

Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors Meeting

August 28, 2023

Via Zoom



1. CALL TO ORDER

President Vavra called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A quorum was present.

Minnesota Watersheds Board (Board) members present: Gene Tiedemann, Peter Fjestad, Linda Vavra, David Ziegler, Mary Texer, Jeff Gertgen, Wanda Holker, Don Pereira, and Brad Kramer

Others present: Ray Bohn, Minnesota Watersheds Lobbyist and Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director

2. ACTION ITEM

Lobbyist Succession Plan

The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors (Board) met in special session to discuss the proposed Lobbyist Succession Plan.

Discussion was held regarding necessary training. Lobbyist Bohn would not recommend hiring someone without experience. The person that is chosen will need to have experience working at the Capitol. The person may not know all the nuances of the organization, but should be able to pick up on them quickly. Lobbyist Bohn has begun speaking with candidates who are seasoned lobbyists who know the environmental players and the history of the environment committee. He provided an example of how he provided information to potential candidates regarding the tax committee and the general operating levy. He has a vested interest in making sure that the person who is hired fits the organization well.

Discussion was held regarding the timeframe for Lobbyist Bohn's retirement. It will be at the end of the 2024 legislative session. The intent is to have someone on board by the middle of the 2024 legislative session. However, he intends to work with candidates during the coming legislative session and provide them information about our legislative process. That way, the person can be watching our issues, reading material, and picking things up along the way.

Discussion was held regarding the contract with Lobbyist Bohn and what would happen if he is unable to fulfill his obligations. Our members pay for education and lobbying services and they have an expectation that those services will be provided. Lobbyist Bohn gave an example of a partnership that was done with the Red River Watershed Management Board when their lobbyist was unable to work. He believes that if something like that happened, he would be able to find someone that would do the job. This type of situation is not described in his contract. However, Lobbyist Bohn stated that if something happens to him, it is his responsibility to find someone to work for Minnesota Watersheds to make sure the contract obligations are fulfilled.

Discussion was held regarding the new lobbyist's attendance at the annual conference. The discussion included having this person attend the 2023 annual conference and also the 2024 annual conference. After clarification, the intent is that the person would come on board in mid-March of 2024 and would attend the annual conference in 2024.

Discussion was held regarding the contract with the new lobbyist. There was discussion about whether the person would start on January 1 of 2024 or 2025. The intent is January 1, 2025.

Discussion was held regarding planning for the future. Members expect the board to be responsible in developing a plan for the future. Often times, this is done five or more years in advance. There are members that are concerned about the future of lobbying for our organization.

Director Fjestad made a motion to accept the proposed Lobbyist Succession Plan, allowing Lobbyist Bohn to work with Executive Director Voit to modify the dates as needed. Director Tiedemann seconded the motion. Discussion was held regarding the timeframe. The plan should be looked at as the worst-case scenario for timing. Concerns were expressed about the possibility of losing a good candidate if this drags out. The motion carried unanimously.

Lobbyist Bohn stated that it is important to ensure that Executive Director Voit is comfortable with the new lobbyist. That relationship is critical.

The earliest a new lobbyist will be brought on board is mid-March of 2024. The sooner it is known who that is and how to move forward the better. Bringing someone on board in 2024 will likely have a budgetary impact.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Director Texer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 a.m. This was seconded by Director Pereira and carried unanimously.

Wanda Holker
Secretary