

**Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
January 14th, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office**

Board of Managers Present: Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman (departed at 7:32 p.m.)

Not present: Amanda Toutges.

Staff & Guests Present: Dan Coughlin – District Administrator; Andy Johnson – Project Manager; Jon Morales – Program Manager; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; John Kolb – District Attorney; Tom Hayden – DLARA; Mark Streed – DLARA; Dale Anderson – County Commissioner

Not present: 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 Hedtke. Motion passed 4-0.**
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Financial Report
 - i. Finance Report
 - ii. Approval of Payables / Expenditures
 - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – October 8th, 2024; November 12th, 2024; December 10th, 2024.
Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed 4-0.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. Review & Discussion of Annual Resolution
 - i. Consideration of Resolution 2025-01, Annual Resolution
As two board appointments will expire in April of 2025, Administrator Coughlin recommended waiting on re-appointments until the two board seats are filled in April and revisit appointments at that time. The November meeting date for 2025 falls on Veteran’s Day so it will be rescheduled for Wednesday, November 13th, 2025.
A motion to amend resolution 2025-01 made by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Hedtke. Motion passed 4-0.
 - b. 2025 Summer Internship Discussion
 - i. Consideration of Resolution 2025-02, Authorization of Internship Position for Summer 2025
Gavin Radabaugh, who was awarded the 2024 Westby Internship, spent time assisting the District during the summer of 2024 and demonstrated an excellent work ethic, being highly motivated and

proved to be a self-starter. He received high praise from Dan, Jon and Erin on many occasions. Gavin expressed interest in our internship program this summer and Program Manager Jon Morales recommended to the Board to hire Gavin as the 2025 summer intern.

A motion to approve resolution 2025-02 made by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Braegelman. Motion passed 4-0.

c. Project Updates

District Engineer Chris Meehan was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a traffic delay. Meehan reported to Administrator Coughlin that he is working on the Diamond Lake report that will ideally be ready prior to the February meeting. Project Manager Andy Johnson added that soil boring and survey work for the Lake Calhoun Dam/Bridge Project is completed, and an upcoming meeting has already been planned.

Johnson also shared an update for CD-47. Diversified Foundations, the contractor, has been out on-site doing prep work for the project and currently it is weather dependent with the extreme cold (equipment working properly).

d. Update on Grant Opportunities & Applications

i. Resolution 2025-04, Authorization to Submit Grant Request to LCCMR (Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) for ENRTF Funding (Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund)

Formal action from the Board is required to grant Administrator Coughlin approval for the resubmittal of this grant. Authorization to request ENRTF funding the LCCMR lottery proceeds grant dollars.

A motion to approve resolution 2025-04 made by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Gertgen. Motion passed 4-0.

State Bonding Request Resubmittal: Representative Dave Baker is preparing to re-submit bonding requests for the New London Nanobubble and he anticipates some sort of bonding agreement this year. Program Manager Jon Morales reached out to the City of New London and will be attending the city council meeting on January 22nd, 2025, to gather the city's input for the state bonding request with the Mayor and council.

U.S. Army Engineer Research & Development Center Environmental Laboratory is seeking grant proposals for technical support and demonstration for harmful algae blooms. Administrator Coughlin will submit Diamond Lake Nanobubble for this funding, which is due January 27th, 2025.

Administrator Coughlin also reported on other grant funding options being explored including AIS grant through MN Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center, various small DNR grants that Manager Gertgen has informed him of, Department of Employment and

Economic Development (DEED), Mid-MN Development Commission and the Southwest Initiative Foundation.

e. 2024 Tax Filing Proposal from Abdo, Inc. – Leah Melges

In order to apply for the Investment Tax Credit for the solar panel installation, the District is required to file a 2024 income tax return regardless of exempt status. Abdo has sent over a proposal to assist the District in filing the return for a fee.

