

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, July 11, 2024**
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5 **1. Call to Order**
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7 President Schmaltz called the July 11, 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 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
14 Jackie Anderson, Treasurer (virtual attendance)
15 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer (virtual attendance)
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17 **Staff Present:**

18 Mike Kinney, District Administrator
19 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
20 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
21 Mike Sandager, Permitting Coordinator
22 Jackie Bussjaeger, Technician
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24 **Others Present:**

25 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources
26 Cecilio Olivier, Emmons & Olivier Resources
27 Kevin Biehn, Emmons & Olivier Resources
28 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
29 Matt Lingam, Kimley-Horn
30 Danie Watson, MP+G
31 Mary Pat McNeil, MP+G
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33 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**
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35 Office Lease was added to the agenda under Old Business.
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37 Manager Anderson moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager
38 Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.
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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. New Business

a) Permit 24-007 Chase Bank

Mike Sandager described permit 24-007 as being in the Comfort Lake Management District at 1232 West Broadway Ave, Forest Lake adjacent to McDonalds. The project consists of the construction of a new 3,432 square foot bank building with an associated parking lot, drive through, ATM, and landscaping. The project would result in 0.6 acres of new and reconstructed impervious surface. The entire 0.8-acre lot would be disturbed along with approximately .04 acres of Broadway Avenue right of way, to be coordinated with the city.

The proposed work triggers CLFLWD Rule 2.0 Stormwater Management and Rule 3.0 Erosion Control. Dr. Wilkinson described the stormwater management features including a surface infiltration basin & underground infiltration basin. Cecilio Olivier further explained the stormwater treatment requirements. For redevelopment projects, the required treatment volume of 1.1 inches of runoff from impervious surfaces must be captured and treated. This results in a total required treatment volume of 2,396 CF. The proposed BMPs provide 4,526 CF, therefore meeting the District volume requirements.

Manager Anderson moved to approve permit application #24-007 with conditions stated in EOR’s July 1, 2024, memorandum. Seconded by President Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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) MN Watersheds Annual Conference Resolutions

Administrator Kinney explained that the deadline to submit proposed resolutions to MN Watersheds is September 1st. Manager Anderson indicated she is planning to submit one or more resolutions, including to renew an expiring resolution concerning lake quarantines for new aquatic invasive species infestations. Mr. Kinney

73 recommended having the draft resolutions prepared for discussion at the August 8th
74 regular board meeting.

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76 **c) Automated Lake Level Monitoring Budget Transfer**

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78 Administrator Kinney recommended automated lake level monitoring for Forest Lake,
79 Bone Lake, and Comfort Lake. He noted that this has been a topic of interest for
80 lakeshore residents due to recent water levels being far above the ordinary
81 highwater mark. He indicated staff could still likely set up the equipment this year.

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83 Manager Anderson moved to amend the 2024 budget for account 3-004-D to
84 \$70,500 and to transfer \$9,500 from account 3-004-D to account 3-003-C.
85 Seconded by Manager Bakke.

86
87 Manager Anderson indicated that this is very much needed. Manager Bakke agreed
88 that this information will provide some clarity for lakeshore residents and lake
89 associations that have been uncertain when the ordinary high water level is
90 exceeded. Manager Toavs indicated that lake level data are important to track
91 closely given the changing climate and increasing precipitation. Manager Loth
92 asked what the monitored range of water levels may be. Administrator Kinney said
93 each system will be set up according to the historical record of water levels, with a
94 margin of error, as appropriate for each lake. Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) will
95 be involved in setting up the equipment. Manager Anderson observed that past
96 circumstances no longer are predictive of the future, and supported involving
97 experts, including the Mn Department of Natural Resources, in setting the elevation
98 range of the systems. President Schmaltz asked if the District has enough experience
99 with this equipment to be certain of its functionality before purchase. He asked what
100 measures would be taken to minimize vandalism. Mr. Kinney explained that EOR and
101 many other entities have used this technology, so the District is well positioned to
102 implement this technology. Mr. Kinney indicated nothing is vandalism proof, but the
103 footprint of the measurement device is small enough that it likely won't attract much
104 attention. Manager Loth asked if the data are transmitted remotely. Mr. Kinney said it
105 will be set up to remotely, automatically upload the information to the internet via
106 cellular data plan.

