

**Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
November 13th, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office**

Board of Managers Present: Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen.

Absent: Shane Braegelman and Amanda Toutges

Staff & Guests Present: Andy Johnson – District Administrator; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Erin Vruwink – Water Resources Specialist; Nick Wyers – 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 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 – October 14th, 2025.
Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. Recommendations for changes to the MFCRWD Employee Handbook
 - i. Resolution 2025-20 Authorization to Amendments to the MFCRWD Employee Handbook
The Policy Committee met on November 3rd to discuss updates and clarifications to existing language in the Employee Handbook. Administrator Johnson reviewed the recommendations to the language including unused vacation leave payout, clarification on personal leave/holiday pay benefits, and changes to parental leave benefits to coincide and comply with the upcoming MN Paid Leave starting in January 2026. Changes to the funeral leave benefit were also recommended to allow for more broad use of leave in the event of a death. **A motion by Manager Gertgen to approve Resolution 2025-20 Authorization to Amendments to the MFCRWD Employee Handbook was made, seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - b. MN Paid Family and Medical Leave Policy update
 - i. Resolution 2025-21 Adoption of MN Paid Leave Policy
Beginning in January 2026, MN Paid Leave law will go into effect, allowing employees to apply for paid leave for themselves and/or to care for family members for up to 12 weeks each year. This program will be funded by premiums that are comprised of payroll deductions (employer and employee portions). The State will review employee applications, determine eligibility and

administer payments directly. The District can elect to pay the premium in full or split the premium cost with the employee per payroll deductions. **A motion by Manager Hedtke to approve Resolution 2025-21 Adoption of MN Paid Leave Policy was made, seconded by Manager Gertgen. Motion passed unanimously with full board approval granted to split the cost of the premium between the District and employee as per required by the state.**

c. MN Watersheds Annual Conference December 3rd-5th, 2025

MN Watersheds will host its annual conference December 3rd-5th at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa, MN and this year the District will be recognized for its 20 year anniversary. President Schaefer reviewed the Resolution and Legislative Committee's recommendations for the six resolutions being presented at the business meeting following the Annual Conference. A mix of Managers and staff plan to attend the Annual Conference this year.

d. Agenda Additions / Other Matters

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – Andy Johnson:

District Administrator Andy Johnson attended BWSR Academy in October and was able to sit in various sessions and trainings providing a wealth of information. Johnson applied for BWSR's Keep It Clean Grant for \$10,000 to keep garbage off the ice in the wintertime via dumpsters and education/advertising. Administrator Johnson and Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink met with New London City Administrator Jen Dahl to discuss the Mill Pond nanobubble project to determine financial ability/willingness of the city to cost-share the project. Currently, the city is willing to financially contribute to the acquisition/maintenance of a nanobubble generator. Johnson also attended the Kandiyohi County public hearing on the Calhoun Dam Project with Stantec Engineer Nick Wyers. Lastly, Administrator Johnson updated that he is working with Stantec on plans for one bioreactor on the Rosenquist land (a second bioreactor will not be feasible due to the grade in the ditch being too difficult to work with) and he has been finalizing the position description for a Project Manager and will look to post for that position soon.

b. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Leah Melges reported that following the adoption of the MN Paid Leave Policy into the Employee Handbook, compliance with requirements of the policy will be documented, including individual notice to employees and acknowledgements. Awaiting updates from Banyon Payroll software to account for the MN Paid Leave premium deductions and setting that up in the payroll system to be effective the first payroll of 2026.

c. Water Resources Specialist – Erin Vruwink:

Water Resources Specialist Erin Vruwink reported that she enjoyed attending BWSR Academy, networking and gathering additional resources, especially regarding climate change tools geared towards agriculture. Vruwink would like to develop a pollinator habitat and build a seed bank program, which could start with planting in the area in front of our office building. She has started to develop a survey to put out to the New London and Burbank townships to gauge

how the public would feel about a mitigation plan for the hydrogen sulfide issue and how much community members and businesses are willing to contribute. Lastly, Vruwink reported she is working on finalizing all the air quality monitoring equipment, with the control panel being mounted at the fisheries building in New London, as well as 4 other locations where sensors will be placed.

- d. District Engineer – Nick Wyers: Written report provided.

District Engineer Nick Wyers reported that the CD-47 project is almost finished with a few remaining punch-out items awaiting completion. Permitting for the Calhoun project is still a waiting game, but the DNR re-engaged today regarding some design specs and elevations. The public hearing for the County Ditch petition presentation on November 4th was accepted by the County. Wyers confirmed the feasibility of one bioreactor location near Diamond Lake and completed some surveying to get water elevations on the staff gauges at various spots in the Diamond Subwatershed as prep work for the potential HSW drawdown next year. Wyers will be scheduling sediment cores for Tadd and Upper Lakes with UW Stout, which will likely be an ice/winter activity.

- e. District Attorney – John Kolb:

Not Present

- 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*): None.
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 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary
Office & Finance Manager