

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Wednesday, February 26, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the February 26, 2020 regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District Offices, 44 Lake Street South, Suite A, Forest Lake.

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Manager Jim Dibble

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz

Others: Mike Kinney, Jessica Lindemyer, Garrett Miller (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke, Jason Naber, Cecilio Olivier (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners); Jay Riggs, Erik Anderson (Washington Conservation District)

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Administrator Kinney noted that the small group listening session meeting facilitator from Big River Group was unable to attend the rescheduled meeting, so that presentation will occur at the next board meeting. As such, item 6a (New Business) was postponed until March 12th.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager Dibble. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

3. Consent Agenda

- a) **Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2020**
- b) **Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2020**
- c) **Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2020**
- d) **Special Board Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2020**
- e) **Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2020**
- f) **FY20 Clean Water Fund Grant Agreement**

Manager Anderson requested that the January 9th and January 23rd minutes be removed from the consent agenda, as she has proposed revisions. She also requested that the FY20 Clean Water Fund Grant Agreement item be removed from the consent agenda and considered under new business, so that the Board may discuss the associated resolution.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager Spence. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

4. Public Open Forum

There were no comments.

5. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Operations & Outreach Specialist Jessica Lindemyer reported that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recently discussed 2020 outreach initiatives, and elected one committee member to participate in the Watershed Champion Award review committee. There was discussion about the CAC board liaison quarterly rotation schedule. Manager Dibble indicated that he already attended a meeting in the first quarter of the year. There was consensus that Manager Schmaltz would attend in Q2, President Spence in Q3, and Manager Dibble again in Q4.

Manager Anderson requested that Tom Furey be asked to give a presentation on the CAC's tree planting initiative at a future board meeting.

6. New Business

a) Watershed Management Plan Update [postponed]

b) FY20 Clean Water Fund Grant Agreement

Manager Anderson moved to adopt resolution 20-02-01. Seconded by Manager Spence. 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
Jim Dibble	X		

c) Shields Lake Shoreline Restoration Grant Contract

Mr. Kinney explained that the proposed project will establish a native buffer along the shoreline in Shields Lake Park. The District will work with the City of Forest Lake to implement the project, and the City will also implement several other park improvements including a new fishing pier, ADA access etc. Additionally, the District will work on replacing the winter aeration system on Shields Lake in order to ensure adequate wintertime dissolved oxygen levels to support gamefish populations and keep the carp population in check.

Manager Anderson moved to authorize the Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute the Shields Lake City Park Shoreline Restoration CPL grant agreement. Seconded by Manager Dibble. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

7. Old Business

a) Comprehensive Data Review

Dr. Funke indicated that, as part of the Watershed Management Plan update, she would appreciate input from managers regarding how monitoring data are presented. Manager Anderson explained that she had several questions on the report, which she sent to staff. She expressed that the report should address the questions, and it could be updated after the Board holds a workshop to discuss the data review in more detail.

Manager Anderson moved to accept the Comprehensive Data Review report. Seconded by Manager Spence. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

b) Monitoring Program

Mr. Kinney explained that staff and EOR compared the District's monitoring data taken by Washington Conservation District (WCD) and volunteers through the Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). Staff also discussed the topic with MN Pollution Control Agency. Results suggest that there is no significant difference between the two datasets; both are valid for use in decision-making and impaired waters delisting. He explained that the Board has the option of continuing to contract with professionals to monitor lakes that have CAMP volunteers, thus creating a redundant dataset. Alternatively, the District could rely solely on its CAMP volunteers for certain lakes, reducing monitoring costs. Once the Board has answered that question, it should consider how it wants to continue lake monitoring; pursue a coordinated effort between the District and WCD, have District staff perform more monitoring, or seek additional CAMP volunteers to cover the remaining lakes without volunteers. Mr. Kinney noted that cost savings in the monitoring program could enable the District to perform more targeted diagnostic monitoring to identify capital improvement projects. Manager Anderson expressed that the District should have a backup in case the CAMP volunteer is unable to take samples.

Mr. Kinney recommended that it would be beneficial for District staff to spend more time out on District lakes collecting data and observing conditions. He had requested that WCD coordinate with District staff to cooperatively perform the lake monitoring. However, WCD indicated it would be inefficient to coordinate with District staff in this way, and it would negatively impact their ability to perform monitoring for other lakes throughout the County. President Spence suggested that the District primarily use CAMP data on lakes where it has volunteers and use other resources to monitor lakes without a CAMP volunteer. Mr. Kinney indicated he would request quotes from WCD and EOR to monitor lakes that don't have CAMP volunteers which fit the District's needs.

