

1                   **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE**  
2                   **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**  
3                   **Tuesday, October 15, 2024**

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5   **1. Call to Order**

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7       President Schmaltz called the October 15, 2024, special board meeting to order at 5:30  
8       p.m. at the Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District offices, 44 Lake Street South,  
9       Suite A, Forest Lake, MN.

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11       **Managers Present:**

12       Steve Schmaltz, President  
13       Christopher Loth, Vice President  
14       Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer  
15       Dave Bakke, Secretary

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17       **Managers Absent:**

18       Jackie Anderson, Treasurer

19  
20       **Staff Present:**

21       Mike Kinney, Administrator  
22       Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator  
23       Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist

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25       **Others Present:**

26       Yianni Arhontoulis, Cultivate Advisors

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28   **2. Strategic Planning Workshop**

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30       Yianni Arhontoulis recommended that managers focus on refining the vision statement  
31       at this meeting. He asked managers to start off by summarizing major takeaways from  
32       the last conversation and the visioning homework assignment.

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34       Manager Toavs remarked that the draft vision statements are very close to the District's  
35       existing mission statement. He asked for an explanation of the difference between vision  
36       and mission.

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38       Mr. Arhontoulis said vision is what does the ideal future look like. The mission is more  
39       action oriented.  
40

41 The vision is where the organization is going. It's what the future looks like if goals and  
42 intentions are accomplished and laid out to be the driving force of how the company  
43 defines success. It is often worded in a way to draw audiences in and get team buy-in.  
44

45 The mission is more like an actionable vision statement – something that will give the  
46 vision legs and traction. What the organization does, who it serves, and the road map  
47 to making the vision become tangible. Mission statements are used to help define the  
48 immediate goal and stay focused on the plan.  
49

50 In other words, the vision is the picture, and the mission is the road map to get there.  
51

52 Mr. Arhontoulis explained that milestones and goals will be drafted after the vision  
53 statement. Ms. Heinz noted that during the 10-year Watershed Management Plan Update  
54 process, the District held several workshops to determine its goals. During these  
55 workshops, the District continually used the term “desired future condition” to create a  
56 vision for each set of goals.  
57

58 Manager Toavs recommended the vision statement be inclusive and active – i.e., use  
59 active tense by starting off with “we will”.  
60

61 Manager Loth said that his sense is that the CLFLWD is an innovator in the field of  
62 watershed management, and this is an important theme to reflect in the vision  
63 statement. He felt that “empowered community stewardship” is a strong statement that  
64 suggests people have the ability to make an impact.  
65

66 Manager Toavs noted that some words may be interpreted differently by different  
67 audiences, (e.g., pristine, vibrant, thriving, fully enjoyable). Mr. Arhontoulis said context  
68 can be helpful in conveying a certain meaning. Manager Toavs asked if the District  
69 should write for a certain education level. Mr. Arhontoulis recommended the statement  
70 be worded to cater toward the masses; it doesn't need to be elementary, but it should  
71 be in layman's terms. Mr. Arhontoulis noted many companies draft their vision statement  
72 in order to speak to its “ideal client persona”.  
73

74 President Schmaltz said he had a hard time scoring each vision statement in the  
75 homework, so he focused on pulling out elements of each statement that he felt were  
76 appropriate. With this, he created a new statement based on those words. President  
77 Schmaltz noted that using the word “pristine” may be perceived as an over-promise. In  
78 reality, the District has financial constraints and may not be able to achieve “pristine”  
79 lakes by everyone's definition of the word. He mentioned that the District needs to  
80 prioritize and establish realistic expectations.  
81

82 Mr. Arhontoulis noted that across the board, draft vision #4 was seen as the most  
83 actionable and forward-thinking out of all. All respondents either rated that the highest,

84 or were in alignment with one other that was rated similarly. He noted that the wording  
85 can be tweaked per the feedback provided.

86  
87 Draft vision statement #4 read as follows:

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89 *Our vision is a future where water remains safe, ecosystems flourish, and the*  
90 *community is well-informed and actively engaged in preserving these natural*  
91 *resources for generations to come.*

92  
93 President Schmaltz recommended the word “safe” be removed because it is open-  
94 ended and could be perceived in terms that are outside the District’s purpose. He stated  
95 that the CLFLWD needs to focus on clean and clear water, which is safe from things like  
96 blue-green algae, but doesn’t encompass all “safety” concerns surrounding water.

97  
98 Manager Toavs recommended simplifying the wording to make the statement shorter  
99 and more easily repeatable. President Schmaltz indicated that the District needs to have  
100 ownership of the vision statement – the District is in charge of seeing it fulfilled. Manager  
101 Bakke said the District needs to create a mindset shift among the people in the  
102 community to engage in more water stewardship behaviors.

103  
104 Manager Loth emphasized the importance of the community’s role. He reiterated that  
105 the theme of innovation is important as well. Manager Loth said the District needs to let  
106 citizens throughout the watershed know that they have an impact on water resources,  
107 even if they don’t live on a lake. He suggested the term “ecosystem” seems to be more  
108 encompassing and invoke the idea of interrelatedness between people living upland in  
109 the watershed to the lakes – again, conveying the idea that “you don’t have to live on  
110 the lake to have an impact on the lake.”

111  
112 Mr. Arhontoulis revised the draft vision statement per the conversation. The final draft  
113 vision statement was:

114  
115 *We see a future where our community is informed and engaged in improving our*  
116 *ecosystems and natural water resources for generations to come.*

117  
118 Mr. Arhontoulis indicated he will send the final draft vision statement to the Board to  
119 review again and consider between now and the next meeting. He will also ask  
120 managers to consider any changes they would like to see to the existing mission  
121 statement. Mr. Arhontoulis will also connect with Mr. Kinney and Ms. Heinz to coordinate  
122 obtaining feedback from District staff.

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124 **3. Adjourn**

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126 **a) Next regular board meeting – October 24, 2024, 6:30 pm**

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**b) Next special board meeting – October 29, 2024, 5:30 pm**

Manager Bakke moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 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 -----