

**Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes**  
**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office**

**Board of Managers Present:** Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman  
Not present: Amanda Toutges

**Staff & Guests Present:** Andy Johnson – District Administrator; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Chris Meehan – District Engineer; and John Kolb – District Attorney; Dale Anderson – County Commissioner; Jeff Martinka – United Prairie Bank/ Kandiyohi SWCD; Ann Gustafson; Frank Gustafson

1. President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. President Schaefer recited the District’s mission statement: “We exist for the protection and preservation of water quality in the Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District.”
3. Additions / Corrections to the Agenda: **A motion to approve the distributed agenda made by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Financial Report
    - i. Finance Report
    - ii. Approval of Payables & Expenditures
  - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
  - c. **Resolution 2025-09, Authorization to approve League of MN Cities Liability Coverage Waiver Form**  
**Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Braegelman to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**
5. Discussion / Business Items
  - a. MN Watersheds Membership Meeting – March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025
    - i. Updates from the two MFCRWD delegates  
Manager Jeff Gertgen and Board President Ruth Schaefer attended the MN Watersheds Membership Meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> and updated that they joined two committees that represented the same resolution. Like last year, and moving forward, MN Watersheds has streamlined their process and will have only two main items to push forward to the Legislature, which will be voted on by delegates at the fall conference.
  - b. Cash Balance and Fund Discussion
    - i. **Resolution 2025-10, Authorization of Final 2024 Fund Transfers**  
Finance Manager Leah Melges reviewed the budget and outlined where each fund balance landed at the end of FY24. Any fund balances that were negative will need to be supplemented, by the general fund, to carry a zero balance at year-end. Melges presented FY24 end-of-year fund transfers to accomplish this via Resolution

2025-10. District Administrator Johnson explained how his goal for the 2026 budget will be to work on building up fund balances in the CIP funds that could be used for future grant matches or project funding. For FY25, these funds will not carry forward a balance due to wage distributions being expended from them. In 2026, Johnson hopes to place more of the wage distributions under the general fund to allow for CIP fund balances to grow. He also hopes to avoid using the Survey & Data fund for any wage distributions. Johnson reviewed for the Board which grants require match funds and President Schaefer inquired about knowing when to stop levying for a particular fund, like New London Stormwater. Johnson explained that as projects come to completion and there are not future projects on the horizon, at that point you can scale back or stop levying for that fund.

Johnson and Melges also presented 2025 budget activity highlighting current cash balances and YTD expenditures demonstrating where each fund stands as we begin the second quarter of the year and where any deficits and surpluses are projected.

**A motion by Manager Braegelman to approve Resolution 2025-10 Authorization of Final 2024 Fund Transfers was made, seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed unanimously.**

- c. Earning interest on MFCRWD cash balance by bank Request for Proposal  
District Administrator Andy Johnson would like to put out a Request for Proposal to banks within our District for an interest-earning checking account. Jeff Martinka, from United Prairie Bank in Spicer presented Administrator Johnson with a quote proposal for a Rise Money Market Account. It is a high interest-bearing checking account at 3.7% per year. Martinka also outlined other interest-earning options available. Johnson has drafted an RFP to send out to all banks within the District, and the Board gave formal authorization for Johnson to seek proposals for the May agenda.
- ~~d.—Accept Summer Intern position and pay~~
- e. MN Clerks Institute for Finance and Officers Association for Leah Melges  
Office and Finance Manager Leah Melges reported that due to the timing of the Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute this year, she is going to forego attendance at the continuing education program this year with the intention of attending year one of the three-year training program in 2026. Per Administrator Johnson's request, the Board gave full approval for this, and any additional future training opportunities that may arise within budgetary constraints.
- f. Lake Calhoun Dam & Bridge Project Update – Chris Meehan, Stantec Inc.  
Chris Meehan reported that the Calhoun Bridge/Dam Project team met on March 20<sup>th</sup>. They are looking at how the bridge and bypass will look and making sure it meets DNR criteria. He discussed the tree clearing that was done, along with the possibility to add additional trees. There is a 90%

design meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with the goal of seeking bids this summer and beginning construction in the fall, around the middle of September. The project is currently awaiting permitting from the DNR or Army Corp. District Attorney John Kolb brought to light that since this project involves CD-20, the county currently has no record of any of the designs being authorized by the drainage authority. Specified in the JPA, MFCRWD is required to take care of all necessary permitting, so we need to prepare and file a petition so the county can alter the drainage record to reflect the modifications (bypass and structures) and how the outlets interact with CD-20. Since Kolb's firm represents both the MFCRWD and the County as a Drainage Authority, we need to make a waiver of conflict, requiring a 220 proceeding. Funding is included in the JPA to cover the costs of the notification of the public hearing required for this.

g. CD-47 Project Update – Chris Meehan / Andy Johnson

Administrator Johnson shared that the sloping and meandering work is completed, and we are in the restoration stage. This project was put at a pause, temporarily, due to extreme mud needing to dry out. Johnson continues to contact landowners regarding their preferences of restoring their properties following construction, however, again due to the muddy conditions, many haven't yet decided.

h. Agenda Additions / Other Matters

District Administrator Johnson shared concerns that have been raised regarding 'The Nest' Planned Unit Development, located between Nest Lake and Green Lake. There is concern that the county's stormwater and erosion control checklist was waived before the preliminary and final plats were approved, and there is no accounting of where stormwater will go. Kandiyohi County Planning and Zoning waived permitting to the state so any requirements are now up to the MPCA, however the MPCA does not review stormwater management for developments as a design approval under 50 acres. The total acreage of 'The Nest' is approximately 6.5 acres. Though construction stormwater management will likely apply, the bigger question is terminal stormwater management. District Attorney John Kolb will reach out to Zoning Administrator Van Dyken regarding this concern. This PUD is within shore-length of an impaired body of water, and the MPCA does stormwater erosion control during the construction phase of development, however not the ongoing stormwater management.

