

Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
June 10th, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office

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

Staff & Guests Present: Andy Johnson – District Administrator; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Erin Vruwink – Water Resources Specialist; Gavin Radabaugh – Summer Intern; Chris Meehan – District Engineer

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 Toutges. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Financial Report
 - i. Finance Report & Cash Balances
 - ii. Approval of Payables & Expenditures
 - iii. Resolution 2025-12 - Annual Step Increase for Leah Melges
 - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – May 13th, 2025.
Motion by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Braegelman to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. Whole Lake Point Intercept Survey for Long Lake North (Hawick, MN)

Two years ago, Starry Stonewort was discovered in Long Lake in Hawick, MN. The lake association has a contract with Blue Water Science to utilize some hand-pulling/removal and chemical treatments. Historically they have only done meandering surveying around the two boat landings, but they have asked for the District’s help in financing a whole lake point intercept survey. The cost of the survey is \$2100, and the lake association will continue to finance the ongoing hand-pulling and chemical treatments.

District Administrator Andy Johnson recommends that with financial assistance to lakes for survey completion there should be a requirement for the vendor to send the data to Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) as well as ensuring there isn’t duplication of services with the DNR’s surveying schedule. Assisting lakes with point-intercept surveys would be beneficial in helping identify AIS in our District and whether it’s spreading. The lake association will pay the invoice and submit a reimbursement request to the District. Johnson would also like to remove the administrative fee that the District receives for being the fiscal agent of each lake association fund.

A motion to approve the reimbursement of funding to Long Lake for the point-intercept survey was made by Manager Gertgen, seconded by Manager Braegelman. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Resolution 2025-06 – Authorization for United Prairie Bank Addendum Entity Signatures
Administrator Johnson and Finance Manager Melges met with Kathy Jopp, business retail manager at United Prairie Bank to complete paperwork to open an interest-earning checking account. The signature authority forms are the last things that need to be signed by all board managers. Within a few weeks the transition should be completed.

- c. Agenda Additions / Other Matters
District Administrator Andy Johnson announced that he will be on vacation during the regular board meeting date in July. He received full board approval to maximize his ‘time off’ by not joining the meeting virtually and allowing the remaining staff to facilitate the July meeting.
Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink and Summer Intern Gavin Radabaugh have been working on posters for a QR code at the Calhoun Dam/Bridge site that will update the public about the project and the ongoing progress of it. Board President Schaefer will also share this information to the lake association at their next meeting.
District Attorney John Kolb also represents the Kandiyohi County Ditching Authority (CD-20), which interacts with the Calhoun Dam/Bridge project, and he continues to work on a process to relieve any potential conflict of interest.

6. Reports & Updates

- a. Administrator – Andy Johnson:
District Administrator Andy Johnson also reported that CD-47 is in final stages and working on the final punch list with Nick Wyers (Stantec). They met and walked the project site. Picking rock/sticks in landowner fields, seeding and tree planting are all final steps in the project. Completion of a final punch-out list with Diversified Foundations will need to occur as well.
Johnson has also been collaborating with Josh Kavanaugh from the DNR and discussing plans to complete a vegetation survey of HSW in July/August to identify existing vegetation prior to a potential full draw-down, for which multiple criteria points have already been met.

- b. Office/Finance Manager – Leah Melges:
Office/Finance Manager Leah Melges reported that once the new bank account at United Prairie Bank is open, we will get checks ordered and begin transitioning the payroll ACH services over to align with our payroll cycles. Melges reached out to the MN DNR to touch base regarding some sizable construction invoices that are anticipated in the coming months as construction on the project begins. The MN DNR outlined that invoices may be sent for reimbursement more frequently than quarterly in the construction phase, and reimbursements requests are also able to be submitted before initial payment is made to prevent temporary cash flow constraints. Melges has also been working with Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink on transitioning over social media responsibilities and training on website editing. Melges shared that each year we are eligible to do Flex Non-Discrimination Testing on our flex benefits plan. Due to our plan incurring no changes this year, and having completed the testing last year (with successful results) the District opted out of testing this year and will plan to have testing done every couple years, unless

changes are made to the District's Flex Benefits Plan. Lastly, Melges has been participating in training opportunities regarding the upcoming MN Paid Leave that will take into effect in January 2026 to ensure that the District is in compliance with the new law.

c. Water Resources Specialist – Erin Vruwink:

Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink reported that monitoring and sampling have been going well with the help of the summer intern, Gavin. She has also been working on interactive media for the website and social media.

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

District Engineer Chris Meehan reiterated that CD-47 is in the finalization stage and praised working with Diversified Foundations. Administrator Johnson and Nick Wyers have put out a pressure transducer at the HSW outlet to Diamond Lake which measures continuous flow. They also plan to install staff gauges to evaluate flow going into Diamond Lake at DL6, DL7 and SWL2.

e. Summer Intern – Gavin Radabaugh:

Gavin has been assisting in sampling and monitoring the lakes and rivers and has also taken on entering the data. He excels at keeping himself busy assisting in projects and research, as well as being extremely helpful to any of the District staff.

f. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: Manager Gertgen attended 1W1P policy committee meeting where they voted to raise technical engineering from \$ 30,000 to \$ 90,000.

7. Public Access Forum (*those desiring to speak, please share your name for the meeting record*):
None.

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 7:44 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary
Office & Finance Manager