

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, May 12, 2022**

1. Call to Order

Vice President Loth called the May 12, 2022, regular board meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. via online video conference.

Present: President Steve Schmaltz, Vice President Christopher Loth, Secretary Dave Bakke, Treasurer Jackie Anderson, Assistant Treasurer Douglas Toavs.

Absent: None.

Others: Mike Kinney, Administrator; Bobbie Law, Office Manager; Blayne Eineichner, Project Coordinator; Jessica Lindemyer, Operations and Outreach Specialist; Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator (CLFLWD staff); Greg Graske, Cecilio Olivier (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners); Hanna Valento, Forest Lake City Council.

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Manager Anderson moved to approve the agenda as presented; with the addition of discussion of a proposed lake association grant program as matter 4(b), and replacement of Administrator Review, matter 7, with discussion of a special meeting date. Seconded by Manager Loth. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Stephen Schmaltz			X	
Christopher Loth	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

3. New Business

a) 2023 Budget Schedule

Ms. Heinz gave an overview of the recommendation provided in the memo. She explained that the recommendation from staff is to have slightly fewer budget-related board meetings than in the previous years and to scale back the length of the budget document itself. She recommended managers direct staff to create a proposed budget to be provided at the June 9th Board meeting.

Manager Anderson indicated the recommendation makes sense. She noted that the Board's goal is to not review the budget as deeply as it has done in the past. She explained that her efforts to update the Treasurer's Report will create an easier to

understand outline that managers can view monthly. This will lessen the time needed when it comes to budgeting.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the 2023 budget schedule and direct staff to prepare a preliminary proposed budget that is consistent with the Watershed Management Plan. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Stephen Schmaltz			X	
Christopher Loth	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

Mr. Kinney noted that staff will be meeting in between scheduled board meetings to discuss the budget. He welcomed managers to join in on those internal meetings, provided there is not a quorum, if a manager is interested or has questions.

b) Lower St. Croix 1W1P Annual Plan of Work

Ms. Heinz summarized the recommended motion to approve the annual work plan, which is a role for each entity to the joint powers agreement (JPA) among entities involved in the Lower St. Croix One Watershed One Plan. She noted that the JPA outlines the process of annual work planning including all partner boards approving the annual work plan. She expanded that this will be year two of implementation of the Lower St. Croix One Watershed One Plan (LSC 1W1P). She explained the fiscal schedule for the LSC 1W1P; the schedule starts in July and ends in June, as does the State’s fiscal year. She noted that a summary of work completed in the previous year is included in the packet materials.

Manager Bakke asked Manager Anderson if she is the liaison for the LSC 1W1P Policy Committee. Manager Anderson confirmed she is. He asked where he can find the work plan. Manager Anderson confirmed that the work plan is included with the memo as an attachment.

Managers discussed the ranking of projects and planning. Manager Anderson noted the differences in planning between watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts. She offered that the plan aims at the right areas of the watershed but doesn't provide for sufficient monitoring to identify projects that may continue in the future. She remarked that she believes the Board should support the proposed plan of work.

Manager Toavs moved to approve the Lower St. Croix FY2023 Annual Plan of Work. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
----------------	------------	------------	---------------	----------------

Stephen Schmaltz			X	
Christopher Loth	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

c) 2022 State of the Watershed Public Meeting

Mr. Kinney explained that staff have questions regarding the format of the event. He noted that Ms. Lindemyer managed and planned the last state of the watershed event. He welcomed any questions or comments.

Vice President Loth summarized the outcome of the recent Forest Lake Lake Association annual meeting. He noted the limited in-person attendance. He would hold the meeting in a hybrid format. Manager Anderson agreed with the recommendation made. She noted that it is practical for the event. Managers discussed attendance levels and numbers at lake association meetings. Manager Toavs explained that he agrees with the recommendation made by Vice President Loth. He mentioned the possibility of saving the recorded information from the virtual meeting components to be shared on social media platforms after the fact. He explained that being hybrid would allow the materials displayed at the event to be reviewed after and as many times as needed.

