

Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Meeting Minutes

Date: 1/12/2022 – 1/13/2022
Minutes prepared by: Marcia Nieman
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting
Approved: April 6, 2022

Attendance

January 12, 2022 (Day 1)

- Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Members: Barb Liukkonen, Janice Erickson, Sophia Green, Jim Ericson, Matthew Brown, Ellen O'Neill, Dick Brenner, Sharon Erickson-Ropes, and Peder Otterson. Don Schreiner (11:08am) and Dan Belden (11:18am) joined the meeting just prior to the STAR Grant Application discussion.
- Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program Staff: Amber Westerbur, Clinton Little, Cynthia Poyhonen, Julie McDonnell, and Marcia Nieman

January 13, 2022 (Day 2)

- Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Members: Barb Liukkonen, Janice Erickson, Sophia Green, Jim Ericson, Matthew Brown, Ellen O'Neill, Dick Brenner, Rick Goutermont, Sharon Erickson-Ropes, Peder Otterson, Bill Majewski, and Dan Belden. Don Schreiner joined at 10:50am.
- Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program Staff: Amber Westerbur, Clinton Little, Cynthia Poyhonen, Julie McDonnell, and Marcia Nieman

Decisions Made

- MOTION by Erickson-Ropes to accept the January 12 and 13, 2022 agenda, Seconded by Ericson. AFFIRMATIVE ALL. MOTION ADOPTED.
- MOTION by Brown to accept the September 29, 2021 meeting minutes as written, Seconded by O'Neill. AFFIRMATIVE ALL. MOTION ADOPTED.
- MOTION by Brenner to recommend adding \$50,000 to the \$71,000 already in the STAR fund, Seconded by Goutermont. AFFIRMATIVE ALL. MOTION ADOPTED.

Agenda

- Day 1
 - Opening
 - Program Update

- December 2021 STAR Grant Application Discussion
- Annual Grant Application Discussion, Session 1 (Applications 1-4)
- Closing
- Day 2
 - Opening
 - Annual Grant Application Discussion, Session 2 (Application 5 – 9)
 - 2022 STAR Funding Recommendations
 - Application Evaluation Debrief
 - Closing

Meeting Notes

Day 1

Opening

Chair Janice Erickson called the meeting to order at 10:09am with a welcome, thank you, and a mention of the passing of Clyde Bellecourt, White Earth Ojibwe Activist, focusing on the importance of his life and his work and love of the environment. The minutes and agenda were voted on and approved (roll call).

Program Update

Westerbur provided an update on 2021 Accomplishments and successes:

- Climate & coastal Resilience Accomplishments
 - Planning kicked off on a climate resilience forum for our region
 - The City of Duluth advanced its climate action planning
 - We had an outstanding year of Climate Conversations
- Data Accomplishments
 - Northeast Minnesota has new LiDAR data.
 - The Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping Task Force is using a mapping methodology developed by our program to determine erosion rates along the shore.
 - Work commenced on a project to develop a vulnerability assessment protocol to use at public access sites on our coast.
- Grant Accomplishments
 - We had a tremendous response from local tribes and tribal agencies to our request for subject matter expert reviewers.
 - We managed 25 pass-through grants, totaling more than \$1 million.
- Administrative Accomplishments
 - President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, bringing with it millions of dollars for habitat restoration.
 - Governor Walz signed a new executive order allowing tribal governments to support Coastal Council nominees.

She also shared upcoming opportunities:

- Council Appointments – There are two applicants for the three open seats in Carlton County. Westerbur asked the Council to reach out to those they know in Carlton County or the Fond du Lac Reservation and

encourage them to apply. We are particularly interested in applicants who are young, female, black, indigenous, a person of color, a veteran or someone with a disability.

- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
 - NOAA plans to award both competitive and non-competitive funding.
 - Each coastal program will receive \$150,000/ year in non-competitive funding to advance work associated with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
 - Each coastal program can submit up to three projects in year 1 for the competitive funding.
 - Projects must be for habitat restoration, habitat restoration planning and engineering or land acquisition only.
 - Projects can be up to three years in length, with one additional year for monitoring.
 - Maximum request is \$5 million per project.
 - Projects must occur on publically owned or leased land in the boundary or coastal watershed county.
 - We do not need to match the funds.

