

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, August 24, 2023**

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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Schmaltz called the August 24, 2023 regular board meeting to order at 6:30
8 p.m. at the CLFLWD office at 44 Lake Street South and via online video conference.

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10 **Managers Present:**

11 Steve Schmaltz, President
12 Christopher Loth, Vice President (virtual attendance)
13 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
14 Jackie Anderson, Treasurer (virtual attendance)

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16 **Managers Absent:**

17 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer

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19 **Staff Present:**

20 Mike Kinney, Administrator
21 Beth Carreño, Senior Program Manager
22 Bobbie Law, Office Manager
23 Garrett Miller, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator
24 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
25 Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist

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27 **Others Present:**

28 Cecilio Olivier, Emmons & Olivier Resources
29 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

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31 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

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33 Manager Anderson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager
34 Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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

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3. Consent Agenda

- a) Special Board Meeting Minutes – July 6, 2023
- b) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2023
- c) Special Board Meeting Minutes – July 20, 2023
- d) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – July 27, 2023

Manager Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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

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4. Public Open Forum

There were no comments.

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5. Public Hearing – 2024 Budget & Levy

Emily Heinz presented an overview of the draft 2024 budget including draft expenditures, estimated revenues, and estimated loan proceeds. She highlighted grants that the District has been awarded and noted that several other grant applications are in progress. Ms. Heinz summarized cash flow projections for the first six months of 2024, indicating that the 8/15/23 version of the budget results in a positive cash flow projection. She explained that the 2024 budget includes \$800,000 in loan disbursements (proceeds) and \$325,000 in loan repayments on past loans (expenses).

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Administrator Kinney highlighted major District initiatives for 2024 including the office space search, Moody Lake Capstone Project, Washington Judicial Ditch 6 (WJD-6) Wetland Restoration, and upcoming lake impairment de-listings. Bone Lake is currently slated to be removed from the impaired waters list in 2024 as a result of the water quality improvements achieved by the District and partners.

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Ms. Heinz noted that several projects and programs are underway to support watershed resiliency including floodplain vulnerability assessment, community partnerships, land acquisition and management, education and outreach, regulatory program, and cost-share programs. She presented the latest estimated market value and net tax capacity figures for the District, as well as three levy scenarios and associated tax impacts. Keeping the levy unchanged from 2023 (i.e., levy at \$1.62M) results in a lower tax impact compared to 2023. Raising the levy by 3% (i.e., levy at \$1.67M) results in roughly the same

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72 tax impact as 2023. Finally, raising the levy by 6% (i.e., levy at \$1.71M) results in a tax
73 impact that is approximately 5% higher than 2023.

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75 Ms. Heinz reviewed next steps including a budget workshop on September 5th, levy
76 certification deadline on September 15th, budget presentations to county partners in
77 September and October, and finally, another public comment opportunity on the budget
78 in December.

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80 No members of the public were present to offer comment. President Schmaltz closed
81 the public hearing.

82 83 **6. Citizen Advisory Committee Update**

84 Aidan Read reported that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recently discussed the
85 Bone Lake impairment delisting, the project celebration scheduled for August 30th, and
86 an overview of zebra mussels. The CAC also continued its discussion of field day
87 opportunities. CAC member Tom Furey was elected chairperson of the CAC at the last
88 meeting.

89 90 **7. Aquatic Invasive Species Update**

91 Garrett Miller reported on zebra mussel surveys on Bone Lake. He indicated that
92 containment is no longer feasible, and long-term population monitoring is the only
93 management option moving forward. Mr. Miller provided an update on the Moody Lake
94 aquatic revegetation project which occurred on August 1st. This project is expected to
95 improve fish habitat and biodiversity in the lake. Results will aid researchers in a larger
96 study on the effectiveness of transplanting aquatic plants. The Chisago County Press
97 wrote an article about the project.

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99 Mr. Miller explained that low water levels in Forest Lake have created more favorable
100 conditions for flowering rush, leading to more seed head production. He provided an
101 update on flowering rush treatment efforts to date, which includes numerous patch
102 treatments and seed head clippings. He also mentioned a recent planning meeting with
103 partners on management strategies and outreach to lakeshore residents on seed head
104 cuttings. Mr. Miller provided updates on purple loosestrife and Eurasian watermilfoil
105 surveys and treatments on Forest Lake. Mr. Miller noted that Blue Water Science recently
106 completed a survey of Eurasian watermilfoil on Comfort Lake.

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108 Mr. Miller provided an update on the watercraft inspection program, indicating that he is
109 expecting to have excellent inspector coverage at the boat launches during the
110 upcoming Labor Day holiday weekend. Manager Anderson asked how the watercraft
111 inspectors will be dispersed over the Labor Day weekend. Mr. Miller indicated there will
112 be coverage on all five public accesses in the District on Labor Day and most of that
113 weekend. President Schmaltz indicated that he thinks the recent flowering rush
114 coordination meeting was very productive.

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8. New Business

a) Expedited Conservation Projects Grant Application – Forest Lake

Administrator Kinney explained that this project is a collaboration with the City of Forest Lake within the city park on North Shore Circle.

Manager Anderson moved to authorize the District Administrator to submit an application to the ECP Grant Program and execute the grant agreement, if awarded. Seconded by President Schmaltz.

Manager Anderson asked if this is the property that was recently donated to the District. Mr. Kinney clarified that it is not; it is city-owned property. The donated property is nearby.