A motion to approve the hiring of Abdo Financial Services to file the 2024 Tax Return was made by Manager Gertgen, seconded by Manager Braegelman. Motion passed 4-0.

f. Discussion of MN Watersheds Legislative Priorities – Jeff Gertgen

Board Manager Jeff Gertgen shared the top 2 priorities of MN Watersheds that will be focused on this year:

1. Support 60-day permit review period for Department of Natural Resources.
2. Support developing regulatory approaches to reduce chloride contamination.

g. DNR Round Table Meetings on 1/10/25 – Jeff Gertgen

On January 10th, 2025, Manager Gertgen attended the DNR Round Table session and shared highlights from the discussion focus on groundwater trends and aquifer levels. Per diems for attendance at events/meetings outside normal Board meetings require formal board approval.

Motion to approve the mileage and per diem for Manager Gertgen for attendance at the DNR Round Table, motion by Braegelman, second by Hedtke. Gertgen abstained. Motion passed 3-0.

h. Agenda Additions / Other Matters

Review of the 2024 Minnesota Statute 103D.201 watershed district purposes by Manager Gertgen which identified different aspects that watershed districts have the ability to do. District Attorney John Kolb clarified that, legally, this is not specific guidance to watershed districts of what they must do. The purpose of each individual watershed district is dictated by each district's overall individual plan. This statute simply identifies purposes a watershed district can have upon establishment but does not require any specific district to focus on any one aspect in particular.

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – Dan Coughlin:

District Administrator Dan Coughlin plans to reach out to the Atwater Mayor regarding meeting with the city council to discuss improvements to Tadd and Upper Lake and possible grant opportunities available for potential projects to implement this year.

b. Program Manager – Jon Morales:

Program Manager Jon Morales reported that the voucher for City of New London was approved by City Engineer Chuck DeWolf and City Administrator Trudie Guptill for the Birch Street Infiltration Project. Morales continues looking for more grant options for the infiltration project (raising the parking lot). The 2024 monitoring data is finalized and input into the EQUIS database for anyone to view. Morales also shared changes at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center including the departure of Cory and Mari Klebe. Cory has accepted a position with Sauk River Watershed District as Education Outreach, and Mari will be working as a special education paraprofessional at NLS Schools.

c. Project Manager – Andy Johnson:

CD-47 project is underway and Project Manager is being diligent in keeping landowners updated as the project progresses. Work on CD-47 is specifically weather-dependent with these extreme cold temperatures. February 17th is scheduled to get tree thinning completed and March 15th to complete work on the channel and stream. District Engineer Chris Meehan and Kyle, from Diversified Foundations, feel the deadline is achievable. Stantec's Chris Meehan and Brady Schmitz have developed a long-term goal for a long-term water filtration process on the west side of Elkhorn Lake, complete with GPS and concept modeling. Johnson also reported that he is working on targeted mailing for the acreage going into Diamond Lake to get a mass mailing out informing landowners of our intentions to attempt to alleviate nutrients from leaving the land and seeking potential partnership with landowners.

d. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Leah Melges reported an increase in the fee for ACH Direct Deposit for payroll from Home State Bank, from \$30/month to \$45/month. In lieu of CDS completing our end-of-year accounting tasks this year, Abdo will be assisting in completing end-of-year documents such as W2's, W3's and 1099's, which will need to be completed by January 31st, 2025. Lastly, prep work for the 2024 audit is underway.

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

Not present.

f. District Attorney – John Kolb:

No report.

g. Other Reports from Managers / Staff:

Board Manager Jeff Gertgen specified that a few of the purposes of the 103D.201 statutes are covered by the SWCD and Project Manager Johnson reported that he has shared potential projects with them due to them having resources readily available.

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

None.

8. Closed Session: Annual Employment Review of District Administrator Dan Coughlin (closed at 7.40 p.m. under the authority of MN Statue 13D.05 Subd. 3(a))
9. (reconvene regular meeting at 8:54 p.m.) Consideration of Resolution 2025-03, Authorization of Step Increase for Dan Coughlin
A motion to approve resolution 2025-03 made by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen. Motion passed 3-0.
10. Adjournment: **Motion made by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Gertgen to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 3-0.**

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 8:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary
Office & Finance Manager