Manager Anderson suggested that District staff was not intended to perform the monitoring itself. She indicated that the idea was to explore options within the

engineering professional services pool or another entity. She indicated that to accomplish its objectives, the District needs more control over the monitoring process. Mr. Kinney indicated that it may be possible to recruit additional CAMP volunteers for other lakes. He explained that staff has assessed its capacity for increasing involvement in the monitoring program. For the next meeting, staff will prepare a summary of tasks that may need to be postponed if more hours in the work plan are shifted toward monitoring.

Manager Anderson stressed the importance of receiving monitoring data in a timely manner so that decisions concerning capital improvement projects can be made. She noted that the District had also previously expressed a desire for changes to the annual monitoring reports to incorporate more historical perspective.

Jay Riggs, WCD Manager, offered that the WCD has had a long and positive relationship with CLFLWD that has lasted many years. He expressed that WCD's intent is to work with partners to implement a shared, collaborative approach to monitoring. Everything that WCD has done for lake and stream monitoring has been at the CLFLWD's request; WCD does not try to dictate what or how its partners should do their monitoring. Mr. Riggs indicated that WCD's reasoning for not allowing CLFLWD staff to accompany WCD during sampling events is because it would be too risky to WCD's efficiency to try to coordinate with someone from outside WCD's own office. WCD monitored 85 lakes last year, and the only way they were able to do that was to be highly skilled and extremely efficient. Bringing another person into that mix poses too much risk to that efficiency, which may have negative effects for other partners. Mr. Riggs indicated that, aside from that one request, WCD is willing to provide monitoring services for CLFLWD in 2020. Mr. Riggs explained that the WCD office is not to blame for delays in receiving monitoring data; the lab analysis is always the biggest timing delay. He indicated that changing who performs the monitoring will not result in receiving the data any quicker. He suggested that the Board may need to modify its expectations regarding lab turnaround time. In response to a comment from Manager Anderson, Mr. Riggs indicated that WCD could use another lab to process samples if needed. Erik Anderson, WCD Senior Water Resource Specialist, indicated that CAMP is a Metropolitan Council program, so those samples are going through the same lab as WCD's samples and would therefore be subject to the same delays.

Manager Anderson noted that, when CLFLWD was first starting, the local soil and water conservation districts were very important in getting the CLFLWD's monitoring program, among others, up and running. She explained that she always looked forward to receiving the WCD's annual monitoring reports. Manager Anderson indicated that, as the District evolved, the various types of monitoring we require has grown, and given our desire to adapt and respond to emerging concerns with unplanned assessment and diagnostic monitoring events, conducting the monitoring ourselves provides the most flexibility. She further stated this change in direction is not meant to impugn the WCD's professionalism or skills; merely that CLFLWD is aiming to ensure certain efficiencies through quicker laboratory analysis, involving District staff more directly in monitoring efforts on our water bodies, and more customized reporting. She indicated that

partnering with WCD may still be an option in future years and thanked Mr. Riggs, Mr. Anderson, and the WCD for their years of service on our monitoring program.

c) Bone Lake Outlet Wetland Feasibility Report

Dr. Funke and Jason Naber presented the feasibility report. Background information included the 2018 Little Comfort Lake Phosphorus Source Assessment which showed high phosphorus concentrations just downstream of Bone Lake. The purpose of the study was to evaluate options for reducing phosphorus loads from the wetland just downstream of the Bone Lake outlet and nearby land uses. Monitoring data from 2019 show an overall increase in phosphorus concentration between the Bone Lake outlet and Manning Trail. The nearby koi ponds don't appear to be directly connected to the outlet channel and are no longer operational. Koi rearing operations have been moved to indoor tanks. Mr. Kinney explained that some additional coordination with the MN Department of Natural Resources is needed in order to understand the stipulations of the permit for the koi ponds, and to understand what is happening to the discharge water from the inside tanks. Historic aerial photography of the area was reviewed, revealing a shift from agricultural uses toward more small residential hobby farms. The outlet channel appears to have been straightened, but former meanders are semi-visible. There was discussion about beaver dams along the outlet channel and communications with landowners on the topic. Mr. Kinney indicated that one landowner is against trapping beavers but was agreeable to using a beaver baffler device to divert flow and prevent flooding by the dams. Potential projects include livestock/land management at a horse paddock and the Bone Lake Outlet wetland restoration. The report recommends working with Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to engage the landowner in discussions regarding current paddock and manure management practices and opportunities for buffer enhancements or other manure management best management practices (BMPs). Another recommendation is installation of a long-term wetland well with remote sensing water level logger to better characterize water levels and fluctuations in this wetland complex over time. There was further discussion about phosphorus loading hotspots and landowner engagement in the watershed.

