

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, April 25, 2024**

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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Schmaltz called the April 25, 2024, regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
8 at the CLFLWD office, 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 Jackie Anderson, Treasurer
14 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)

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16 **Managers Absent**

17 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer

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19 **Staff Present:**

20 Mike Kinney, District Administrator
21 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
22 Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist
23 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
24 Garrett Miller, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

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26 **Others Present:**

27 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources
28 Greg Graska, Emmons & Olivier Resources
29 Cecilio Olivier, Emmons & Olivier Resources
30 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
31 Andy Berg, Abdo
32 Colin Bowman, Cultivate Advisors

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34 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

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36 The following item was added to the agenda: Shoreline Flyer, City of Forest Lake Lakeside
37 Park Shoreline, and DNR Shoreline Partnership.

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

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
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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 – January 23, 2024
- b) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2024
- c) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2024
- d) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – February 22, 2024
- e) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2024
- f) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – March 28, 2024

President Schmaltz moved to approve the consent agenda as amended. 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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4. Public Open Forum

There were no comments.

5. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Aidan Read reported that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met on April 16th and discussed the District’s 2023 accomplishments and the schedule and process for the 2025 annual budget.

6. New Business

a) 2023 Audit Report

Administrator Kinney introduced Andy Berg who is a partner with the District Auditor, Abdo. Mr. Berg presented the results of the 2023 financial audit. The auditor’s unmodified opinion has been issued, and Abdo found no MN legal compliance

73 findings in 2023. Mr. Berg reported an ending balance of \$105,000 in the General Fund,
74 \$584,291 in the Implementation Fund, and \$407,393 in the Debt Service Fund.

75
76 Manager Anderson moved to accept the Abdo prepared Management Letter and
77 Annual Financial Report of the Comfort Lake Forest-Lake Watershed District for the
78 year ended December 31, 2023, and directed staff to forward the report to the State
79 of MN as required. Seconded by Manager Bakke.

80
81 Manager Bakke asked for Mr. Berg’s recommendation for fund balance percentage.
82 Mr. Berg recommended, as a rule of thumb, a fund balance of approximately 50% of
83 the budget in the General Fund. Mr. Berg explained that the Implementation Fund is
84 often funded by loans, grants, and other revenues, so the fund balance could
85 potentially be lower than 50% of the budget.

86
87 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

88

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

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90 Manager Bakke noted that it is a good sign that there are no findings in the audit.
91 President Schmaltz and Manager Anderson agreed and indicated this is typical for
92 the District.

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94 **b) Cultivate Advisors Strategic Planning Support**

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96 Administrator Kinney introduced Mr. Colin Bowman with Cultivate Advisors. Mr. Kinney
97 explained that he and Emily Heinz have had a couple of meetings with Mr. Bowman
98 to discuss strategic planning. Mr. Bowman provided a recap of the communications
99 that have taken place thus far. He noted that District staff got connected with
100 Cultivate Advisors through a grant seeking service called Grant Station.

101
102 Mr. Bowman explained that he has discussed the District’s mission with Mr. Kinney
103 and Ms. Heinz, and the shoreline outreach and restoration program in particular. Mr.
104 Bowman presented an overview of factors to consider in strategic planning including
105 leadership, sales, recruiting, marketing, financial engine, and productivity. He
106 presented the strategic planning roadmap which provides a prioritized, sequential
107 approach to planning. Mr. Bowman described some of the key elements of the

108 roadmap including grant seeking, employee compensation, marketing and public
109 outreach, staff recruiting/leadership, and priority management.

110
111 Manager Anderson indicated that this seems to be a well-designed plan, and she
112 has a lot of experience with these sorts of plans. She indicated that this sort of
113 planning is important for the CLFLWD since it is in the process of transitioning into a
114 new period with new priorities.

115
116 Manager Bakke asked: when it comes time to create the strategic plan, who will be
117 at the table? Mr. Bowman explained it is typically 3-5 people on the planning
118 committee, and the District can decide who participates. The planning committee
119 typically meets for 2 hours every other week. Mr. Bowman explained that some
120 members of the organization might send in feedback rather than participating in
121 every bi-weekly meeting. Manager Bakke indicated that it is important for all
122 members of the board and staff to have buy-in on a strategic plan.

123
124 Mr. Bowman noted that Cultivate Advisors has a team of 45 staff members located
125 nation-wide. Manager Anderson asked if Cultivate Advisors has experience working
126 with government entities. Mr. Bowman explained that Cultivate Advisors does have
127 experience working with government entities. Manager Anderson agreed with
128 Manager Bakke's comment that the Board of Managers should be involved in the
129 planning process. President Schmaltz explained that the District is searching for a
130 new office space, which is an important element of planning and grant seeking.
131 President Schmaltz indicated that he is in support of condensing some of the
132 elements from the District's large, 10-year Watershed Management Plan, and
133 creating a more succinct strategic plan.

