

COMMISSION FILE NO: 23-158-12 **DATE INTRODUCED:** December 4, 2023

INTRODUCED BY: Executive Director (Signature on File in the Office of the Commission)

REFERRED BY COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO: Policy, Finance, and Personnel Committee

RELATING TO: Approval of Contract W97005P13, Working Soils® Program Implementation for the Year 2024

SUMMARY:

The Commission is requested to authorize and to direct the Executive Director to negotiate and to execute Contract W97005P13, Working Soils® Program Implementation for the Year 2024, with the Conservation Fund (TCF) in an amount not to exceed \$218,578. TCF's proposed budget to carry out the program in 2024 is \$181,578 with an additional \$37,000 budgeted for subcontractors.

The contract is being negotiated with the consultant and is requested for Commission approval. The duration of the contract is one year, beginning January 1, 2024, with a completion date of December 31, 2024. This would be the third year of the second phase of a five-year partner agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to the agreement, NRCS, the District, and other local partners will coordinate conservation efforts to prioritize and provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forest producers in the Milwaukee River Watershed to reduce flood risks, improve water quality, promote soil health, and improve habitat for fish and wildlife. NRCS would provide \$7.5 million for financial and technical assistance, while the District and its local partners would provide \$11 million for financial and technical assistance and administration. This effort implements the District's Working Soils® Program through 2025.

TCF has managed and overseen the Working Soils Program® since 2016 and District's Greenseams® Program since 2001, when they were selected through a competitive request for proposal process. This proposed agreement represents an increase of \$6,646, or three percent from the 2023 contract budget.

ATTACHMENTS: **BACKGROUND** ☒ **KEY ISSUES** ☐ **RESOLUTION** ☒
FISCAL NOTE ☒ **S/W/MBE** ☒ **OTHER** ☐ _____

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COMMITTEE ACTION: _____ **DATE:** _____

COMMISSION ACTION: _____ **DATE:** _____

BACKGROUND

Approval of Contract W97005P13, Working Soils® Program Implementation for the Year 2024

MMSD has been implementing the Greenseams® Program since 2001. This innovative program is designed to accomplish environmentally responsible flood management by permanently preserving critical floodplain areas. Undeveloped vegetated Greenseams® lands reduce future flooding risks by storing and draining water into the ground naturally.

Like Greenseams®, the Working Soils® Program acquires voluntary, permanent easements on undeveloped, privately owned properties in areas expected to experience major growth in the next 20 years. Working Soils® easements protect privately owned farmland and do not accommodate public access to private working lands, whereas Greenseams® properties are typically purchased outright and allow for public access for recreation. Like Greenseams®, Working Soils® easements prioritize protection of water absorbing hydric soils typically found along streams, shorelines, and wetlands. The Greenseams® and Working Soils® programs help protect the District's structural flood management projects – infrastructure investments worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The Working Soils® Program has leveraged more than \$1.9 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS toward the purchase of easements.

RESOLUTION

Approval of Contract W97005P13, Working Soils® Program Implementation for the Year 2024

RESOLVED, by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, that the Executive Director is authorized and directed to execute Contract W97005P13, Working Soils® Program Implementation for the Year 2024, with the Conservation Fund in an amount not to exceed \$218,578.