

Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
February 10th, 2026 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office

Board of Managers Present: Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman, Amanda Toutges (left at 7:00pm).

Staff & Guests Present: Andy Johnson – District Administrator; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Erin Vruwink – Water Resources Specialist
Attending Virtually: John Kolb – District Attorney

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 Toutges, seconded by Manager Braegelman. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Financial Report
 - i. Finance Report & Cash Balances
 - ii. Approval of Payables & Expenditures
 - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 13th, 2026.
Motion by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Hedtke to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. Final 2025 Fund Transfers
To finalize the 2025 financials and begin audit work, four remaining fund transfers must be authorized by the Board and completed in the accounting system. **A motion to approve Resolution 2026-02 Authorization of Final 2025 Fund Transfers was made by Manger Gertgen, seconded by Manager Toutges. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - b. Earth Day 2026 PWELC Sponsorship Request
Historically, the District has partnered with the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center for its annual Earth Day event. This year’s event is scheduled for April 18th, 2026, and the District will host an educational booth. In prior years, the District has also provided a sponsorship donation for the event. **A motion by Manager Toutges, second by Manager Gertgen, to approve the sponsorship donation of \$600 for the PWELC Earth Day event. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - c. Summer Internship Program

Gavin Radabaugh served as the District's summer intern last year and performed exceptionally well in the role. He has expressed interest in returning for the upcoming summer and would be a strong addition, given his familiarity with the District's operations, equipment, and processes. During his previous internship, he assisted with monitoring activities, supported various projects, and contributed to outreach efforts. He is available from mid-May through mid-August and comes recommended by Administrator Johnson. The internship position is included in the District's 2026 annual budget. **A motion to approve Resolution 2026-03 Authorization for 2026 Seasonal Internship for Gavin Radabaugh was made by Manager Gertgen, seconded by Manager Toutges. Motion passed unanimously.**

d. Diamond Lake Bioreactor BMP – Discussion

A request for bids was published in both local newspapers and on the website for the Diamond Lake Bioreactor project and resulted in a total of six received bids. This is a lowest-bid contract and District Engineer Nick Wyers contacted all contractors who submitted bids. NXT LVL Excavating, LLC came in with the lowest bid of \$22,661.48, no concerns were noted and they have signed the responsible contractor form. Administrator Johnson gave his recommendation to approve the lowest bid submitted by NXT LVL Excavating, LLC.

A motion to approve the NXT LVL Excavating, LLC bid at \$22,661.48 was made by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Braegelman. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Calhoun Dam Project start for 2026 - Discussion

Construction work on the Calhoun Dam project started this week and contractors and bridge subcontractors met on-site. There was concern about the weight of the trucks crossing the bridge, however there is not the option to build a temporary bridge around due to the requirement of extra DNR permitting, so extra support will be added to the existing bridge. Signage and notices have been posted, and flyers were distributed to notify lake-goers of the road closure during this process, and a temporary gate will be put up to block the road off. Construction will need to cease by ice-out or March 31, 2026 due to fish spawning. There is some concern with timeline as Minnesota Native Landscapes had planned on having two winters to work on the project, and now a good portion of this winter has passed. There were also 2 amendments to this project: an extra \$30,000 for the additional materials to reinforce the bridge, and an extra \$44,000 for alternative steel materials for the dam per the DNR request. The approved amendments were signed, and the DNR secured an additional \$200,000 to cover the increased project costs.

f. Water Pollutant Load Monitoring Program (WPLMN) Grant with MPCA - Discussion

A meeting was held with the MPCA to discuss the two-year WPLMN grant; the FY24-26 grant agreement ends June 2026. The MPCA would like the

District to continue monitoring the sites and managing the grant. They reimburse monitoring activities, calibration and solution costs, and certain lab delivery fees. The District has alternated grant management responsibilities with North Fork Crow River Watershed District, though it is uncertain whether they will request to resume that role.

g. Agenda Additions / Other Matters: None.

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – Andy Johnson:

District Administrator Andy Johnson provided an update on the potential stormwater project in the City of New London, which includes storm sceptors near the new city building and underground storage. He is currently preparing grant applications to help fund the project. The total estimated project cost is \$550,000; while the District has sufficient funds available in the New London Fund and 319 Fund to complete the project, additional grant funding will still be pursued. Johnson reported that the recent posting for the Project Coordinator position did not receive any applications, and the position will be re-posted. He also noted that the District's current website is hosted through Streamline, with the annual contract expiring at the end of February. Streamline's costs continue to increase significantly, particularly due to new ADA compliance requirements for PDFs. Johnson has researched alternatives, and Erin Vruwink (WRS) has begun developing a new website platform. Even with a third-party ADA compliance service, the new option—Wicks—would cost an estimated \$20–\$160 per month and remain substantially less expensive than Streamline. Johnson recommended moving away from Streamline, and the Board agreed. Lastly, Johnson reported that he also attended the Lake Symposium at the Arboretum which provided valuable information. Additionally, Vruwink and Johnson collected 12 sediment core samples from Tadd and Upper Lakes with Stantec, which will be sent to UW–Stout for analysis.

b. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager reported that all W2's and 1099's for 2025 have been distributed out to employees, Board Managers and vendors and the Annual Exclusion and Annual Leave Report have been submitted to PERA for 2025. The on-site audit will begin February 18th with Brenda Nowak coming from Peterson Company Ltd. for 3 days next week. Melges has already started submitting requested items for the audit review and will also be submitting a reimbursement request for 2025-Q4 for the Calhoun Dam Project.

c. Water Resources Specialist – Erin Vruwink:

Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink reported that the H2S survey is currently open through the 15th and has received 98 responses out of the 800 distributed. She has also completed the 2025 water quality monitoring report and will be sending it to the Managers.

d. District Engineer – Nick Wyers – not present.

- e. District Attorney – John Kolb:
No report.

 - f. Other Reports from Managers / Staff:
Manager Jay Hedtke asked whether the District offers any programs for cover crops. Administrator Johnson noted that the District does not have standalone funding for such programs, but would refer interested landowners to the SWCD.
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 7:57 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary
Office & Finance Manager