

**Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6:00 pm at the MFCRWD Office**

**Board of Managers Present:** Ruth Schaefer, Jay Hedtke, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman, Amanda Toutges.

**Staff & Guests Present:** Andy Johnson – Project Manager; Jon Morales – Program Manager; Chris Meehan – District Engineer; and John Kolb – District Attorney, Jason Weinerman-BWSR, Tom Beneke -Stantec, Ann Latham, Dale Anderson-County Commissioner, Anita Hagen-DLARA, Brian Weist-DLARA, Tom Hayden-DLARA, Mark Streed -DLARA, Ann Latham, Ann Gustafson, Frank Gustafson, Patricia Buboltz,

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 Toutges. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Financial Report
    - i. Finance Report
    - ii. Approval of Payables & Expenditures
  - b. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025
  - c. Special Board Meeting Minutes – March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025  
**Motion by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Toutges to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**
5. Discussion / Business Items
  - a. MN Watersheds Membership Meeting – March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025
    - i. Appointment of two delegates to represent MFCRWD and vote on Policies & Procedures submitted by the MN Watersheds Board.  
Ruth and Jeff have both volunteered to go to the meeting as delegates.  
**Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Braegelman to appoint Ruth Schaefer and Jeff Gertgen as delegates to vote and represent the MFCRWD at the MN Watersheds Membership Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
  - b. Employment / Activng Administrator
    - i. Consideration of Resolution 2025-07, Authorization of Internal Promotion of District Administrator Position  
Since Dan Coughlin’s resignation the WD board decided to extend the administrator position to Jon Morales, however since Jon has also taken a new position and will be leaving the MFCRWD the WD board decided to internally promote Andy Johnson as the new MFCRWD Administrator which

he has accepted. **Motion made by Manager Braegelman and second by Manager Toutges to approve Resolution 2025-07 and offer the MFCRWD District Administrator Position to Andy Johnson. Motion passed unanimously.**

- ii. Resolution 2025 -08, Acceptance of Voluntary Resignation of District Program Manager Jon Morales

Jon said that he has had a good almost ten years working at the MFCRWD and has nothing but hope for the trajectory that the District is on and that it's not an easy decision to leave but he has been working at the MFCRWD for almost ten years and is going to be turning forty and life is full of adventure that he wants to experience and grow his skills. Jon said that he will continue to work with everyone in the future to make the transition as smooth as possible. **Motion by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Hedtke, to approve Resolution 2025-07 Acceptance of Voluntary Resignation of Program Manager Jon Morales. Motion passed unanimously.**

- iii. Discussion Regarding Vacancies

Andy discussed that he has gone over the position description that will be replacing Jon's role and has removed the Capital Improvement and levy BMP program with New London along with the monitoring of installed BMPs at year 2,5 and 7, these will be moved to the Project Manager so they can all be managed under one role for efficiency and accuracy. Andy also mentioned that the MFCWD's monitoring season will start soon in May but our WPLMN grant has already begun and would like someone to fill this vacancy ASAP. He mentioned that Erin Vruwink who was our previous intern for two years would be perfect for the role since she has proven to be organized, smart, a fast learner, and already has experience with our programs and monitoring sites. Andy mentioned that he would like to put his current role as Project Manager out for hiring in the general LGU and state websites. **Motion by Manager Hedtke, seconded by Manager Toutges, to approve the hire of Erin Vruwink and hire out for the Project Manager Position. Motion passed unanimously.**

- c. Diamond Lake Condition Engineering Report – Tom Beneke, Stantec Inc.

- i. Consideration of a Motion to Accept the Report and its Recommendations- see slides presented by Tom B

Tom went over the final Diamond Lake Condition and Nano Bubble Engineering Report, and project description with goals and findings. Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), Nutrient reduction, and water clarity are the main goals wanted out of the nanobubble generator for Diamond Lake. Key findings from slides are no expected change with nutrient reduction while also not expecting a large reduction with HABs but science can be hard to have definitive answers with nature and limited published data. However, the rate of organic decomposition could result in a decrease of organics around docks and foam washed up on beaches. From the TMDL and 2020

