

# REGULAR MEETING OF THE RCWD BOARD OF MANAGERS

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

**Shoreview City Hall Council Chambers** 4600 North Victoria Street, Shoreview, Minnesota

Meeting also conducted by alternative means (teleconference or video-teleconference) from remote locations

**Minutes** 

1 **CALL TO ORDER** 2 President Michael Bradley called the meeting to order, a quorum being present, at 9:00 a.m. 3 4 5 ROLL CALL Present: President Michael Bradley, 1st Vice-Pres. John Waller, 2nd Vice-Pres. Steve Wagamon, 6 Secretary Jess Robertson, and Treasurer Marcie Weinandt 7 8 9 Absent: None 10 Staff Present: Regulatory Manager Patrick Hughes, Drainage and Facilities Manager Tom Schmidt, Project 11 Manager David Petry (video-conference), Office Manager Theresa Stasica, Program Support 12 13 Technician Emmet Hurley (video-conference), Communications and Outreach Manager 14 Kendra Sommerfeld 15 District Engineer Chris Otterness from Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); District Attorney 16 Consultants: Louis Smith from Smith Partners 17 18 19 Visitors: Chris Stowe, Bob S.

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### **SETTING OF THE AGENDA**

District Administrator Tomcik noted a staff handout for Minnesota Watersheds Annual Meeting proposed motion based on yesterday's workshop, no proposed changes to the agenda.

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Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Weinandt, to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

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### **READING OF THE MINUTES AND THEIR APPROVAL**

Minutes of the October 23, 2024, Board of Managers Regular Meeting and November 4, 2024, Workshop. 30 Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Weinandt, to approve the minutes, as presented. 31 Motion carried 5-0. 32

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# **OPEN MIC/PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Chris Stowe, 426 Pine Street, asked if it would be possible for him to speak to the Board off the record. 34
- President Bradley stated that would not be possible because there has to be a justification, under the law, 35
- 36 in order to close their meetings and make them private.
- 37 Mr. Stowe noted that at the last Work Session the Board had discussed the two law firms that the District
- had engaged since 2008 and also discussed ACD 10-22-32. He noted that at the meeting the Board talked 38
- for about an hour about the law firms and which firm they should continue with and made the decision to 39
- continue paying for both firms. He stated that he felt a key question that should be asked was why the 40
- District has had 2 law firms since 2008 which was when they had also hired Houston Engineering. He noted 41
- that when ACD 10-22-32 was discussed he was not allowed to contribute to their conversation and he felt 42
- that during the Board discussion, District Administrator Tomczik had lied to the Board using information 43
- from a 2018 engineering survey and referencing the lowering of the culvert on Pine Street that was done in 44
- 2020. He explained that he felt this action increased his flooding issues and now the Board was also 45
- discussing lowering the culvert on West Pine Street and the need for wetland credits. He noted that he was
- 46
- fortunate that he has the time and resources to be able to attend the RCWD meetings and explained that 47
- 48 he disagreed with the actions that have been taken to lower pipes upstream before addressing and lowering
- pipes downstream and noted that the road ditch was moving water in the opposite direction of the grade 49
- of the roadway. He stated that felt they should fix the pipes downstream by increasing their size before 50
- they do anything to the north. 51

## ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

## **RCWD Rule Adoption**

Regulatory Manager Hughes reminded the Board that they had discussed this item at their Workshop meeting yesterday. He noted that the public review period ended on September 20, 2024 and stated that the Board had also held a public hearing on this item at their September 11, 2024 meeting. He stated that staff had reviewed the comments received during the review period and updated the rule language based on the comments. The comments were reviewed with the Board at the workshop yesterday.

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Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Bradley, to adopt Resolution 2024-10 Adopting Rule Revisions.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby adopts the proposed revisions to the District Rules, as amended below;

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Paragraph B.1: The following text will be added, "Where a public applicant must acquire land, a signed notice from the landowner acknowledging the application may be provided

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Paragraph C.6(d)(2): The following text will be added, "...and 6(d)(1)."

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Paragraph C.9(e): The following text will be added, "be"

in lieu of the landowner's signature as a co-applicant."

