

# **VNP Clean Water Joint Powers Board Meeting**

Wednesday May 13, 2015  
10:00 a.m.  
St. Louis County Land Office

## **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public comments
3. Approve minutes of the March 18, 2015 JPB meeting
6. S.E.H. and Advisory Board Representative Updates
  - A. Kabetogama
  - B. Ash River
  - C. Crane Lake
  - D. Koochiching
  - E. VNP
  - F. DNR
  - G. MPCA
  - H. Bear Island Association
7. Project Funding Status
8. Other
9. Next meeting date



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Voyageur's National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB)

FROM: Sara Christenson, Randy Jenniges, and Gary Cerkvenik

DATE: May 13, 2015

RE: VNPCWJPB Update Information - May 2015  
Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, Minnesota  
STLCO 121718

### **Board Meetings**

The last meeting held was at 10:00 A.M. at the St. Louis County Land Department building on March 18, 2015. See the attached draft meeting minutes for details.

Action Requested: Motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting.

### **Kabetogama**

The project was split into three and opened on March 11. Due to lack of funding, the project has not been awarded.

### **Ash River**

St. Louis County would be representing Ash River through the land exchange, however the county would not like to be recognized as the leader of a Sewer District. In the near future, a township meeting shall be held to inform the public of the potential for a Sewer District.

The next conference call with the DNR will be schedule for May 14th.

### **Crane Lake**

At the last meeting the board awarded the Handberg Road extension project to Utility Systems of America. The project is planned to begin construction the end of May and be complete in about 6 weeks. The board is continuing the Community Assessment Report (CAR) for the Handberg Road and Bear Island Area. The district is planning a public meeting in June to review the findings.

### **Island View**

No updates except for funding status, see the attached Federal Funding Update dated April 1, 2015 and May 4, 2015.

### **Project Funding Status**

See the attached Federal Funding Update dated April 1, 2015 and May 4, 2015.

## Advisory Board Representative Updates

- Voyageurs National Park
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Department of Natural Resources
- Bear Island Association

## Star Tribune

The Star Tribune requested information under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13). The Star Tribune is requesting:

- Copies of all consulting or other business contracts that the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board has signed with Gary Cerkenik or his companies such as The Costin Group and Populis Ventus in the last 15 years, as well as agreements with Newport Partners or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates.
- All invoices submitted during those years to the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board by Gary Cerkenik or his companies such as The Costin Group and Populis Ventus, as well as those submitted by Newport Partners or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates.
- Data on payments made in response to those invoices, including but not limited to the date of payment, the amount, the recipient name and any codes or other information identifying reason for the payment. If you keep data on these payments in a database- or spreadsheet-type format, we ask that the data be provided in a database-friendly format such as delimited text or Excel.

## Meeting Dates

- Action Requested: Propose and approve an upcoming meeting date for May.

## Contract

The current agreement has a scheduled of proposed work to be completed by April 30, 2015.

- Action Requested: Propose a new agreement between St. Louis County, Minnesota and SEH Inc.

## Invoices

- Action Requested: Propose and approve the SEH Inc. and Costin Group Invoices.

If you have any questions regarding these items, please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

Sara Christenson	Randy Jenniges	Mike Larson	Gary Cerkenik
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Cc: VNPCWJPB Advisory Committee, Koochiching and St. Louis County Environmental Services staff, Project Area residents (upon request)

Att: VNPCWJPB Minutes from March 13, 2014, Federal Funding Update (Costin Group), SEH Invoice, The Costin Group Invoice

## **VNP CLEAN WATER JOINT POWERS BOARD MEETING March 18, 2014**

The monthly meeting of the VNP Clean Water Powers Board was held at the Saint Louis County Land Office on March 18, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Commissioner Pavleck. Commissioner Ecklund and Commissioner Rukavina were also present. Introductions were made and there were no comments from the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukavina and seconded by Commissioner Ecklund to approve the February 14 meeting minutes. All voted in favor.

Kabetogama: The issue regarding contractor bids and funding shortfalls were discussed. There are three approaches to obtain additional grant monies; (1) State bonding funds, (2) State Legacy funds, and Federal funds via a state sponsored agency to the WRDA bill. There a motion by Commissioner Ecklund and supported by Commissioner Rukavina to send a letter to the DNR Commissioner to support for DNR to sponsor his agency to request that the VNP Clean Water Project funding to be included in the WRDA bill. All voted in favor. Mike Larson, S.E.H. stated that the JPB should readdress additional funding from the IRRRB. A motion by Commissioner Ecklund was made to have S.E.H. to draft a letter to IRRRB requesting funding support. Commissioner Rukavina seconded and all voted in favor.