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108 Manager Anderson indicated Little Comfort Lake should have an automated lake
109 level monitoring device as well. Mr. Kinney explained the lake level would be almost
110 identical to Big Comfort Lake because of the culvert connecting the two lakes. Staff
111 were directed to look into lake level monitoring for Little Comfort Lake once the
112 equipment has been installed on the first three lakes.

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114 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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. Old Business

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a) Public Relations Research Report

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Mr. Kinney noted the report was distributed to managers in June.

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President Schmaltz moved to accept the public relations research report. Seconded by Manager Anderson.

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Danie Watson presented an overview of the Public Relations Research Report. She noted that the District is interested in increasing participation in its lakeshore restoration program. The target audience for the purpose of this research effort was composed of homeowners who participated in a cost-share program site visit but did not proceed with a project.

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Main research findings included:

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- Education about lakeshore health is needed
- Participants valued time with family at the lake, peace and quiet, water sports, open view of the lake, fishing, boating, seeing wildlife, and beauty of the lake
- Participants indicated they disliked “weeds” (not distinguishing between beneficial native aquatic plants and invasive plants), and erosion
- The group would benefit from talking points, tools to validate, and support for their choice of a natural shoreline
- Participants viewed the site visits and materials favorably, and participants gave CLFLWD staff high marks
- The District’s program would benefit from a wider variety of options for budgets, project sizes, and splitting projects into phases

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Ms. Watson noted limitations to the research including small project budget and small sample size. She noted the data are qualitative, not quantitative, and not predictive.

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Ms. Watson presented recommended key messages and talking points:

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1. A well-maintained natural shoreline will help preserve the lake life you and your family love.

- 151 2. A natural shoreline helps filter water for a clean, healthy lake for fish and
- 152 wildlife.
- 153 3. A clean, healthy lake with natural shoreline is great for fishing, swimming,
- 154 boating and water sports.
- 155 4. Enjoy the peace and quiet of your lake with the beauty a natural shoreline
- 156 provides.
- 157 5. Loons, ducks, turtles, frogs and butterflies all thrive in natural shoreline habitat
- 158 and add to the lake life you love.

160 Ms. Watson noted that the Watershed District, lake associations, and MN Department
 161 of Natural Resources are trusted sources of information in the eyes of participants.
 162 She recommended next steps including research with remaining audiences to
 163 persuade District residents/the public to participate; engage landscape companies
 164 as allies, not adversaries; and develop tailored communications.

166 Manager Anderson indicated that it is important for lakeshore residents to
 167 understand their responsibility in keeping the lake clean and healthy. Manager Bakke
 168 indicated that the sample size is too small to draw conclusions. He indicated that the
 169 District needs a more comprehensive database to draw from. Mary Pat McNeil
 170 recommended talking to other audiences in order to refine and reaffirm key
 171 messaging. Manager Anderson recommended the Board hold a separate workshop
 172 for topics like this.

174 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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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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b) Office Space Planning

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Kevin Biehn explained EOR’s involvement in Capitol Region Watershed District’s (CRWD) office space capital campaign. He presented a timeline beginning in 2012 with real estate inquiries and concluding in 2020 with moving into the office. He noted that by the time EOR became involved in the effort, CRWD was very organized and had a clear vision of priorities for the office. He explained CRWD delegated responsibility to specific board members and staff members for specific tasks to further the effort. Mr. Biehn noted the CRWD office site was a brownfield site requiring environmental remediation. He presented an overview of the environmental

187 practices implemented on the site such as stormwater harvest, interactive
188 educational exhibits, a pocket park, tree trenches, and native landscaping.