- Table C6: The following text will be added as an asterisk under the table, "Rain gardens are 'off-line' infiltration or bio-filtration basins."
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- Paragraph F.5(e): The following text will be added, "...unless credits are unavailable or the

- applicant demonstrates that credit price deviates substantially from a market condition."
- Paragraph G.3: The text will be modified to, "The landowner or conveyance system owner receiving a permit under this rule is responsible to maintain the permitted alteration in the design condition."
- Paragraph K.4: The word "statute" will be replaced with "law"

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the District Administrator, on certification of the revised rules by the Board Secretary, is to publish legal notice of the adoption of the revised rules; file the certified revised rules with each county recorder and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources; provide notice of adopted rules to each public transportation authority within the District; mail a copy of the certified revised rules by January 1, 2025, to the governing body of each city and township within the District; and file a certified copy of the revised rules in the official minute book of the District;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District Administrator is to supply a copy of the District's written response to comments to each commenting party and otherwise make the response to comments available as a part of the public rulemaking record; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the revised rules are effective as of January 1, 2025, and will apply to all applications for permits that have not been submitted to the District and deemed complete, within the meaning of Minnesota Statutes §15.99, by December 31, 2024.

Manager Robertson stated that she appreciated the robust discussion that the Board had at their Workshop meeting and wanted to make note of a few things before the vote moved forward. noted that she had taken some time to go through the graph that had been included in the Board packet from back in June that was a comparison between the State standards and the District. She stated that she was surprised at how many of the regulations between the two were different and that the District had a lot of layers in place that were above and beyond what the State required. She stated that there was no statutory requirement that the District cannot talk about it without having to wait for every two years and felt that this would be a good thing to include on a future Workshop agenda and review a comparison of the State and the District in a more in depth fashion and discuss the 'why' for the differences. She noted that she felt anything the Board could do, as a governing body, to encourage open dialogue and positive relationships would be a good thing. She reiterated that she would like to suggest that sometime in the 2025 calendar year that staff sit down and have those conversations because she wanted to acknowledge the comments that were received from the cities that seemed to have similar and repetitive issues. She explained that she was happy to move forward with what has been presented, with the caveat that she would like the Board to talk about this in a more robust manner in order to really understand why the District may be a bit more heavy on the regulatory side versus what the State statutory minimums are.

President Bradley stated that he felt that was an excellent suggestion for sometime during the year when they have a lower workload.

Manager Wagamon stated that he agreed.

Manager Waller stated that he did not disagree with the comments that have been made by the Board but would also add that in addition to looking at the State minimum standards that they need to understand what the cities have in place at this time. He stated that he felt that if they already had a standard in place, that should be recognized and understood. He stated that he felt that in

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some situations, there ended up being duplications and that they were not really working in a partnership and asked that they take a look at both the State standards and what the cities have in place. He stated that he did not believe that they had to wait for a slower time during the year for the Board and felt that it could be something that is slipped into their discussions for the entire year and explained that he would like to see it pursued soon.

Manager Wagamon reiterated that he agreed with all the comments that have been shared.

Manager Robertson stated that she thinks this will end up being a large conversation and will not be something that will be a one workshop conversation. She suggested that staff try to break down the relationship between the District and the cities that do have their own regulations or rules in place and then review the State minimum standards compared to the District. She stated that it may help to include examples on how and why things exist the way they are.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Manager Bradley - Aye Manager Robertson - Aye Manager Wagamon – Aye Manager Waller - Aye Manager Weinandt – Aye Motion carried 5-0.

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#### 2. **RCWD Employee Handbook Updates**

President Bradley noted that Administrator Tomczik reviewed the proposed updated with the Board at their Workshop yesterday.

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Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Robertson, to approve District Employee Handbook amendments to Section 4.2 Employment Classification, Section 4.4 Time Records, Section 7.2 Vacation, and Section 7.3.1 Earned Sick and Safe Time Leave. Motion carried 5-0.

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#### 3. MN Watersheds Annual Meeting Delegates & Voting

President Bradley noted that this topic was also discussed at the recent Workshop meeting.

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Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Robertson, to designated Manager Bradley and Manager Weinandt as delegates to the 2024 MN Watersheds business meeting, with Manager Waller as the alternate. Motion carried 5-0.

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Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Robertson, to instruct the delegates to vote in accordance with the stated RCWD positions related to the seven resolutions, budget, and bylaw, voting 'yes' in favor of resolutions #1, #10, #13; and 'no' or 'opposition' to resolutions #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #11, and #12, as discussed, on the agenda at the 2024 MN Watersheds business meeting.