Ash River: Work continues on obtaining County land for a treatment plant. Also the process to establish a sewer district needs to be completed.

Crane Lake: The Crane Lake expansion project bids to complete a collection system down the Handberg Road to the DNR landing were opened on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The bids came in under engineering estimates and a decision will be made at the April CLWSD monthly meeting. In addition to the regular meeting there will be a public meeting to discuss the C.A.R. for the Handberg Road area.

Koochiching: There was an extensive discussion on funding shortfalls and the best approach to obtain additional funding. There is a \$6 million in the state bonding bill along with a parallel request for Legacy funds. This is also intended to be included in the WRDA bill. Commissioner Ecklund discussed his trip to D.C. and attendance at the NACO conference. He met with staff and Congressional members of the entire Minnesota Congressional delegation to talk about the VNP Clean water project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ecklund and supported by Commissioner Rukavina to pay the Costin Group invoice. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:42. The next meeting is set for May 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 at the County Land Office in Cook.

Submitted by: Rob Scott, secretary

## **Federal Funding Update, VNP Clean Water Project**

**Gary Cerkvenik, The Costin Group, Inc.**

I was in Washington, DC, last week and met with Sen. Klobuchar and Rep. Nolan on our request for federal funding for the VNP Clean Water Project. Both are very familiar with the project and appreciated Rob's update.

Here is our present plan:

1. Rep. Nolan, at our request, met with the leadership of the St. Paul District of the Army Corps to ask them to support our project either as a priority in their annual report to the Congress or as an Administration request under the 569 section of the WRDA. The St. Paul office has been somewhat intimidated by the opposition from some in Congress to the old section 569 program, but that is changing.
2. Nolan also, at our request, met with the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works in the Defense Department about these issues.
3. We need to make sure we can prove that our projects have a significant effect on pollution problems in the National Park. It would be most helpful to also have a native American component, because that increases the priority by law for the Army Corps. Another priority is to show that our project deals with another federal facility, in this case the headquarters of the Park and the waters of the Park.
4. We will try to get our project written into the work plan for the Army Corps' regional basin budget for the St. Paul and Mississippi Districts. This would be done in July, and push it into the 569 program.
5. The alternative is to submit it as an annual report, which would need the public sponsor—the DNR.
6. We need letters of support specifically identifying the science of pollution in the Park and how our projects will address this and reduce it. Therefore, we need detailed letters from the Kooch and St. Louis County Environmental Services Divisions, from the MPCA, the DNR, and the VNP identifying the pollution problems and the steps we will take to reduce them.\

To summarize, we need letters from the agencies above identifying the problem, the pollution, the reason it needs federal support, the projections on how this will solve the problems, and our long-term plan. Secondly, we will try to qualify to submission for the 569 program. Thirdly, we will try to be submitted as part of the Annual Report from the Army Corps to the Congress. Fourthly, we will get the DNR to officially sponsor our request. Hopefully, we authorize the project in 2016 and get an appropriation in either 2016 or 2017.

4/1/15

## **Federal Funding Update, VNP Clean Water Project**

**Gary Cerkvenik, The Costin Group, Inc.**

1. I've been working with Assistant Commissioner Meier and Lori from the DNR regarding their sponsorship of our federal VNP application. While very supportive, I believe they need to receive approval by the Attorney General in order to proceed, and they are working towards that goal.
2. With Mike Larson from SEH and Jim Swiderski from Congressman Nolan's office, we have identified the two people we need to work with at the Army Corps. Jim asked for a few specifics to advance the project, and the counties and SEH are in the process of drafting the response.
3. We have a bonding bill introduced for \$6 million for Kooch and Kab, introduced by Sen. Bakk and Rep. Dill, who have been strong supporters of the project. We have met with key legislators on the committees. It is still unclear if there will be a bonding bill. Most folks believe so, but it will be small and focused.
4. We have a legacy amendment from the leadership of Sen. Bakk and Rep. Dill to expand the national park grant program we got passed two years ago in Legacy that helped fund the CLWSD. I've had extensive meetings on this, and we have a good chance of getting it in the Senate Legacy bill this week. Then we need to get it passed by a conference committee by the deadline, May 18. If successful, it is a grant for \$1.5 million in FY 2016 and \$1.5 million in FY 2017.
5. As soon as we get the data and a letter of support from the VNP, we will arrange a visit with the Army Corps. At our request, Rep. Nolan has already met with them on our project.

5/4/15