Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer, Kalar. Motion carried.**

Overview of One Watershed, One Plan Process

Rachel Olm, consultant with Houston Engineering introduced herself and described the One Watershed, One Plan and what it is, how it is separated by watershed boundaries, and how Houston Engineering will work with the process to write a plan that will be useful and easy to implement.

The process was explained with milestones. Each milestone will be presented to the Policy Committee for review and approval.

Steps:

- Prioritize
- Set measurable goals

- Define implementation
- Draft implementation
- Internal review
- Formal review and public hearing

Note: The slides presented will be sent to the Policy Committee.

Overview of 60-Day Notification Responses:

Input of potential issues for the plan is gathered from partners. Tomevi reviewed responses recently received from agencies. Responses have been received from all required except the Department of Agriculture. These responses will be sent to the Policy Committee for review. Hrubes described how these comments are used within the plan.

There will be a second 60-day notification process once the final draft plan is completed.

Draft Plan Issues:

Existing plans are used to assess issues such as WRAPS, TMDLs, current Comprehensive County Water Plans, and other local/state plans. Houston Engineering has been reviewing and cataloging these documents to gather relevant issues. These issues are narrowed down to the priority issues for the plan.

Brainstorm of issues amongst the Policy Committee:

The group discussed specific local issues in the following categories:

- Issues that impact drinking water
- Issues that impact wetland/peatland/urban
- Issues that impact hydrology

Olm discussed issues in the same categories that were found in existing plans.

Other issues discussed included: beaver dams causing localized flooding and riverbank slides which were noted by Olm.

Public Kickoff Meeting:

Vision and Purpose: To inform the public about the process and begin to obtain feedback.

Logistics: Where, when, food, etc. Location options: Ranier Community Building

Timeframe: September, (after Labor Day), During the week, after business hours

Wednesday/Thursday

It was discussed that a brief presentation will be helpful followed by large maps that participants can post sticky notes with issue statements and/or fake money.

Draft Land and Water Resources Narrative:

Rachel reviewed draft land and water resources narrative (one correction); maps by Mitch;

2023/7-3 **Motion Voigt, seconded Lahmayer adopting the waterdrop logo as the official logo for the Rainy River-Rainy Lake One Watershed, One Plan.**
Voting yes: Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer, Kalar. Motion carried.

Action Items and Next Steps:

Advisory Committee Roster: discuss more next meeting

General Business:

None.

Confirm Next Meeting Location/date and adjourn

Reschedule next meeting from August 21st at 2:00-4:00 pm

2023/7-4 **Motion by Hell, seconded by Lahmayer to adjourn the meeting at 4:10 pm.**
Voting yes: Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer, Kalar. Motion carried.

Jenn Lahmayer, Secretary