Manager Anderson moved to accept the February 2020 Bone Lake Outlet Wetland Feasibility Assessment report. Seconded by Manager Spence. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

d) Workload Analysis

There was discussion about scheduling the kickoff meeting with Houston Engineering. Tuesday, March 10th was suggested as an option. Mr. Kinney indicated he would check with the other managers to confirm this date works.

e) Watershed Champion Award & State of the Watershed Update

Manager Anderson reported that the Watershed Champion Award nomination form was revised to create two additional nomination categories: education & outreach initiatives

and projects. Nominations are also categorized by nominee type (residential, commercial/community, agricultural, or municipal) and age range (adult or junior). Trophies will be given out this year and three samples were displayed.

Ms. Lindemyer requested that the Board select a manager to serve on the award nomination review committee. The committee meeting is set for April 7th. There was agreement that a manager would be selected next time the full board is present. Ms. Lindemyer reported on State of the Watershed communications and outreach through flyers, newspaper notices, and emails. She encouraged managers to share the nomination form with interested parties. There was discussion about inviting private consulting firms to participate in the pre-meeting mini trade show by hosting tables. Manager Anderson recommended that this year the State of the Watershed meeting focus more heavily on future/planned work in each lake management district. A draft presentation will be brought to the Board for review in April.

8. Report of Staff

a) Administrator

Mr. Kinney reported that there is a public workshop for the Lower St. Croix (LSC) One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) on Monday evening. He noted that the LSC group will not release the draft plan until the public workshops are finished, and that the plan, as currently written, will take 100 years to address water quality goals on the major lakes in the LSC basin. Mr. Kinney noted that the District's new Permitting Coordinator, Abigail Ernst, will start on Monday. Other updates included preparations for spring runoff monitoring and Clean Water Fund grant work plan drafting.

Manager Anderson had several comments and questions:

- Jason and Trey gave a presentation to other staff members on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) related to their studies in the Watershed Specialist Training course. Manager Anderson asked if they could present to the Board. Mr. Kinney suggested starting a program with regular lunchtime "brown bag" informational presentations that would be open to the public. Manager Anderson supported the idea.
- Manager Anderson was disappointed to see that the Comfort Lakes Association did not respond to the District regarding the DNR aquatic invasive species grants.
- It was clarified that planned springtime carp removal activities on Shields Lake will be the second round, as an initial round occurred in the fall.
- It was clarified that there is just one landowner for the Washington Judicial Ditch 6 iron enhanced sand filter project site. Mr. Kinney indicated that staff has met with the landowner multiple times, and the landowner has seemed to show significant interest in participating in the project.
- Manager Anderson asked about notices on seminars and water related conventions be shared with the Board. She attended a MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates group meeting a few years back with Mike Sorensen and found the

sessions very informative. She requested that notices on meetings, seminars and conventions be brought to the Board's attention and posted on the online TeamUp shared calendar.

b) Emmons & Olivier Resources

Dr. Funke reported that the EOR office just moved from Oakdale to a new location on University Avenue in St. Paul.

c) Smith Partners

Nothing to report.

9. Report of Treasurer

a) Approval of Bills and Treasurer's Report

President Spence reported income for the period of \$92,808.74 and expenses of \$155,149.97.

Manager Anderson moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills in the amount of \$155,149.97. Seconded by Manager Dibble. Upon vote, the motion carried 3-0.

10. Report of Officers and Managers

Manager Anderson reported on the most recent LSC 1W1P meeting. The Planning Committee presented a memo outlining the difference between a collaboration and a joint powers entity. Most of the partners are in favor of a joint powers entity, while Washington County was strongly in favor of a collaboration. Manager Anderson was the only partner who voted against a collaboration. An agreement is being prepared. There was discussion about partner voting credits. The LSC group had suggested that all seven participating watershed districts should get one combined vote among them, while Chisago County should have more votes given it comprises a large percentage of basin area. The Chisago County extra voting members was approved, and the watershed districts' fractional voting was rejected by the policy committee after Manager Anderson spoke against that proposal. As of now each of the watershed districts has a place at the table. While the group is starting with a collaborative model, it may be possible to switch to a joint powers entity in the future. There was discussion about LSC public outreach and how some LSC partners believe the public has little interest in providing input on the plan. Manager Anderson explained that the project selection criteria from the plan may not be as refined as CLFLWD would like but still has some elements that CLFLWD would agree with. There seems to be some slow movement in the right direction. Manager Anderson reported that she gave a presentation to the group regarding CLFLWD's input on the planning process and the message seemed well-received. Mr. Kinney suggested that the LSC group needs to come to a consensus on what the main goal of the plan is, because there is not clear agreement currently.

11. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Directives from the meeting were summarized:

- Staff should talk with Tom Furey about a presentation to the board on the tree project.
- Several questions for EOR to examine regarding the koi ponds near the Bone Lake outlet.
- Note that the spring 2020 Shields Lake carp harvest is the second one.
- Staff include in the online TeamUp calendar seminars and other events that may interest the board.

There was discussion about managers' preferences for Watershed Champion trophy type.

12. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – March 12, 2020

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Dibble. Upon vote, the motion carried 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____