

**MINUTES**  
**St. Louis County Board of Commissioners Septic Subcommittee**  
**Northland Office Building,**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Floor Environmental Services Conference Room #118**  
**Virginia, Minnesota**  
**August 13, 2015**

Call to Order: Keith Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members Present: Commissioner Keith Nelson, Commissioner Steve Raukar (late), Commissioner Tom Rukavina; Commissioner Pete Stauber (absent)

Others Present: Karen Bruun, Dave Fink, Jo Ann Newman, Mark St. Lawrence Environmental Services Department; Chris Strubb (Sand Lake Association); Jim Nephew St Louis County Attorney's Office

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Commissioner Rukavina and second by Commissioner Raukar the minutes of the April 4, 2015, Septic Subcommittee meeting were approved as presented.

Director's Update: St. Lawrence handed out and went over the Director's Report. Items discussed by the group included: Budget, Personnel, Administration, Financial Assistance Programs

Ongoing Business:

**Personnel:** Replacement hiring has taken place for solid waste workers, requisition in place for a Planner Tech; Funds from Solid Waste subsidize a portion of Onsite Wastewater staff (Jeff Crosby/Donna O'Connor) positions.

**Onsite Wastewater Division – Administration:** Continuance in working toward E-Permitting; Increase in septic activity 2015 with enforcement, escrow and operating permit (performance and holding tank systems) monitoring; Liquor license pending issues have been resolved; Reviewed role process between Auditors office and Environmental Services for the issuance of liquor licenses.

**Financial Assistance Programs:** Jo Ann Newman will coordinate and oversee the Septic Loan Program, Imminent Threats to Public Health (ITPH) Grant Program, and any future financial assistance programs; Continuance in exploring other options for additional funds for replacement of ITPH and non-compliant systems.

**Septic Loan Program Update:** approval to receive \$143,000 additional funds at a 0% payback rate from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Loan Program; Pay back 10 years 2.5% interest, not collected on property taxes; four septic loans approved and four pending totaling \$117,157; funds cover approximately eight septic systems.

**Board of Soil and Water Resources Grant:** St. Louis County (SLC) Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) with matches from Board of Soil and Water Resources Grants (BWSR) have combined for \$312,241 to assist low income property owners to replace Imminent Threats To Public Health (ITPH); Additional \$60,202 has been awarded by the MPCA to the County to assist low income residents with systems identified as ITPH or noncompliant; SLC was not awarded BWSR or MPCA Fix up grants for fiscal year 2015, funds were distributed toward storm water control, erosion and sediment control; 8/28, 2015 board letter to approve request for 2016 funding of \$200,000 from BWSR; BWSR funds has helped replace approximately 20 ITPH's through the deferred loan/grant program, applicant has an agreement to live at home for five years; Mark St. Lawrence to discuss with Barb Hayden funds received for invasive species.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Base/Fix-up Grant Update: County Board approved authorization for department to submit grant application requesting \$74,000 in program funding to go toward off setting administrative costs for the department.

**2016 SSTs Proposed Fee Schedule:** Mark St. Lawrence went over proposed fee increases. The Department is looking at simplifying the standard fees shore land and non-shore land with two categories; new fee category Compliance Inspection Review and Processing Fee of \$30 being added. Motion to recommend the fees to the County Board was made by Commissioner Nelson and supported.

**Ordinance 61 Compliance/Enforcement Program:** Assistant County Attorney Jim Nephew explained the steps the Department has been taking to ensure compliance; variety of less serious enforcement issues from non-renewal of operating permits to compliance inspections not conducted for point of sale were reviewed; approximately 50 letters were sent out in May/June from all geographical areas in St. Louis County, homeowner had 10 days to respond followed by county attorney letter, violations were from 2-5 years past due; three were taken to court for compliance one each in Duluth, Hibbing and Virginia; objective is compliance, not to create criminal records; positive results/conversations with judges, future may look to court referee for reviewing cases; additional enforcement cases will be reviewed in 2016. Recommendation to look toward January time frame with staff focus on systems with emphasis on septic's within bodies of water.

**Community Sanitary Sewer Projects Updates:** Mark St. Lawrence gave an overview of the projects to the group.

Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board projects include Ash River, Crane Lake (currently has effective sewer project) and Kabetogama who are seeking additional funding to move forward in 2016; St. Louis County may be asked to offer assistance, projected costs have increased over \$600,000.

**Ash River** - project is in initial stage, an Unorganized Township which falls on St. Louis County for support; Fall of 2014 staff worked with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in identifying a five acre onsite septic site; Bob Whitmyer, Matrix Soils and Systems, Inc. (Duluth) was hired at a cost of \$23,500 which the county is responsible for funding; recommend to track funds spent, enclose engineering costs into a grant application; Dan Weber, Land Department is aware of the counties interest in the property.

**Sand Lake** – Sand Lake Association is interested in a community system; assistance is being sought from Short, Elliott, Hendrickson Inc. (SEH); grant funding from public financing authority assured up to \$60,000 for assessment report; St. Louis County assisted and applied for the grant.

Mark St. Lawrence request for proposal includes two Environmental Services staff, three representatives from Sand Lake; Sand Lake Association could also reach out to IRRRB; Resolution needs approval from the County Board.

**Public Comment Period:** There were no comments from the general public.

**Scheduling Next Meeting:** The next Septic Subcommittee meeting was not set at this meeting.

**Adjourn:** Upon motion by Commissioner Rukavina and second by Commissioner Raukar the meeting was adjourned.