

Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes
June 12th, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office

Board of Managers Present: Ruth Schaefer, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman (arrived at 6.43 pm), Amanda Toutges.

Not present: Jay Hedtke

Staff & Guests Present: Andy Johnson – Project Manager; Jon Morales – Program Manager; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; and John Kolb – District Attorney

Attending Virtually: Brady Schmitz – Stantec; Dan Coughlin – District Administrator

1. President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:32 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 updated distributed agenda was made by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Schaefer. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Financial Report
 - i. Finance Report
 - ii. Approval of Payables / Expenditures
 - b. Resolution 2024-08, Authorization of Step Increase for Leah Melges
 - c. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – May 8th, 2024
Motion by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Gertgen, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
 - a. Project Designation Resolutions – District Attorney John Kolb:
District Attorney John Kolb reviewed new resolutions that help align watershed management projects with fund projects for budgeting purposes. The following resolutions do not require public hearing or engineering, but account for levied revenues coming in.
 - i. Resolution 2024-09, Monongalia (nanobubble project)
 - ii. Resolution 2024-10, Belgrade (stormwater study)
 - iii. Resolution 2024-11, Diamond Subwatershed (study & implementation)
 - iv. Resolution 2024-12, Atwater (stormwater study)
 - v. Resolution 2024-13, Atwater / Tadd Lake (nanobubble pilot project)
 - vi. Resolution 2024-14, Calhoun Outlet (partnership with DNR)
A motion to approve the above 6 resolutions 2024-09 through 2024-14, as stated, was made by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Gertgen. The motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Project & Activity Updates
 - i. CD-47 – Andy Johnson:

Army Corp released a waiver for the CD-47 project which will take effect through February 2028. There are 2 years left on our grant and the project should take approximately 60 days to complete. Project Manager Johnson is currently looking at easements that have been identified by O'Malley and Kron, for which rights will be filed with county.

- ii. 1W1P (Fiscal 2020 Assurance Measure Report) – Andy Johnson:
Project Manager Johnson updated on a report that BWSR released for FY20, which is part of the PRAP process. The report highlighted a grading scale on compliance with what would have been done so far on projects and monies spent. We met and exceeded all goals and objectives identified at the beginning of the funding cycle.
- iii. Atwater Pilot Nanobubble Project – Jon Morales:
On May 29th, 2024 Program Manager Jon Morales and summer intern Erin Vruwink mapped Upper and Tadd Lake in Atwater, MN on the BioBase software. On June 4th, 2024, Jon met with Denise Devotta from Moleaer Inc. and James Williams from the University of Wisconsin - Stout on the sediment core aspect of that study. There is the potential to do a nanobubble study on the sediment cores through U of W Stout, whom Moleaer would like to partner with. In-Situ buoys will be arriving, one for Upper Lake and one for Tadd Lake. These buoys will monitor water quality setting a baseline, as well as collecting data during and after the Nanobubbler has been installed in the lakes. Deployment of these buoys will be on June 20th, with the goal of deploying the Nanobubbler in Tadd Lake on July 1st, 2024.
- iv. Calhoun Dam & Bridge – Jon Morales:
Program Manager Morales reported that the contract has been approved and a planning meeting is set for June 21st, 2024.
- v. New London Nanobubble Project – Jon Morales:
Morales reported that “David Buoy” was deployed on May 23rd, 2024 on the Mill Pond in New London along with St. Anthony Falls Laboratory staff. David Buoy will take readings every 5 minutes, and Morales has started the mapping process on the lakes there using the BioBase software.
- c. Green Lake Oil Spill Update – Jon Morales:
On June 3rd, 2024, oil was leaking into Green Lake at Pirotta Park in Spicer. What appeared to be black used motor oil was observed in the culvert going into Green Lake. Program Manager Morales contacted the Duty Officer with the MPCA and filed a report (220785). The MPCA determined the oil spill merited a response, so they deployed West Central Environmental Consultants (WCEC) out of Morris, MN who utilized sorbent booms and poms to confine the oil. The state agencies are investigating and will update on any conclusions drawn from the investigation.

d. MN Watersheds Legislative Priorities – Manager Jeff Gertgen:

Manager Gertgen updated on legislative priorities for the upcoming MN Watersheds Board Meeting regarding requiring state agencies to secure permits from the watershed district to do work within the district. Concern was raised that our relationship with state agencies may be strained if the district is required to enforce permitting.

Another recommended priority is to support dredging as a best management practice for removing sediment and phosphorus from aquatic areas.

Manager Gertgen expressed concern with this and encouraged preliminary study of the source before dredging.

e. Agenda Additions/Other Matters:

Program Manager Jon Morales – Due to dense curly leaf pondweed (CLP) in Tadd Lake, consideration was presented to use Leaf and Lake as a subcontractor to remove some of the CLP to allow easier access to the lake to conduct the study. A quote of approximately \$5500 was given for the removal of CLP, however we are responsible for removing it from shore. Manager Gertgen made a motion to approve no more than \$10,000 for the removal of CLP from Tadd Lake through Leaf and Lake, upon compliance with internal processes / identification of available funding, statutory requirements to secure bids/quotes and permitting from the DNR, motion seconded by Manager Braegelman to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Reports & Updates

a. Program Manager – Jon Morales:

Morales reported the WPLMN contract should be ready for approval at July meeting.

b. Project Manager – Andy Johnson:

Project Manager reviewed educational events he attended, including the Stormwater MECA event and Kandiyohi Lakes Seminar (Kandiyohi SWCD) at Spicer Legion on May 22nd, 2024. He attended the Elkhorn Lake association annual meeting where he did a short presentation and looked at some lakeshore erosion for potential future projects. June 1st was Paddle the Crow with PWELC and there were 32 in attendance. Johnson is continuing work on Atwater and Belgrade stormwater studies and waiting to hear if they received grant funds. Johnson provided tier 1 and 2 lists for Elkhorn and Long Lake associations for mailings and may potentially assist with special assessments within the lake associations. Johnson will also participate in an upcoming New London Middle Fork River Trail meeting to look at developing ADA compliant accessible entry and exit points along the Middle Fork River for recreational use. The DNR has some funding available for a landing, however the concern is the get-out spot on Nest Lake is privately owned land.

c. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Melges reported that all the data from the CDS portal, including payroll and benefits, that they processed for us have been saved digitally to the district's server. Schlenner and Wenner will present the audit report at the next board meeting on July 10th. The monthly board meeting date changes have been posted on the website and the building door, and the first half of the county property tax settlements are starting to be received.

- d. District Engineer – Brady Schmitz:
None.
 - e. District Attorney – John Kolb:
None.
 - f. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: No additional comments offered.
7. Public Access Forum: No public input was received.
8. Adjournment: Motion made by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Braegelman to adjourn the meeting was made. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 7:48 pm.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges
Recording Secretary