

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, June 10, 2021**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the June 10, 2021, regular board meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. via online video conference.

Present: President Jon Spence, Secretary Jen Oknich, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz.

Absent: Vice President Jackie Anderson.

Others: Mike Kinney, Emily Heinz, Bobbie Law, Aidan Read (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke, Greg Graske, Cecilio Olivier (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners).

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Item 4d – WJD-6 Headwaters Land Acquisition was proposed for addition to the agenda.

Item 4e – Greenway Corridor Visioning Update was proposed for addition to the agenda.

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson			X
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

3. Public Hearing – Draft Watershed Management Plan

President Spence opened the public hearing.

A group presentation was given by Ms. Heinz, Dr. Funke, and Administrator Kinney. The main topics presented included:

- Overview
 - Ms. Heinz gave an overview of the District’s location, boundary, and general flow patterns.
- Plan Process
 - Ms. Heinz reviewed the planning process that has been completed to update the Watershed Management Plan. She explained that the District performed a gap analysis which entailed reviewing past studies, monitoring data, and

activities/projects completed. The gap analysis also included a detailed workload analysis to estimate current and future staffing requirements.

- Another part of the planning process was issue identification. Ms. Heinz explained the District met with multiple stakeholder groups in order to identify key issues. She noted that the District received stakeholder input through multiple avenues including an online survey, a website, advisory committee group meetings, public listening sessions, and board Zoom meetings/workshops.
- Ms. Heinz noted that the District has completed the required 60-day review period. She stated that 67 comments/questions were received, and most resulted in relatively minor revisions to the Plan. The District received a lot of positive feedback from reviewers.
- Plan Outline
 - Ms. Heinz gave an overview of the 10-Year Plan sections including an executive summary, ten sections, and appendices A-L.
 - Ms. Heinz reviewed the 1000 (Administration), 3000 (Programs), and 5000 (Projects) series coding system. This system is used throughout everything the District does, from budgeting to work plan to District files.
 - Ms. Heinz gave an overview of the four lake management districts in the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District: Bone Lake, Little Comfort Lake, Forest Lake, and Comfort Lake.
- Plan Priorities
 - Ms. Heinz explained the District primary issues include lake water quality (aiming to achieve in-lake water quality goals within first five years of the planning period), stream water quality, and floodplain management. There are nine priority lakes and four priority watercourses.
- Plan Goals
 - Dr. Funke explained how the District utilizes monitoring data and paleolimnological sediment cores to ensure lake water quality goals are achievable. The schedule for some lake goals was adjusted, resulting in a goal to achieve long-term water quality levels sooner than indicated in the previous Plan. She noted that District goals go beyond state standards in some cases.
- Targeting
 - Administrator Kinney gave an overview of the targeted diagnostic monitoring approach for project implementation. He explained that this is an approach the District uses to improve impaired waters in a cost-effective manner. The data has helped to focus in on key areas rather than doing multiple projects elsewhere in the watershed that wouldn't have as much of an impact on the target waterbody. The District uses on-the-ground monitoring data to focus on the most cost-effective projects. This approach has enabled the District to achieve state standards on multiple waterbodies.
 - Administrator Kinney gave a real-life example using a targeted approach on Moody Lake. He noted that this project is an example that implemented a sequential diagnostic study. He explained that this targeted approach showed a large percentage of the load coming from a specific tributary. Mr. Kinney

explained how the initial identification of a specific location allowed them to work at that site and correct the issue. He explained that the main source in this specific example led the District to an agricultural operation. Remediation was conducted to reduce 80% of the load coming into Moody Lake. Moody Lake's 2020 water quality data met state standards, but the lake will need to have a few more years of monitoring data to get the 10-year average below state standards.

- Measurement
 - Ms. Heinz gave an overview of the progress the District has made from 2012 to 2021. She explained that when setting goals, the District looks at where it is currently and what's achievable in the next ten years. In the last ten years the District has made a lot of progress towards its lakes goals; 89% to meeting state standards and 81% to meeting District long term goals. The District completed several projects to create flood storage capacity, reduce TSS in streams, restore wetlands, preserve upland resources, and reduce groundwater pumping (Shields Lake stormwater reuse project – reduce groundwater pumping by up to 26 million gallons/year).
 - Ms. Heinz touched on the progress report compiled by District Staff. This is unique to Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District and is more detailed than the annual report. The report details water quality goals and summarizes the status of the goals (remaining phosphorus load reduction to reach goals).
 - Ms. Heinz displayed a visual that showed the District-wide progress toward phosphorus reduction goals. The graphic showed how close the District is to reaching both state and District reduction goals. Ms. Heinz again noted that District goals are stricter than state standards and in most cases are based on actual historic sediment data to ensure the goal is consistent with the lake's natural state and is sustainable in the long term.
 - Ms. Heinz noted that the District is close to delisting impaired waters. She explained that this will be a major goal in the updated Watershed Management Plan.
 - Ms. Heinz showed a visualization of lakes that are meeting state standards for total phosphorus, Chlorophyll-a, and Secchi depth. Many are meeting the goals, but the lakes in red are noted as not meeting the standards.
 - Ms. Heinz welcomed the group to present any comments or questions.
 - President Spence asked how much time she and Administrator Kinney will have to present to the central region committee. Ms. Heinz explained that they plan to keep the presentation to 5-10 minutes.
 - Manager Schmaltz noted that he believes the presentation is well done, brief, concise, and informative. He would like Ms. Heinz and Administrator Kinney to cover why the District has been able to accomplish the results and outcomes that it has. Mr. Kinney agrees that the committee would be receptive to hearing new and innovative watershed management techniques.