The Green Lake Property Owners Association (GLPOA) submitted a letter for the Planning and Zoning meeting held on April 7<sup>th</sup>, and the letter was not read as public commenting was shut down for only that section of the meeting. President Schaefer questioned whether the District should look into becoming a permitting agency again. District Attorney John Kolb and District Engineer Chris Meehan clarified that the MPCA will not do an in-depth review for developments under 50 acres, however if a complaint is made, the MPCA will pull that permit and do a more in-depth review. At that point, the MFCRWD could submit data practices request to the MPCA. The

District could also submit data practices request to the county Planning & Zoning Department to obtain information.

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – Andy Johnson:

District Administrator Andy Johnson participated in KWLM's Conservation and Conversation Talk on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and talked about some of the projects our District has done. Johnson will be meeting with the City of Belgrade regarding stormwater planning and partnering on future projects. New Watershed Resource Specialist, Erin Vruwink, will start on May 5<sup>th</sup> and Summer Intern, Gavin Radabaugh, will start on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Chuck Johnson, from the MPCA, is willing to loan our District some sampling equipment for the summer. Training will be required for using the equipment and lake associations will be able to use it for 4 days and the District will recalibrate it after each use. Johnson will continue to research and price out new Sonde.

b. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Leah Melges' monthly update included completion of the March bank reconciliation, as well as switching web hosting services from SiteGround to our current website developer, Streamline, at no additional cost. Melges started the Q1 quarterly tax returns for 2025 and filed the state return but is waiting to review the federal return and unemployment insurance payment for accuracy with Abdo before officially submitting them by the end of the month. Adjustments in the payroll system have begun to account for the change of Administrator Johnson's new wage distributions, the removal of deductions and benefits for recently departed employees, and lastly updating wage distributions for new hires. Melges has been assisting in drafting employment contracts, preparing necessary new employee documents for onboarding Erin Vruwink and Gavin Radabaugh and cancelling Principal insurance coverage for Jon Morales.

c. District Engineer – Chris Meehan: Written report provided.

District Engineer Chris Meehan has been researching costs for a new bioreactor for the Rosenquist property, as well as supporting Administrator Johnson on the Bergstrom and Elkhorn BMP's. Meehan is also working on looking at Diamond Lake data and how functions on HSW chain of lakes may assist Diamond Lake utilizing tools already in place.

d. District Attorney – John Kolb:

Nothing further to report.

e. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: As a representative of the DLARA Board, Manager Gertgen has been seeking assistance from County Administrator Kelsey Baker on developing a county-wide blue-green algae process that may followed in the future in the event that blue-green algae is discovered on a lake

7. Public Access Forum (*those desiring to speak, please share your name for the meeting record*):

Frank Gustafson: He thanked the MFCRWD for the work that they have been doing.

He expressed concern that more than locating utilities has been done, there have also been tree stumps dug up. There will be another meeting next week to approve the final plat and no public comment will be allowed at that time.

Ann Gustafson: Ann strongly urged the MFCRWD, as an organization, to take a position on this matter with The Nest. She is concerned that the county will be able to duck and run based on how things have developed thus far. No one has had opportunity to make public comments and a position from the MFCRWD would be helpful. She asked District Attorney John Kolb how to slow down the process and he replied that continuing to submit written concerns highlighting parts of the code that are being violated is the best course of action as the written reports are required to be kept and recorded, even if they choose not to make them part of the meeting record. Kolb then advised the MFCRWD Board that currently the District lacks a regulatory mechanism to prevent this and nothing indicates that there is imminent issue to the lake. He also suggested that landowners have several options, both legal and administrative.

Frank Gustafson: The MPCA is only considering a construction stormwater plan and nothing requiring them to consider a long-term drainage management plan. District Attorney Kolb explained that the process covers when construction starts until after construction is completed and the land that was disturbed is returned to fully vegetated areas. Kolb also pointed out that it will be necessary to see what the accumulated regulatory requirements dictate for this site, and he is waiting to learn what the justification was for waiving stormwater management plans.

Dale Anderson: County Commissioner reiterated the importance of sending written comments or making phone calls to the County Commissioners and County Administrator to make sure that concerns are known and documented. There is time to send letters/call until April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Commissioner Anderson also brought up concern about the MFCRWD's levy increase and that he has received complaints from a constituent that the levy amount is too high and to keep that in consideration in the next budget cycle.

President Schaefer asked District Administrator to formally submit a data practice request to the County regarding The Nest PUD prior to the meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Manager Jeff Gerten briefly shared about a Diamond Lake property that was sold, and a major tree removal took place expanding down to the beach resulting in potential shore-impact zone issues. County Commissioner Anderson also acknowledged receiving concerns about this same property.

8. Adjournment: Motion made by Manager Gertgen, seconded by Manager Braegelman to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 8:09 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges  
Recording Secretary  
Office & Finance Manager