soil core samples the internal loading of Diamond Lake is currently very small (about 5%) to have an overall internal water quality benefit from the nanobubble generator vs external loading BMPs. Stantec did not see anoxic levels of Tadd Lake improve to anaerobic while the NBG was running at the bottom at the lake bottom interface with the water. The nature of the evolution of lakes is extremely complicated to make direct predictions with every water system. Manager Braegelman asked if the size of the lakes and inlets between Tadd and Upper would change the dissolved oxygen percent, Tom stated that all lakes are unique and DL does not show low DO from MFCRWD profiles and stratification can limit how oxygen moves to deep depths of some lakes. Manager Gertgen asked if soil core samples would show an organic decomposition rate during nanobubble treatment. Tom Beneke said that is a tough question and is possible with many samples being taken over a long span to possibly get a definitive answer. From the available dissolved oxygen profile data on Diamond Lake there are only three times where the dissolved oxygen was low enough to indicate a release of phosphorus from the lake bottom, meaning that lake does not have frequent conditions for internal loading. Meaning whether a nanobubble generator will oxygenate the bottom or not is sort of irrelevant for Diamond Lake because the dissolved oxygen is above the anoxic threshold and the low internal loading. Beneke said the circulation of water alone from the nanobubble generator can limit algae growth away from stagnation but there is no method available to study, therefore predict it. Tri Lakes Marina in WI saw a 3-foot increase in water clarity, Tadd Lake saw a 1-foot increase in clarity, Lake Elsinore in CA has had drastic increases in water clarity, however these lakes are drastically different and had very little dissolved oxygen to begin with including extreme nutrient levels. Long term solution for HABs would be to address the external phosphorus loading, Diamond Lake has a high extreme loading for tributaries. Board President Schaefer asked if going to change phosphorus levels, and oxygen was not very deep while the nanobubble generator for Tadd Lake was running, to which Beneke responded no. Beneke reported that ozone is still in the experimental study phase and is not able to give a definitive answer to how it will work. There is not data to support that neutrally buoyant bubbles will penetrate the thermocline. Manager Gertgen asked for additional monitoring recommendations and Beneke recommended multiple monitoring location for dissolved oxygen profiles and more samples cores could help. Tom Beneke went over multiple DLARA questions from the audience, however many were sent to Stantec ahead of time and were addressed in the slides during the presentation. Tom reported that more monitoring data from different locations will help us to understand Diamond Lake loading.

**Motion by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Toutges, to accept the Diamond Lake Condition Engineering Report. Motion passed unanimously.**

- d. Lake Calhoun Dam & Bridge Project Update – Chris Meehan, Stantec Inc.  
Chris said that the area has already been cleared of the trees ahead of time to avoid bat nesting regulations and the area looks great, three landowners

were able to take all the large tree sections to use with firewood and to avoid burning. Next Thursday is a meeting at the WD to go over 60% design and further decision if an outlet pipe is still necessary for possible winter kill with fish. The DNR is pleased with the current progress but has some decisions to make about the outlet pipe.

e. CD-47 Project Update – Chris Meehan / Andy Johnson

Andy reported due to the freezing temps in February there was no work being completed for almost two weeks. Johnson was able to get an in-waters permit extension to work past the initial due date from the DNR Fisheries. The project is currently on track to get all the erosion blankets and mulching down by the end of the month with seeding and cleanup to start depending on weather. If everything goes according to plan there will be post photos at the April board meeting.

f. Agenda Additions / Other Matters

None

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – N/A.

b. Program Manager – Jon Morales: Jon created an 11-page transition document with duties, contacts, procedures, file locations, etc for the new employee to help with training.

c. Project Manager – Andy Johnson: Met with New London Administrator to discuss the Monongalia H2S goals and to discuss all aspects with project, cost, conducting a survey from the public to access their level of willingness to pay. Johnson will also meet with Kandiyohi Administrator Kelsey Baker to discuss a partnership for getting access to the land at the campground on Diamond Lake for the nanobubble project. The next round of grant funding from CD-47 was submitted in eLINK.

d. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Leah was not present but had a written report provided that went into the board meeting records and Andy read it to the board.

e. District Engineer – Chris Meehan: Written report provided. Meehan reported that Andy has done well moving forward with future projects on the Bergstrom 1-stage ditch, Elkhorn lake stormwater to the west side wetland, and bio reactor to Diamond Lake and contacts with questions from landowners for the CD47 project.

f. District Attorney – John Kolb: Kolb recommended that Managers should look at House File, Section 8; the legislature is trying address the permitting efficiency related to public water permitting, its similar with the house.

g. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: None.

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

Ann Latham- advice the District of a Planned Unit Development by the Nest lake dam without adequate protection may have a negative effect on the water quality to Green Lake. Preliminary county approval so far. Contractor has to provide final plans to the county board and planning commission. MPCA will need to approve the design.

Brian W. (DLARA) Suggested that we postpone the nanobubble project to 2026 for time to work on project details. He also suggested that there is a 15-year contract for revisitation of the Aquatic Plant Management levy started in 2012. The DLARA board wants to look into revisions, the DLARA Board wants to know how much you can levy, to which Andy Johnson reiterated that they can't levy more than 50% in their bank account. DLARA wants more detail on the how the fund is processed and discussed the draw down possibly to be done again. DLARA wants to know what they can do now to improve the lake. Chris Meehan stated that we will obtain the data and then go forward.

Ann and Frank Gustafson spoke on their concern of the Planned Unit Development on Nest/Green Lake and that it is being passed without proper investigation of stormwater impacts to the lake and the old infrastructure that is under the road may not be able to handle the increase of additional stormwater.

8. Adjournment: Motion made by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Hedtke to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 8:27 p.m.

Submitted by,

Andy Johnson  
District Administrator