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

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

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b) Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Application – Bone Lake

Administrator Kinney explained that this grant request would supplement the District’s Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for the site. The two separate grants would be used to acquire two separate adjacent parcels on the same site.

Manager Bakke moved to authorize the District Administrator to submit an application to the CPL Grant Program for the Bone Lake South property and execute the grant agreement, if awarded. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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

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c) Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Application – Little Comfort Lake

145 Mr. Kinney explained this site has been identified as a potential location for a water
146 quality improvement project to address excess pollutant loading to Little Comfort
147 Lake. The landowner has expressed a willingness to subdivide and sell a resulting
148 portion of the property to the District.

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150 Manager Anderson moved to authorize the District Administrator to submit an
151 application to the CPL Grant Program for the Heath Avenue property and execute the
152 grant agreement, if awarded. Seconded by Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the
153 motion carried 4-0.
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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs			X	
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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156 **9. Old Business**
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158 **a) Clean Water Partnership Loan**

159 Mr. Kinney explained that the question about interest repayments was brought up at
160 the last meeting, and more information is provided in the board packet
161 memorandum.

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163 Manager Anderson moved to adopt resolution 23-08-02 and directed staff to
164 proceed with the remaining requirements for the loan execution. Seconded by
165 President Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.
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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs			X	
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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168 **b) 2024 Budget**

169 President Schmaltz explained that Manager Anderson submitted several comments
170 on the budget last week. Her memo recommended total additional expenses of
171 \$613,000, no levy increase, and an additional \$943,000 in grants. Manager Anderson
172 indicated that the increases are meant to convey to the public all of the work that
173 the District plans to do, assuming it receives anticipated matching grant funds. She

174 indicated that the District’s past practice is to keep the levy flat for several years, then
175 proceed with an increase in order to replenish the reserve fund.

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177 President Schmaltz presented additional budget tables that incorporate Manager
178 Anderson’s comments from her memo. He explained that all grant revenues need to
179 be tied to a specific grant-eligible expenditure in the budget. He noted that a special
180 meeting is scheduled for September 5th, and there will be more time for detailed
181 discussion during that meeting.

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183 Manager Bakke indicated that he agrees with the idea of maintaining transparency
184 through the budget.

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186 Administrator Kinney reported that staff have begun working on further prioritization
187 and site identification for the office space. He indicated that he discussed with staff
188 the additional office space on the 2nd floor of 44 Lake Street South (within the District’s
189 current office building). He explained that this 2nd floor office space is only accessible
190 by stairs and therefore isn’t ideal for equipment storage. The space is not ADA
191 compliant and therefore isn’t ideal for holding public meetings. Furthermore, the
192 space isn’t as visible to the public as the current office space on the 1st floor. Mr. Kinney
193 indicated that, given these considerations, staff recommends that the Board
194 reconsider leasing this additional space. He estimated that the additional space
195 would cost an additional \$20,000 per year.

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197 [Manager Loth left the meeting]

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199 Manager Anderson indicated that she sees value in renting the additional space and
200 would like to discuss this further before making a decision. She thinks as well that it
201 would make sense to have a real estate broker help develop options, rather than
202 having staff spend time on that. Manager Bakke indicated he supports the idea of
203 staff working toward prioritizing requirements for the office space. There was
204 consensus to inform the owners that the District is not prepared to sign the new lease
205 effective September 1, but needs more time to make a decision.

206 207 **10. Report of Staff**

208 209 **a) Administrator**

210 Administrator Kinney reported he has travel plans starting at the end of September
211 and will be working remotely on a limited basis while taking time off.

212 213 **b) Emmons & Olivier Resources**

214 Cecilio Olivier reported on preparations for the upcoming Forest Lake Alum
215 Treatment project that is scheduled to occur during the week of September 25th.

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217 **c) Smith Partners**
218 Nothing to report.

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220 **11. Report of Treasurer**

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222 **a) Approval of Bills and Treasurer’s Report**

223 Treasurer Anderson reported income for the period of \$873,906.53 and expenses in
224 the amount of \$185,153.38.

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226 Manager Anderson moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report and pay the bills in the
227 amount of \$185,153.38. Seconded by President Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion
228 carried 3-0.

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

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231 **12. Report of Officers and Managers**

232 President Schmaltz reported that he has invited Forest Lake city councilmembers to the
233 District’s upcoming project celebration on August 30th. Manager Anderson indicated she
234 has invited council/board members from City of Wyoming, the Chisago Soil and Water
235 Conservation District, and the Comfort Lakes Association.

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237 **13. Summary and Approval of Board Direction**

238 No new directives were given.

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240 **14. Land Acquisition – Bone Lake South**

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242 President Schmaltz moved to convene in closed session as permitted by section 13D.05,
243 subdivision 3 (c), to consider offers relating to the District’s possible purchase of the
244 tract of land encompassing parcel ID numbers:

- 245 • 08.032.20.13.0001
- 246 • 08.032.20.14.0001
- 247 • 08.032.20.31.0001
- 248 • 08.032.20.41.0001
- 249 • 08.032.20.43.0001
- 250 • 08.032.20.44.0001
- 251 • 17.032.20.11.0001

252 Seconded by Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0, and the
253 Board convened in closed session.

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

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256 The Board reconvened in open session. [Manager Loth returned to the meeting at this
257 time.]

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259 **15. Adjourn**

260 **a) Next special board meeting – September 5, 2023**

261 **b) Next regular board meeting – September 14, 2023**

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263 Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Bakke.
264 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:47
265 p.m.

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

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268 Dave Bakke, Secretary -----