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Manager Robertson stated that she wanted to thank the delegates for taking time to attend the MN Watersheds business meeting. She noted that she was curious about the back story on these items and would like them to share whether or not there ends up being any spicy aftermath of those discussions and would like to understand what was really at the heart of some of these items.

Motion carried. 5-0.

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#### 4. Ramsey County Ditch Repair - Phase 2

Drainage and Facilities Manager Schmidt explained that the District had completed the first phase of the RCD-4 repairs which focused on vegetation management such as tree removal and turf establishment. He noted that during the initial investigation of the repair, they discovered erosion in the channel between Little Johanna and Big Johanna and what was before the Board today was a request to award the contract to do the repairs between Little Johanna and Big Johanna.

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Motion by Manager Waller, seconded by Manager Bradley, to award a contract to Dunaway Construction at a price of \$74,600.00, to complete channel stabilization repairs and authorize the Administrator to execute contract documents as necessary and on the advice of the engineer and counsel and to execute change orders increasing the contract price by an amount not to exceed *30% of the contract price (\$22,380).* 

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President Bradley stated that he thought they had showed the District, at its best, when they responded on the fly to a request to get in and fix a problem that needed to be fixed.

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### Motion carried 5-0.

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#### **Consider League of MN Cities Liability Coverage Waiver Form** 5.

President Bradley explained that basically what this proposed action will do is that, to the extent that there is insurance, that the District accepts liability up to the coverage of their insurance. He noted that he believes this will be the tenth year that the Board has taken this action.

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Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Weinandt, that the District waives the monetary limits on municipal tort liability established by Minnesota Statutes, Section 466.04 to the extent of the limits of the liability coverage obtained from LMCIT. Motion carried 5-0.

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#### 6. **Professional Services Contracts**

District Administrator Tomczik reminded the Board that every 2 years they solicit interest proposals for its professional and technical services. He stated that on October 23, 2024, the Board had provided consensus direction to develop and amend contracts with Houston Engineering, Redpath and Company, and RYMARK. He noted that at the November 4, 2024 meeting the Board had interviewed representatives of Rinke Noonan and Smith Partners for legal services and noted that the Board had asked for clarity on the provisional components of the contracts and if they were able to terminate those agreements. He explained that the District is able to terminate the agreements and noted that there is language within the agreements that included a clause allowing either party to immediately terminate the agreement. He referenced Resolution 2024-12 for legal services and noted that included language regarding the delineation of duties. He explained that the District had generalized this to be general council versus public drainage system, but noted that it goes beyond that, as Rinke Noonan was working on other issues and Smith Partners was also engaging

with different projects that come through. He stated that the District can offer clarification to the firms, as the Boards sees fit.

President Bradley suggested that the Board vote on the resolutions unrelated to legal services first and then have additional discussion about the legal services. He noted that, to his knowledge, he did not believe that there were any debates or additional discussion needed for any of the resolutions besides the legal services. He stated that he had been pleased with the presentations that the Board received from each of the law firms and felt that John Kolb had been very direct and honest with the Board that he was not currently situated in the position where he felt he had the capacity to represent the entire process for the District at this time. He stated that he has no question in his mind that the District has the best situation that they can have with the best two law firms in the State. He stated that he also wanted to remind the Board that these were personal and related to their income and livelihood, so he did not believe that they should not upset that without a really good reason.

Manager Robertson stated that she thought that they had intended to discuss the legal services situation following the other professional services resolutions.

President Bradley explained that he did not think there was going to be any discussion on the other items.

Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Bradley, to adopt Resolution 2024-11 Retention of Engineering Services

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Managers elects to extend the services agreement for engineering services with Houston Engineering, Inc. for an additional two-year period (2025-2026);

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Administrator is authorized to enter into an extension of the existing agreement with Houston Engineering, Inc. in accordance with the terms of the proposal received and such other terms as are not inconsistent therewith.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Manager Bradley – Aye Manager Robertson – Aye Manager Waller – Aye Manager Weinandt – Aye Manager Wagamon – Aye Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Wagamon, to adopt Resolution 2024-13 Retention of Accounting Services

