

Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
January 13th, 2026 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office

Board of Managers Present: Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman (attending virtually).

Not present: Amand Toutges

Staff & Guests Present: Andy Johnson – District Administrator; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Nick Wyers – District Engineer; and 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 Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Financial Report
 - i. Finance Report & Cash Balances
 - ii. Approval of Payables & Expenditures
 - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – November 13th, 2025.
Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. RFP bids for MFCRWD’s Annual Audit - Discussion
District Administrator Johnson shared research across various other SWCD’s/Watershed Districts/Local Partners inquiring about annual audit fees which resulted in quite a broad range of fees. Johnson sent an RFP to 7 various audit firms and received 3 quotes back from: Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing (\$26,500), Peterson & Co. (\$18,500) and Schlenner Wenner & Co. (\$27,650). Peterson & Co. offers the greatest price reduction in current audit fees, even with potential additional costs for various services throughout the year. Johnson made a recommendation to the Board of Managers to change auditors from Schlenner Wenner & Co. to Peterson & Co. for the 2026 audit year.
Manager Gertgen made a motion to go with a one-year contract with Peterson & Co., seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Resolution 2026-01 – 2026 Annual Resolution Appointments & Designations
 - i. Calendar Year 2026 Board Officer & Advisory Committee Appointments
 1. President: Ruth Schaefer

2. Vice-President: Jay Hedtke
3. Secretary: Jeff Gertgen
4. Recording Secretary: Leah Melges
5. Treasurer: Shane Braegelman
6. Vice-Treasurer: Amanda Toutges
7. Personnel & Policy Committee: Schaefer and Hedtke
8. Finance & Budget Committee: Braegelman and Toutges
9. Projects & Practices Committee: Gertgen and Braegelman
10. Technology & Communications Committee: Gertgen and Toutges
11. North Fork One Watershed One Plan Policy Committee
Representative: Gertgen
12. Citizen Advisory Committee: Shall consist of all authorized volunteer monitors as well as any other residents of the District formally appointed by the Board of Managers.

District Attorney John Kolb advised that since all five Managers were not present at this meeting, the Annual Designations could be tabled until a later date when all Managers are present or the Board could approve current designations as is.

Manager Hedtke made motion to leave as is and Manager Gertgen seconded to continue with current designations. Motion passed unanimously.

- ii. Official Depositories, Newspaper and other Designations
- iii. Review Meeting and Holiday Dates

Manager Gertgen made a motion to amend the above motion and to approve all appointments and other annuals designations in Resolution 2026-01, motion was seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Bioreactor BMP – Discussion

District Administrator Johnson shared with the Board that remaining grant funds that were left over from the CD-47 project were authorized by BWSR to be used for the Rosenquist Bioreactor Project on the north side of Diamond Lake to help meet the overall grant goals. An RFP for bid was sent out last week and Johnson is hopeful of being able to present a bid at the next board meeting for approval.

d. Calhoun Dam Project - Discussion

District Engineer Nick Wyers updated that the public waters permits have been obtained, but the project is still awaiting Army Corp permitting (SHPO). Partners and contractors (Minnesota Native Landscapes) met today to update on the status of the project. The grant dollars extend for 5 years and September 14th, 2026 is still the target date for the start of the bridge work and closing of the road. Updates will continue to come as final permitting is received.

- e. Tadd and Upper Lakes Subwatershed Scope of Services Amendment - Discussion
In September of 2025 the Board approved to have a Tadd and Upper Lake Watershed assessment completed to better understand the chemistry of the lakes and the potential internal loading. The original quote for the study was \$18,873 and the additional analysis and additional soil cores (from the already approved budget) increased the quote to \$21,933. The additional cores, taken through the ice, are required to be driven immediately to the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Administrator Johnson's recommendation is to include the additional services and to amend the original plan. \$15,000 for this study will be reimbursable by 1W1P and the Atwater Stormwater fund will provide the remainder of the funding for this assessment.

Manager Gertgen made a motion to approve the amendment to the Tadd and Upper Lake Subwatershed Assessment totaling \$21,933. Motion was seconded by Manager Hedtke, motion passed unanimously.

- f. Agenda Additions / Other Matters

Board President Ruth Schaefer shared that the Minnesota Watersheds Legislative Event will occur on March 3-4, 2026 in St. Paul, MN. President Schaefer, Manager Jeff Gertgen and District Administrator Andy Johnson plan to attend and Managers will reach out to schedule meetings with our legislators at the event.

Manager Gertgen shared that the Future of Southern MN Lakes Conference will occur on March 6-7, 2026 and he and Board President Schaefer plan to attend.

District Administrator Andy Johnson and Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink plan to attend the 2026 MN Lakes Management Symposium at the Minnesota Arboretum on February 3rd, 2026.

6. Reports & Updates

- a. Administrator – Andy Johnson:

District Administrator Andy Johnson finished submission for a BWSR drainage grant, totaling \$350,000 (this is only 40% of the total project cost), for New London underground storage and storm sceptors. There is another BWSR grant due at the end of February, which is a multipurpose grant, which Johnson intends to submit New London storage / storm sceptors again, as well as possibly the Peace Church project. Johnson also reported that he was able to get significant reimbursement from 1W1P for project development hours of his time from January 2023 – December 2024. For the CD-47 project, the grant has been extended for one more year, ending May 2027. Johnson also posted a position opening for a Project Coordinator in the local newspaper, on social media and via partner websites. Lastly, a survey for the Mill Pond Hydrogen Sulfide issue will be distributed to New London Township to determine the level of community buy-in for funding a possible Mill Pond nanobubble project.

- b. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Leah Melges reported that all updates and changes for 2026 payrolls were made to Banyon Payroll and Fund Accounting Software, with

majority of the changes regarding the implementation of MN Paid Leave. 2025 4th Quarter Payroll Tax Returns have been filed and CDS will be processing W2's/1099's for the District for 2025, as well as the submission of W3/1096 to the Social Security Administration. W2's will be dispersed to staff/Board as soon as they are received from CDS.

- c. Water Resources Specialist – Erin Vruwink – Absent, no report.
 - d. District Engineer – Nick Wyers: Written report provided.
District Engineer Nick Wyers updated regarding the Rosenquist Bioreactor project and Calhoun Dam project. There is just one punch-list item left on CD-47 project, a final log that will be burned before winter is over, to close out that project.
 - e. District Attorney – John Kolb:
No report.
 - f. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: No additional comments offered.
7. Public Access Forum (*those desiring to speak, please share your name for the meeting record*):
President Schaefer inquired fellow Managers regarding receiving and completing their campaign finance report, and if not, to do so promptly. President Schaefer also updated that Kandiyohi County has dissolved their AIS Task Force in efforts to save money. Schaefer reported that County Commissioner Duane Anderson recommended that the county board take the recommendation of the county staff to dissolve the task force. Commissioner Roger Imdieke made a motion to keep the task force for 2026, but was voted down 2-3 and the task force was dissolved as of January.
8. Adjournment: Motion made by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary
Office & Finance Manager