Managers discussed the length of time for attendees to ask questions. Ms. Lindemyer explained that when RSVPing to District events individuals are typically asked to submit any questions they may have. She explained that this has allowed staff to incorporate those questions into their presentations and has resulted in more succinct Q&A periods.

Ms. Lindemyer explained that she understands the recommendation to hold the 2022 State of the Watershed Public Meeting in a hybrid format and that staff would plan to implement the event in that format. She advised that staff propose to hold the event in September to align with the District’s anniversary of establishment and the expected rollout of the website and logo work. Managers agreed to this timeframe for the event.

Manager Anderson requested staff consider a larger venue for the 2022 State of the Watershed Public Meeting.

Mr. Kinney asked managers if they would like to consider a tour of District projects as well as the State of the Watershed Public Meeting. Managers agreed that this would be beneficial and should be scheduled by District staff as a precursor to the State of the Watershed Public Meeting. Manager Anderson recommended it be held in July or August. Ms. Lindemyer explained a better turnout may occur in August. She noted that segments of this tour would also be recorded for use as previously suggested by Manager Toavs.

Managers discussed whether virtual tours created by other entities have been successful. Ms. Lindemyer confirmed that a virtual tour is something she plans to complete in the summer of 2022.

Manager Bakke asked what the District is attempting to accomplish through the event. Manager Anderson explained that the District, by statute, must keep the public informed. She explained that the State of the Watershed Public Meeting arises out of this legal requirement and need. She explained that interaction with the public is vital to keep everyone informed. She explained that the Watershed Champion Awards were a highlight of the event. She explained that the publicity opportunities are great. She noted newspapers, in the past, writing articles regarding the event and the awards awarded. She also noted the value of recognizing volunteers who assist with District programs.

Manager Toavs mentioned that his previous attendance at the event was extremely positive.

4. Old Business

a) District Office Space

Mr. Kinney explained that ISG has the experience to complete a comprehensive plan for obtaining space. He noted that it can provide these services to the District.

Mr. Kinney explained that staff is researching a loan program through the USDA that may be used to support purchase or development of facilities. He noted the many advantages from a fiscal standpoint. Mr. Kinney explained that he will request ISG's presence at a coming board meeting. He noted that the population of the District may be a limitation in attempting to utilize this program, which is directed at small communities.

Mr. Kinney explained that a new contract with a new scope of work will be required from ISG.

Manager Anderson asked if the USDA loan program is a "last resort" program that requires exhausting options. Mr. Kinney is not certain, but suggested that the District can argue that it has a limited ability to increase the levy. Manager Anderson requested that staff confirm the District would qualify for the program before the District spends too much time pursuing it.

Manager Anderson moved to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel and verification of accessibility, to execute documents in order to apply to the USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan Program. Seconded by Manager Toavs.

Manager Bakke asked if we need ISG for strategic planning or identification of office space or location. Mr. Kinney explained that it is not a re-hashing of the plan but an additional plan for citizen and professional engagement in the process. He noted that they would also work on office design space after input is provided. Manger Kinney

explained the importance of understanding the community needs at the same time as understanding District staff needs.

Manager Anderson explained that this will be a specified strategic plan. She gave an example of a need for a meeting space for the LSC 1W1P committees. She noted that the CLFLWD is situated centrally for all the organizations involved, making it an ideal location for LSC 1W1P meetings. She noted that it would be important for the District to consider these facts when discussing office space. Mr. Kinney noted that the District is shifting from project construction to project maintenance, but also to forms of work involving partnerships, such as climate resiliency, which may affect the amount and configuration of space that will best serve the District.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Stephen Schmaltz			X	
Christopher Loth	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

b) Lake Association Grant Program

Mr. Kinney explained that this program will be brought to the Board in the future for further discussion.