President Spence noted that no members of the public were present to offer comments, and closed the public hearing.

4. Old Business

a) Watershed Management Plan

Managers had a brief conversation about clearing up some language. Manager Schmaltz thanked staff and consultants for their hard work and dedication to creating the updated 10-Year Watershed Management Plan.

President Spence moved to approve the draft Watershed Management Plan as presented and direct staff to submit it to BWSR for final 90-day review. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson			X
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

b) 2022 Draft Budget

Ms. Heinz noted that she received emails from President Spence and Manager Schmaltz requesting additional information after discussing the budget at the last Board meeting. Based on the questions she received Ms. Heinz compiled revenue projection scenarios and a significant line items change list for the managers to review. Ms. Heinz welcomed the managers to discuss the draft budget. Manager Schmaltz thanked Ms. Heinz for the additional information and clarification.

The managers decided that they would review and discuss the budget by sections. Managers decided they would review the 1000 Administrative series of the budget. Managers agreed that they would like Manager Anderson present for a more detailed discussion of the 3000 Programs and 5000 Projects series of the budget.

President Spence remarked that he was comfortable with the line items in the 1000 series. He also mentioned that the biggest change would be that the District would not be making progress towards the purchase of a new office space for staff. He also noted that he had concerns about the levy getting larger in the future. He explained that this may be a cause for concern for people living on the lakes in Chisago County. President Spence explained one of the scenarios put together by Ms. Heinz that shows the budget increasing by 5% a year.

Manager Schmaltz stated that he believes more loans could be used to offset reserve and control the rate of levy increase. He noted that he would like this to be something the

managers look into at future meetings. President Spence thanked Ms. Heinz for compiling the scenario information for the Board.

Manager Schmaltz brought forward multiple comments for staff to consider. Manager Schmaltz noted that the 2021 projected yearend expenditures for 5000 Projects is significantly lower than budgeted. He would like to understand this, so that he can judge if the District's capacity will match the increased project spending proposed for next year. He noted he understands it may be because some projects are being delayed. Manager Schmaltz expressed other concerns regarding grant funding, an increase in administrative spending, and office space. Manager Schmaltz discussed options for a new office space. Administrator Kinney explained that he will be speaking with staff on how they are coding time. He noted that some items may be being coded as administrative work when they should be coded under projects or programs. Manager Schmaltz noted that he thinks the budget looks better every year it is brought to the Board. He commended the work that allowed him to look back at previous years to help make faster decisions based on data.

Managers had a discussion of the possibility of a collaboration with the Forest School District for office space that also would function as a community and education space.

c) Updating Bank Access Authorizations

Administrator Kinney explained that the District would like to authorize Bobbie Law to view financial accounts to assist with administrative tasks.

Manager Spence moved to authorize the Administrator to add Office Manager Bobbie Law as an authorized viewer to the Lakes Area Bank and First State Bank of Wyoming accounts. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson			X
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

d) Land Acquisition Screening

Administrator Kinney explained that staff and the District Engineer had visited the site presented to them in the Board packet materials. He noted that it is a landlocked parcel. The City of Forest Lake is not interested in the purchase of the property and directed the landowners to speak with District staff. Administrator Kinney noted that upon an initial evaluation staff agreed it would have some potential, but it is not a high priority parcel for projects. It is adjacent to property that was donated to the District. Staff stated that they are looking to the Board for direction on how to move forward. Administrator Kinney noted that the owners of the property have not indicated a selling price but only an assessed value. Staff are not interested at the assessed value.

Manager Spence offered that this parcel is not of interest regardless of price because it is not a high priority location for possible improvement projects. He also noted that the possibility for the property to negatively affect water quality, if the District were not to acquire it, is also low due to it not being buildable. Mr. Kinney stated that the property owners were notified of the adjacent property being a donation to the District.

The managers concluded that the District is not interested at this time. Mr. Kinney confirmed that he will share the memo and information of the night’s conversation with the realtor. He may suggest that the District will consider accepting a donation. Mr. Holtman noted that donated property would present ongoing cost and liability risk to the District, so the Board should find some value in the property even to accept a donation.

e) District Engineer Update

Dr. Funke explained to the Board that she will be leaving Emmons & Olivier Resources to start a new career. She gave the group notice that this is her last meeting with the District. Managers congratulated Dr. Funke and wished her good luck. Dr. Funke shared a few slides to introduce some of the Emmons and Olivier staff that also work with the District behind the scenes.

Cecilio Olivier from EOR noted that they are sad to see Dr. Funke go but respect her decision. He noted that he and Greg Graska will be working more closely with the District. He introduced Jim Almendinger as EOR’s new limnology expert. He noted that Mr. Almendinger is very experienced in his field.

5. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Board directives were summarized:

- Staff will update the Watershed Management Plan PowerPoint presentation to provide more detail on direct outreach to stakeholder groups, clarify the 99-ac ft floodplain goal, and expand on how the District does targeting differently.

6. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – June 24, 2021

Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson			X
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____