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190 Mr. Biehn presented CRWD's lessons learned such as establishing building goals
191 early and returning to them often, identifying decision makers, and considering
192 design focus committees. He recommended the District engage CRWD directly to
193 discuss these topics.

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195 Mr. Biehn noted other office comparisons including the Mississippi Watershed
196 Management Organization, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District, and Nine
197 Mile Creek Watershed District. He presented additional examples of research
198 facilities and outdoor learning centers, some of which EOR has been involved with
199 designing: Science on the River in Sheboygan, WI; Eastman Nature Center in Dayton,
200 MN; Central High School in St. Paul, MN; Amery Medical Center in Amery, WI; Potomac
201 Science Center Woodbridge, VA; and Harry J Enns Wetland Discovery Centre in
202 Winnipeg, Canada.

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204 Manager Bakke indicated this presentation highlights the need for the Board to reach
205 consensus on an office space vision to best serve the constituents in the watershed
206 district. He indicated the District has potential to create a space that benefits
207 everyone in the watershed, not just lakeshore owners. President Schmaltz referenced
208 a recent newspaper article on the Belwin Foundation and recommended managers
209 think about how the District's education program may be similar to or different from
210 this site. President Schmaltz suggested establishing a committee to work more
211 closely on this.

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213 Manager Anderson asked about the Cultivate Advisors strategic planning work and
214 asked if the District should complete this effort before starting the proposed office
215 planning work. Manager Loth asked if it would be best for the District to determine
216 office vision first or funding availability first. Administrator Kinney explained the
217 proposed office planning effort would work in tandem with the strategic planning
218 work, and it is a logical next step to keep this overall effort moving forward. Manager
219 Toavs noted the District has baseline, minimum office needs in the ISG Office
220 Feasibility Report. He suggested the District now needs to determine which add-ons
221 it would like to pursue, such as community facilities. President Schmaltz indicated the
222 District needs a road map and planning framework to guide this work. Manager
223 Bakke suggested that the strategic planning that the managers will undertake in
224 September will be a good setting in which to bring definition to this.

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226 Manager Anderson moved to authorize the Administrator on advice of counsel to
227 enter into an agreement with EOR in accordance with the July 3, 2024, scope of work
228 for Tasks 1 and 2, and in an amount not to exceed \$21,200. Seconded by Manager
229 Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-1.

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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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c) Office Lease

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Manager Anderson reported that she spoke to the building manager of the current leased office space this morning. The building manager will visit the space in order to ensure the District’s needs are met. Manager Anderson estimated that the District will have a signed lease extension by end of July.

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5. Program/Project Update

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a) Project Update

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Mr. Kinney reported that the Heath Avenue Iron Enhanced Sand Filter project in the Little Comfort Lake Management District is moving forward. The District has hired a surveyor to begin the process of parcel rezoning and subdivision.

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b) Program Update – Education & Outreach

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Mr. Kinney noted that staff prepared a summary of the Bone Lake delisting event for the board packet. He highlighted staff’s work on this effort, particularly that of Adam Hjelm. He noted staff is working on planning the District’s 25th anniversary and State of the Watershed Event. Staff will bring an update to the next board meeting.

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6. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

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The following board directives were summarized:

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- Staff will work with EOR to consider automated lake level monitoring for Little Comfort Lake after automated monitoring equipment is set up for Forest Lake, Bone Lake, and Comfort Lake.
- Manager Anderson requested that the District hold workshops for topics like the PR Report, rather than bringing the discussion to a regular board meeting.

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Manager Bakke noted that the administrator’s quarterly review has been completed, and he will send out notes to the rest of the managers in the coming days. Manager Bakke indicated the next quarterly review is on September 30th. Mr. Kinney was directed to choose a time that fits his schedule for the review.

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7. Adjourn

- a) Next special board meeting – July 24, 2024**
- b) Next regular board meeting – July 25, 2024**

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Loth. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

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 -----