134
135 Administrator Kinney noted that the District is currently working on staff succession
136 planning, and the District is in the beginning stages of reprioritizing its operational
137 approach. He recommended that it would be helpful to bring in outside support for
138 this effort. He noted that the District can apply for grant funds from the Board of Water
139 and Soil Resources to help fund this effort. Mr. Kinney noted that the competitive
140 Clean Water Fund grants are diminishing, and the District is shifting its grant seeking
141 efforts.

142
143 President Schmaltz noted the importance of grant seeking and asked if Cultivate
144 Advisors could assist with grant seeking. Mr. Bowman indicated that priorities often
145 shift throughout the strategic planning process, and it sounds like a high priority will
146 be grant seeking.

147
148 **c) 2025 Budget Schedule**

151 Emily Heinz summarized the proposed schedule which includes discussing the
152 budget at three workshops from May to July, then adopting the budget in August.
153 She indicated that the May 9th regular board meeting agenda is likely going to be
154 short, and she recommended holding the first budget discussion at the May 9th
155 meeting. There was consensus to have the first budget discussion, which includes a
156 presentation by staff, at the May 9th regular meeting.

157
158 Manager Bakke moved to approve the 2025 budget schedule and direct staff to
159 prepare a preliminary proposed budget that is consistent with the Watershed
160 Management Plan. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion
161 carried 4-0.
162

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

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164 **d) EMWREP 2025-2027 Service Agreement**

165
166 Administrator Kinney noted that staff have begun laying the groundwork for the 2025
167 budget, and one element is the service agreement with East Metro Water Resource
168 Education Program (EMWREP) which is up for renewal for the period of 2025-2027.

169
170 Manager Bakke asked for more information regarding the services that EMWREP
171 provides. Mr. Kinney explained that Angie Hong is the primary staff person for
172 EMWREP, and she provides outreach services for a wide area and multiple partners.
173 Some of her work includes organizing educational events/workshops, writing articles
174 and blog posts, and generally providing an array of outreach services for
175 participating members. Manager Anderson indicated that EMWREP essentially
176 functions as a shared marketing service. She explained that the partner fee structure
177 is based on taxable market values and not based on actual participation/use of
178 services. Manager Anderson indicated that there is an upcoming EMWREP steering
179 committee meeting to discuss the fee structure. President Schmaltz requested that
180 staff post the 2023 EMWREP annual report on the District website.

181
182 **e) Aquatic Invasive Species Update and Comprehensive Plan**

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184

185 Garrett Miller provided an update on the aquatic invasive species (AIS) program
186 including curly-leaf pondweed delineation surveys and anticipated treatments,
187 watercraft inspector hiring and start dates, and AIS workshops in the month of April.
188

189 Mr. Miller presented the AIS Comprehensive Prevention & Management Plan, noting
190 it was distributed to the Board on April 12th. He explained that the purpose of this plan
191 is to elaborate on the goals provided in the Watershed Management Plan and
192 establish consistent standards for AIS prevention and management. He indicated
193 the AIS Comp Plan also serves as a useful resource for staff and local partners to find
194 information on:

- 195 - AIS in general – what they are, how they spread, etc.
- 196 - How the District operates its program
- 197 - The District’s AIS management history
- 198 - Resources on AIS management

199
200 Mr. Miller noted that the structure of the AIS Comp Plan aligns with the Watershed
201 Management Plan. He explained that the report was developed with information
202 from several other organizations’ plans. He noted Emmons & Olivier Resources has
203 reviewed the report and indicated it is one of the most comprehensive reports they
204 have seen. The plan will be brought to the Board at the next meeting for action.
205

206 7. Old Business

207 a) 2023 Year-In-Review, Annual Report, Progress Report

208 President Schmaltz indicated that the Board discussed these reports at the April 24th
209 special board meeting and had a significant amount of back-and-forth discussion
210 on the matter.
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212

213 Manager Anderson moved to approve the 2023 Year-in-Review, Annual Report and
214 Progress Report. Seconded by Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion
215 carried 4-0.
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218 Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs			X	
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

219 b) 2023 Monitoring Report

221 President Schmaltz moved to accept the 2023 Water Quality Monitoring Report from
222 Emmons & Olivier Resources as presented in the accompanying memo. Seconded
223 by Manager Anderson.

