

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

November 19, 2024

Hybrid Meeting – MN State Capitol 120 & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 08:31 a.m. [\(00:00:07\)](#)

Members Present	Members Absent
David Hartwell (Chair)	Rep. Leon Lillie
Ron Schara (Vice Chair)	Sen. Andrew Lang
Suzanne Baird	
Rep. John Burkel	
Dudley Edmondson	
Kristin Eggerling	
Sen. Foug Hawj	
Mark Holsten	
Tom Saxhaug	
Jamie Swenson	

A quorum was present.

1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(00:01:21\)](#)

Councilmember Holsten made a motion to approve the agenda. – **Motion Prevailed**

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(00:01:43\)](#)

Councilmember Eggerling made a motion to approve the minutes from October 3rd, 2024 – **Motion Prevailed**

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported: [\(00:02:12\)](#) No conflicts of interest were reported.

4. Chair's Comments: [\(00:02:26\)](#)

Chair Hartwell thanked LSOHC staff for their work in preparing ML 2025 accomplishment plans and noted that an update on prevailing wage information would be provided during the Executive Director's report.

5. Executive Director's Report: [\(00:03:27\)](#)

Executive Director Mark Johnson briefed the Council on meeting materials provided from the MN Department of Labor and Industry. The Department of Labor and Industry prepared documents that indicate to Outdoor Heritage Fund partner organizations how to comply with prevailing wage requirements when working with contractors. MN DLI was able to provide a code match for the different types of jobs that OHF contractors engage in. Council discussion followed regarding the likely increase in labor costs for OHF projects. Mr. Johnson reported that he visited Lake Christina, the site of an OHF wetland enhancement project completed by Ducks Unlimited and MN DNR. His visit showed sizable populations of multiple species of waterfowl that have returned to the area and commended the partner organizations for their work. Mr. Johnson, along with Council members Eggerling and Baird, summarized a non-public tour of the St. Louis River estuary, the site of OHF work being done by MN DNR and Minnesota Land Trust to restore and enhance the waterway. Mr. Johnson, Mr. Pavelko, and House/Senate legal staff met with MN DNR to continue conversations on Pittman-Robertson funds, seeking to provide further clarity to partner organizations on their use. Council discussion followed.

6. Discussion / Action: Review and Tentative Approval of 2025 Council Calendar [\(00:18:45\)](#)

Council members discussed the tentative calendar for 2025 and brought up scheduling conflicts with the suggested dates of council meetings. After this discussion, the Council tentatively changed dates with which members had conflicts: January 9th was changed to January 3rd, and May 21st was changed to May 28th.

7. Presentation/Discussion: Wind Easements and Conservation, MN DNR [\(00:24:12\)](#)

Dave Trauba, Interim Wildlife Section Manager for MN DNR, gave a presentation on wind easements and their affect on wildlife management and conservation work. Southwest Minnesota has become the epicenter for wind energy development in the state, and this area has sizable numbers of wind turbines and corresponding wind

easements. As of the time of this presentation, there are approximately 690,000 acres of land with wind easements, with this number expected to increase in the near future. The terms and requirements of wind easements are often prohibitive for wildlife organizations, state, and federal agencies seeking to complete wildlife conservation projects. Wind turbine developments have the potential to disrupt and displace wildlife, especially grassland birds. Post wind turbine construction monitoring has shown concerning amounts of bird and bat mortality. Mr. Trauba discussed that wind energy development and conservation professionals ought to work together to minimize risk to wildlife and allow conservation work to continue. Council discussion followed the presentation.

8. Discussion / Action: Requests for Extension of Appropriation [\(01:33:46\)](#)

Nine aye votes are required to approve any extension request.

- a. ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(k), St. Louis River Restoration Initiative, Phase 7; MN DNR [\(01:33:46\)](#)

Melissa Sjolund, Lake Superior & St. Louis River Program Supervisor at MN DNR, outlined the reasons for requesting an extension, noting multiple delays in completing work with other agencies.

Action: Councilmember Saxhaug moved that the ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(k), St. Louis River Restoration Initiative, Phase 7 extension request be approved as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		Sen. Foug Hawj
Schara		Sen. Lang
Baird		Rep. Lillie
Rep. Burkel		
Edmondson		
Eggerling		
Holsten		
Saxhaug		
Swenson		

9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

- b. ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(o), Roseau River Habitat Restoration; Roseau River Watershed District [\(01:46:57\)](#)

Tracy Halstengard, Administrator of the Roseau River Watershed District, presented the request for extension. Unforeseen issues that caused delays included permitting delays, project design complications, and landowner pushback. Council discussion followed.

Action: Rep. Burkel made a motion to approve the ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(o), Roseau River Habitat Restoration extension request as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell	Schara	Sen. Lang
Baird	Swenson	Rep. Lillie
Rep. Burkel		
Edmondson		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Holsten		
Saxhaug		

8 AYES, 2 NAYS, 2 ABSENT – Motion Did Not Prevail due to lack of 9 affirmative votes.

- c. ML 2021, First Sp. Session, Ch. 1, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(c), Lower Otter Tail River Corridor Habitat Restoration; Buffalo-Red River Watershed District [\(01:40:37\)](#)

Bennett Uhler, District Engineer, spoke on behalf of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District. Delays occurred in working with landowners to enroll them in the RIM program, as well as from complications coordinating restoration work on the Lower Otter Tail River. Council discussion followed.

There being no motion offered, the request for extension was not approved.

d. ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(b), Metro Big Rivers, Phase 10; MN Valley Trust [\(01:52:07\)](#)

Deborah Loon, Executive Director of Minnesota Valley Trust, presented the extension request. Archeological review will be completed by early winter 2025, and has the potential to delay the project depending on findings of archeological and cultural resources.

Action: Councilmember Saxhaug moved to approve the ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(b), Metro Big Rivers, Phase 10 extension request as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		Sen. Lang
Schara		Rep. Lillie
Baird		
Rep. Burkel		
Edmondson		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Holsten		
Saxhaug		
Swenson		

10 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

9. Discussion / Action: Council Funding Recommendations [\(01:55:29\)](#)

a. Draft Accomplishment Plans – Report and Recommendations from Staff [\(01:55:35\)](#)

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko outlined the process that project managers underwent after their requests for proposal were approved for funding. This includes writing draft accomplishment plans, which are submitted to staff for review prior to Council approval. Mr. Pavelko outlined several projects that were encouraged to revise their accomplishment plans to provide clarifying information. Mr. Pavelko reminded the Council that the upcoming December budget forecast may provide for additional funds to be distributed to OHF projects, which will require revision of budgets and accomplishment plans.

b. “Core Functions in Partner-led Land Acquisitions” (IDP and Land Acquisition Costs) – Report and Recommendations from Staff [\(02:01:15\)](#)

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko explained the budgeting process for “Core Functions in Partner-led Land Acquisitions”, which provides funds to MN DNR for their work with partner organizations in acquiring land. Mr. Pavelko noted that the current number is an estimate subject to change based on budget revisions, and that any unspent funds would be returned to the fund.

Council discussion followed.

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.