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Managers elects to extend the services agreement for accounting services with Redpath and Company for an additional two-year period (2025-2026);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrator is authorized to enter into an extension of the 247 existing agreement with Redpath and Company in accordance with the terms of the proposal 248 received and such other terms as are not inconsistent therewith. 249 250 **ROLL CALL:** 251 Manager Bradley - Aye 252 Manager Robertson - Aye 253 254 Manager Waller – Aye Manager Weinandt - Aye 255 256 Manager Wagamon - Aye Motion carried 5-0. 257 258 Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Weinandt, to adopt Resolution 2024-14 259 **Retention of Information Technology Services** 260 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Managers elects to extend the services agreement 261 for information technology services with Rymark for an additional two-year period (2025-2026); 262 263 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrator is authorized to enter into an extension of the 264 existing agreement with Rymark in accordance with the terms of the proposal received and such 265 other terms as are not inconsistent therewith. 266 267 **ROLL CALL:** 268 Manager Bradley - Aye 269 Manager Robertson – Aye 270 Manager Waller – Aye 271 272 Manager Weinandt – Aye Manager Wagamon - Aye 273 Motion carried 5-0. 274 275 Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Bradley, to adopt Resolution 2024-12 276 **Retention of Legal Services** 277 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Managers elects to extend the services agreement 278 for legal services with Smith Partners and Rinke Noonan for an additional two-year period (2023-279 280 2024);

> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrator is authorized to enter into an extension of the existing agreement with Smith Partners and Rinke Noonan in accordance with the terms of the proposal received and such other terms as are not inconsistent therewith and consistent with current delineation of duties between the firms which will be clarified further in discussions with firms.

> **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** where the scope of a particular project involves subject areas normally handled by both firms, the Administrator has authority to select one of the two firms to provide all legal services associated with that project.

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Manager Robertson asked when the District put the RFP process out and the proposals come back 289 if they include costs, including retainers. 290

President Bradley stated that it did include that information.

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Manager Robertson stated that her understanding from the workshop discussion was that both law firms, independently, have not only the experience with other watershed clients, but also offer 'ala carte' capacities, as it relates to serving the watershed. She asked if she had misunderstood that from their conversation.

District Administrator Tomczik stated that both firms have identified work in all areas that watersheds endeavor in and Rinke Noonan noted its expertise in public drainage.

President Bradley stated that one thing he has learned from his long career is that lawyers are not fungible. He noted that while Rinke Noonan has partners who do business law, he has not met any of them, vetted them, or gotten reviews of them. He stated that they may be the best people in the world, but he would not want to hire one on the fly.

Manager Robertson stated that it was her understanding that these contracts were not specific to just District Attorney Holtman, District Attorney Smith, or Drainage Attorney Kolb and the District would actually be employing the entire legal firm.

President Bradley stated that there is what the contract says and then there is reality.

Manager Robertson stated that would be perception versus reality.

President Bradley explained that Smith Partners has 3 attorneys at their firm and the District sees two of them. He stated that Rinke Noonan is a larger firm, but also handles things like divorce, which has nothing to do with the kinds of things the District does. He stated that he was just saying that he would not want to hire a business lawyer because John Kolb has told the District that he did not have the capacity to do it all at this time. He stated that he believes that Mr. Kolb would really want to bring on somebody and vet that person, have the District meet them and determine that they would be able to have the same personality and style that they have come to appreciate about Mr. Kolb.

Manager Wagamon stated that he felt that could be done.

President Bradley agreed it could be done but did not believe it could be done this year.

Manager Robertson stated she appreciated the comments from President Bradley as well as his legal background, but explained that her comments come from her own level of government experience where they hire one law firm that offers ala carte and everything under the sun. She stated that her take away was from the sit down discussions that they had is that both firms are not only experienced, but more than qualified. She stated that she did not necessarily know if the correct answer was moving forward with both, or one over the other, but did feel that these were appropriate questions to be asked because the legal component of the District's budget is in just about every department and sub-category that they have. She stated that, personally, she prefers having a streamlined legal 'go-to' firm.

Manager Wagamon stated that he completely agreed and also shared the same feelings as Manager Robertson and was also basing this on his own personal experiences.