224
225 Manager Anderson indicated she would like EOR to provide responses to the
226 questions she raised at the last board meeting. She indicated she would like to
227 schedule a meeting with EOR and Administrator Kinney to discuss projects around
228 Comfort Lake. President Schmaltz indicated that any changes to the 2024 water
229 monitoring scope of work that may result from that meeting will need to be approved
230 by the Board.

231
232 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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235 **c) Shoreline Outreach, City of Forest Lake Lakeside Park Shoreline, and**
236 **Relationship with DNR**

237

238 President Schmaltz indicated he is working on a letter from the Forest Lake Lake
239 Association urging shoreline residents to attend the District's upcoming natural
240 shoreline workshop.

241

242 Administrator Kinney explained that the City of Forest Lake is planning some changes
243 to the layout of Lakeside Park on Forest Lake including potentially moving the public
244 boat launch to a nearby site further north. The city council will discuss this topic at
245 an upcoming council meeting.

246

247 Mr. Kinney reported that staff recently visited with the homeowner on a residential
248 shoreline property on Forest Lake. The homeowner hired a contractor to install rip rap
249 on the shoreline. Mr. Kinney indicated that staff would like to communicate with the
250 homeowner about the benefits of a natural shoreline and to collaborate with the MN
251 Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Manager Anderson noted that the District
252 Rules advise that rip rap is a method of last resort.

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254 **8. Report of Staff**

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256 **a) Administrator**

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Administrator Kinney reported that the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is writing an article on the Bone Lake impairment delisting. BWSR will interview Manager Toavs because the Moody South Wetland Restoration project is located on his property, and this project helps contribute to improved water quality in Bone Lake downstream. Manager Anderson requested that the discussion of the lake de-listing schedule be on the next board meeting agenda.

b) Emmons & Olivier Resources

Dr. Wilkinson reported that the contractors are working on plantings and final cleanup for the Moody Lake Capstone Project and the WJD-6 Western Tributary Wetland Enhancement Project. She noted that water monitoring is underway this year.

Greg Graske provided an update on the City of Forest Lake’s regional stormwater treatment project off North Shore Trail. The City began construction on the roadside stormwater best management practices last year but ran into issues with the contractor and lack of support from surrounding homeowners. As a result, the City will scale back this project, and it won’t achieve as much stormwater treatment as originally intended. President Schmaltz noted that the project is in a high traffic, highly visible area, and it is an eyesore.

Mr. Graske explained that the District did not have a role in the design or implementation of the project. The District’s role is with respect to helping plan the broader downtown development regional treatment approach, and the District has a memorandum of understanding with the City. Mr. Holtman asked why the City doesn’t ask the contractor to correct its work. Mr. Graske wasn’t sure why, but his understanding is that the City is hiring a new contractor to fix the issues. Administrator Kinney recommended that he and Mr. Graske communicate further with the City Engineer.

c) Smith Partners

Nothing to report.

9. Report of Treasurer

a) Approval of Bills and Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Anderson reported income for the period of \$13,283.55 and expenses in the amount of \$113,172.66.

298 Manager Anderson moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, transfer funds in the
 299 amount of \$74,000 and pay the bills in the amount of \$113,172.66. Seconded by
 300 President Schmaltz. Upon 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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303 **10. Report of Officers and Managers**

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305 Manager Loth reported that the Forest Lake Lake Association held its annual meeting last
 306 week, and the District presented on natural shorelines.

307

308 Manager Bakke indicated that Tom Furey is the president of the Bone Lake Association,
 309 and he recently planted several trees on shorelines around Bone Lake. He noted Mr. Furey
 310 has a tree nursery where he grows his own trees. Manager Anderson indicated the
 311 District should formally recognize Mr. Furey’s work and thank him for it.

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313 **11. Summary and Approval of Board Direction**

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315 Board directives were summarized.

316

- Staff will post the 2023 EMWREP Annual Report to the website and ensure all
 317 managers are on the distribution list.
- Manager Anderson will discuss water quality projects and water monitoring
 318 data with Administrator Kinney and EOR.
- Lake Delisting Schedule will be added to the next board meeting agenda
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- Administrator Kinney and Engineer Graske will discuss Forest Lake regional
 320 stormwater projects with City staff and report back to the Board.
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324 **12. Adjourn**

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326 **a) Next special board meeting – May 2, 2024, 3:00 pm**

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328 **b) Next regular board meeting – May 9, 2024, 6:30 pm**

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329 Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Loth. Upon
 330 a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.
 331

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			

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

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Dave Bakke, Secretary -----

DRAFT