Westerbur asked the council for suggestions/goals for this funding. The program will use those suggestions/goals as we go forth.

STAR Grant Application Discussion

Poyhonen introduced the STAR Grant review process. Liukkonen facilitated the discussion of the December 1, STAR grant applications.

01 – City of Proctor, 100 Pionk Drive, Proctor, MN 55810, \$10,000. No conflicts of interest. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

02 – Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District, 411 West 2nd Street, Grand Marais, MN 55604, \$6,450. No conflicts of interest. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

03 – Friends of the Finland Community DBA Finland Food Chain, 6866 Cramer Road, Finland, MN 55603, \$2,700. No conflict of interest. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

Final scores, project rank and other data in the applications and as part of the evaluation process will be available once the STAR projects start; anticipated start dates vary, with the latest being July 1, 2022.

Annual Grant Application Discussion, Session 1

Poyhonen introduced the Annual Grant review process. Liukkonen facilitated the discussion of the Annual grant applications.

01 – Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, 408 First Avenue, Two Harbors, MN 55616, \$20,868. Conflict of Interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

02 – South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, 4215 Enterprise Circle, Duluth, MN 55811, \$95,000. Conflict of interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

03 – Regents of the University of Minnesota, 450 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455-2070, \$51,395. Conflict of interest –Don Schreiner. Schreiner requested and the council agreed that he not participate in discussion and later scoring. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

04 – St. Louis and Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority, 111 Station 44 Road, Eveleth, MN 55734, 91,120. Conflict of interest – Rick Goutermont – was not in attendance to participate in discussion. Council decided he would not score the application. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

Closing

Members shared feedback on how well the meeting went before adjourning for the day at 2:00 pm.

Day 2

Opening

Chair Janice Erickson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am with a welcome, thank you.

Westerbur proposed a “Check-In” question: If we are done early today, how will you spend your extra time? Council and staff responded with a variety of answers.

Annual Grant Discussion, Session 2

Liukkonen facilitated the discussion.

05 – Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District, 411 West Second Street, Grand Marais, MN 55604, \$28,542. Conflict of Interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

06 – Cook County Historical Society, 8 South Broadway, Grand Marais, MN 55604, \$90,649. Conflict of interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

07 – Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 West Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102, \$99,349. Conflict of interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

08 – Regents of the University of Minnesota, 450 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455-2070, \$71,224. Conflict of interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

09 – City of Duluth, 411 West 1st Street, Duluth, MN 55802, \$100,000. Conflict of interest – none. Application discussion. Members submitted final scores via secure survey after the meeting.

Final scores, project rank and other data in the applications and as part of the Annual grant evaluation process will be available once the state submits its cooperative agreement to NOAA in early April 2022.

2022 STAR Funding Recommendations

Westerbur went over the Grants Specialist’s Report, which showed where we are currently with STAR funds (\$71,000 set aside right now). The council discussed how much more they would like to add. Liukkonen called for

a motion to come up with the value for STAR Grant levels beginning July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. MOTION by Brenner to recommend adding \$50,000 to the \$71,000 already in the STAR fund, Seconded by Goutermont. Discussion. AFFIRMATIVE ALL. MOTION ADOPTED.

Application Evaluation Debrief

Members discussed the evaluation process, focusing on this year's scoring criteria and scoring format. Members noted that this year's criteria put emphasis on projects that met program priorities and improved diversity in grant making. They recognized that projects that did not address at least one of the three priorities were unlikely to reach the 70% threshold for a funding recommendation. Many also noted that the question/answer section of the application made things easier for scoring. Members stressed the importance of having several easy to read maps and making highly technical proposal easier to read and comprehend. With maps in particular, it would be helpful to point to digital sites that allow for zooming in and out. They encouraged staff to keep up and expand where possible efforts to bring in new applicants, including hosting grant workshops.

Closing

Westerbur recapped the meeting, reminded the council to complete the surveys and destroy their materials. She conducted a quick poll: How would you grade our meeting? A-F. Response was A-33%; B-66%.

MOTION to Adjourn by Brenner. Meeting adjourned at 2:02 pm.