Manager Anderson explained that this program has been in the works for some time. She noted her goals are to format an application and have the application process outlined in official documents. She explained that a draft will be provided in the future. She stated that she hopes the grant program can be implemented by June of 2022.

Manager Bakke asked how much money will be available through the grant. Mr. Kinney explained that lake associations can apply for the grant in the annual amount of \$15,000 for each lake. He noted that each basin in Forest Lake is considered a separate lake. Mr. Kinney explained that, in theory, lakes without associations would not be eligible for the grant. He explained that this needs to be a consideration the board understands. He explained that the outcomes and objectives of the grant program need to be considered by managers. He noted multiple formats for the program to make it more inclusive upon the direction of the Board. He noted that this would not be a small effort. He explained that staff need directives regarding what the Board wants the program to look like. Mr. Kinney explained that this program may be able to be supported by funding sources such as Lessard Sams, and that the application process is pending.

Manager Anderson explained she brought this grant program idea to the Board in January of 2021. She noted that the District has had multiple grant programs that have not all been highly successful. She explained that her concept is to engage individuals

already engaged in the District's goals and mission. Manger Anderson explained that lake associations would provide education via the projects completed with grant dollars and the District would provide guidance. She does not believe it can be an after-the-fact grant reimbursement format. She explained that the goal is to have lake associations assist in achieving District goals.

(Manager Schmaltz joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.)

Manager Anderson explained that a draft is near completion and will be ready for review at the May 26th regular board meeting.

5. Program/Project Update

a) Project Update

Mr. Eineichner gave the monthly project update. He included updates on:

- Bone Lake Northeast Wetland Enhancement “Legacy Load” Project: Construction was completed on 2-16-22. The full site restoration and planting are planned to occur this spring.
- County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter (IESF): The western property easement is close to being secured. Coordination with the City regarding the utility and drainage easement will be discussed at the 5-9-22 City Council meeting. The diversion petition was approved on 4-28-22. Wetland permitting was approved on 5-2-22. Implementation is on track to begin in the fall of 2022.
- Little Comfort Lake Subwatershed Enhancement “School/Little Comfort Channel” Project: Inter –Fluve is scheduled to begin assessment and surveys this spring. Two restoration concepts will be developed.
- Sunrise River Drained Wetland Restoration “Tax Forfeit Property”: The project was ordered on 3-24-22. A MnDOT coordination meeting occurred on 4-18-22. Staff is working on construction access with adjacent landowners. Staff is planning to officially request a grant extension this spring. An open house meeting is to be held this summer.
- Moody Lake Capstone Projects: Staff is currently working on landowner outreach and finalizing the grant work plan.
- WJD-6 Western Tributary Wetland: Staff is currently working on landowner outreach and finalizing the grant work plan.

Managers discussed District goals versus state goals.

Manager Anderson asked that she and Manager Toavs be notified of any public meeting for a project in Chisago County. Manager Loth asked if appointed agency liaison meetings are included in the managers' weekly update. Mr. Kinney explained that these updates are relatively new. He stated that these meetings will be added to the weekly updates.

6. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Board direction was summarized:

- Staff will plan the State of the Watershed Event to be conducted in a hybrid format for the fall of 2021. Staff will schedule a project tour for late summer as a precursor to the State of the Watershed Event.
- Staff will notify Manager Toavs and Manager Anderson of any project meetings concerning projects in Chisago County.
- Staff will list public meetings for all agencies in which managers are liaisons in the weekly update to managers.

7. Administrator Review

Mr. Kinney explained that the review committee met with Gallagher on May 11th. At this meeting they determined a special meeting should be scheduled to discuss the framework for administrator reviews and conclude the 2021 administrator review. Managers scheduled a special meeting for Wednesday, May 25th at 9 am pending two managers providing availability confirmation.

8. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – May 26, 2022

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

Dave Bakke, Secretary _____