Manager Weinandt stated that District Administrator Tomczik had presented the Board with three 328 different versions of Resolution 2024-12 and she had read aloud the version that included both legal 329 firms. 330 President Bradley confirmed that had been the resolution language read aloud as part of the motion 331 and noted that he had seconded that motion. 332 **ROLL CALL:** 333 Manager Bradley - Aye 334 Manager Robertson - Nay 335 Manager Waller – Nay 336 Manager Weinandt – Aye 337 Manager Wagamon - Nay 338 Motion failed 2-3. 339 340 Motion by Manager Bradley, seconded by Manager Waller, to adopt Resolution 2024-12 341 **Retention of Legal Services** 342 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Managers elects to extend the services agreement 343 for legal services with Rinke Noonan for an additional two-year period (2023-2024); 344 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrator is authorized to enter into an extension of the 345 existing agreement with Rinke Noonan in accordance with the terms of the proposal received and 346 such other terms as are not inconsistent therewith. 347 President Bradley explained that he would vote no on this resolution because if the District was only 348 349 going to have one law firm, he would prefer to go with Smith Partners. Manager Wagamon stated that he has probably spent more time thinking about this decision than 350 he has for any other decision that he has made while serving on the Board. He stated that he 351 wanted to make it clear that he had nothing against Smith Partners and thinks both lawyers were 352 upstanding citizens and excellent lawyers but felt that the District needed to make a change. 353 **ROLL CALL:** 354 Manager Bradley – Nay 355 Manager Robertson - Aye 356 Manager Waller - Aye 357 Manager Weinandt – Nay 358 Manager Wagamon – Aye 359 Motion carried 3-2. 360 361 President Bradley extended an apology to District Attorney Smith. 362 Manager Wagamon stated that he also wanted to apologize because he felt bad. 363

November 27, 2024 Check Register – Resolution Authorizing Treasurer Approval 7.

Manager Waller thanked District Attorney Smith for his services to the District over the years.

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District Administrator Tomczik explained that this resolution is presented as the Board only has one 367 regular meeting in November and this action would authorize the Treasurer to review and approve 368 the November 27, 2024 Check Register for payment, not to exceed \$400,000 for operational 369 expenses and \$150,000 for surety returns. 370 371 Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Waller, to adopt Resolution 2024-15 372 **Authorization For Payment Of November 2024 Check Register** 373 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Managers authorize the District Treasurer to review 374 and approve payment of the November 27, 2024 check register in an amount not to exceed 375 \$400,000 for operating expenses, and \$150,000 surety returns. 376 377 **ROLL CALL:** 378 Manager Bradley - Aye 379 Manager Robertson - Aye 380 Manager Waller – Aye 381 Manager Weinandt - Aye 382 383 Manager Wagamon – Aye **Motion carried 5-0** 384 385 8. Check Register Dated November 13, 2024, in the Amount of \$160,618.02 Prepared by Redpath 386 and Company 387 388 Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Waller, to approve check register dated 389 November 13, 2024, in the Amount of \$160,618.02 prepared by Redpath and Company. 390 carried 5-0. 391 392 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION 393 1. **District Engineer Updates and Timeline** 394 395 2. **November/December Calendar** 396 President Bradley noted that there would be no Board meetings on November 27, 2024 or 397 December 25, 2024. 398 399 Manager Weinandt stated that Manager Wagamon would be attending the upcoming CAC meeting 400 in her place. 401 402

Manager Waller reminded the Board that their December 11, 2024 meeting would be held in the

**Administrator Updates** 3.

evening and not the morning.

#### **Managers Update** 4.

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Manager Waller stated that he, President Bradley, and District Administrator Tomczik attended the 409 Watershed Round-Up Annual meeting. He stated that the presentation made by RCWD was on 410 the new manure facility that will be up on JD-2. 411 412 Manager Weinandt stated that she had listened to yesterday's meeting and asked if she had 413 understood correctly that Bob, the CAC member from Washington County, had passed away. 414 415 416 Manager Waller stated that was correct. 417 418 Manager Weinandt offered her condolences to Bob's family and explained that he had served on 419 the CAC for many years. 420 President Bradley stated that Bob had not sought re-election because of his health and noted that 421 Bob was a wonderful, kind, and gentle person. 422 423 Manager Wagamon reiterated his apology to Smith Partners that the District would no longer be 424 utilizing their legal services and explained that he has liked working with them and shared that they 425 were great to him every time he spoke with them. 426 427 President Bradley asked which Board members would be in attendance at the City-County Partner 428 429 Meeting later in the day. 430 Manager Robertson stated that she would be unable to attend because of her job. 431 432 The remainder of the Board stated that they would be in attendance at the City-County Partner 433 434 Meeting.

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438 439 Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Wagamon, to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 a.m. Motion carried 5-0.