

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Tuesday, November 12, 2024**

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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Schmaltz called the November 12, 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 (virtual attendance)
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 Mike Sandager, Permitting Coordinator

24
25 **Others Present:**

26 Yianni Arhontoulis, Cultivate Advisors

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28 **2. Strategic Planning Workshop**

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30 Mr. Arhontoulis recapped the homework since the last meeting, which included all
31 managers and staff being asked to respond to a Google form with the vision statement,
32 mission statement, and values. He explained that the organization’s values are the
33 guiding principles and core beliefs that shape an organization’s culture, actions, and
34 decision-making; they reflect what the organization stands for, its priorities, and the
35 ethical standards it upholds. Mr. Arhontoulis indicated that when put together, the
36 mission, vision and values create the organization’s “north star.”

37
38 Mr. Arhontoulis said it isn’t feasible for the mission statement to be very detailed and all
39 encompassing. He recommended that the mission statement should be broad enough
40 to stand the test of time and allow the organization to adapt.

42 Manager Toavs indicated that he liked how the draft mission statement creates a
43 springboard for discussion; it opens the door for further conversation to articulate a
44 greater level of granularity.

45

46 The mission statement was revised as follows:

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48 *Our mission is to protect and enhance our ecosystems and natural water resources*
49 *leading watershed work, leveraging innovation, practicing adaptive management,*
50 *adhering to sound economic principles, engaging in community education, while*
51 *empowering our community to be informed and active stewards.*

52

53 President Schmaltz stressed the importance of clarifying the District's top priorities such
54 as greenway corridor, flood mitigation, wetlands, lakes and other water resources,
55 upland resources, groundwater.

56

57 Mr. Arhontoulis presented a consolidated list of values that were submitted by managers
58 and staff via the Google form. He noted that there is a good deal of consistency among
59 the feedback provided.

60

61 Consolidated Values:

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1. Water Resource Leadership

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- Serve as a leader in water resource management, setting high standards and driving impactful initiatives in the field.

64

2. Innovation and Adaptive Management

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- Embrace creative, adaptive strategies that respond to evolving environmental challenges, utilizing the latest research and tools.

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67

3. Fiscal Responsibility

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- Ensure efficient allocation of taxpayer funds through cost-benefit analysis (Pareto Principle) and leverage grants and low-cost loans to maximize impact.

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4. Collaboration

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- Work inclusively with constituents, partners, employees, and critics to achieve shared goals, valuing diverse perspectives.

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5. Sustainability and Resilience

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- Commit to sustainable practices that protect natural resources and implement resilient systems that anticipate environmental changes.

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77

6. Scientific and Metric-Driven Approach

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- Use science-based methods, diagnostic monitoring, and clearly defined metrics to guide all actions and evaluate progress toward goals.

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7. Community Engagement and Education

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- Equip the community with knowledge and tools, fostering informed, active stewardship of water and natural resources.

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83

8. Transparency and Accountability

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- 85 • Act with integrity and openness, ensuring that the organization remains clear
- 86 in its actions and accountable to its constituents.
- 87 9. Service-Oriented Mindset
- 88 • Approach all interactions with respect and friendliness, prioritizing service
- 89 and responsiveness to community needs.
- 90 10. Responsible Governance
- 91 • Follow sound governance principles focused on meaningful results, ensuring
- 92 efficiency and a focus on impactful outcomes over mere activity.
- 93 11. Equity and Inclusivity
- 94 • Serve the community equitably, embracing diversity, inclusion, and
- 95 accessibility for all.
- 96 12. Visionary Spirit
- 97 • Encourage forward-thinking, innovative ideas that challenge boundaries for
- 98 the advancement of community and environmental health.
- 99

100 Mr. Arhontoulis presented a formatted template created by staff to convey the vision,
101 mission and values. He recommended that managers discuss the maximum number of
102 values desired. He recommended that managers and staff should be able to list all of
103 the values from memory. There was general consensus to settle on 5-7 values. Mr.
104 Arhontoulis noted that Cultivate Advisors has adopted 8 values.

105
106 President Schmaltz noted it is common for companies to have “core competencies.” He
107 recommended the District identify the core competencies that have made the District
108 successful. President Schmaltz indicated that phosphorus reduction cost-benefit is a
109 core competency that has served the District well. He noted the District’s use of the
110 Pareto Principle, which posits that 80% of the outcomes result from 20% of the activities
111 performed. President Schmaltz noted that transparency and data sharing is a strength
112 of the District’s.

113
114 Managers discussed the topic of Equity and Inclusivity. President Schmaltz indicated he
115 didn’t think this topic applied to the CLFLWD in quite the same way as other metro
116 watershed districts with more diverse populations. Manager Loth indicated that he is
117 aware of other organizations trying to develop equity and inclusivity policies. He
118 indicated that those organizations weren’t successful in achieving meaningful
119 outcomes with those policies. Manager Bakke indicated that there are people that live
120 on lakeshore property and those who don’t; all must pay taxes to the District. He
121 suggested this may tie into the Fiscal Responsibility value.

122
123 Ms. Heinz recommended that the Board consider some data from the Environmental
124 Protection Agency’s Environmental Justice Screening Tool. She noted that equity and
125 inclusion are related to race, but not limited to it. An estimated 1,800 (10%) people within
126 the CLFLWD have a disability, 2,700 (15%) of people are over the age of 65, and 400 (6%)
127 of households speak a language other than English. Ms. Heinz noted that climate change

128 is expected to affect some demographics disproportionately, which is something the
129 District is considering as part of its floodplain vulnerability assessment. She indicated
130 that equity and inclusion have a place in much of the District's work from climate change
131 planning to internal practices and pay equity.

132

133 President Schmaltz indicated that it is good to look at the data, and this is an important
134 element of flood mitigation planning. Manager Bakke indicated that the District will use
135 the strategic plan to communicate with the public, so the District should be sensitive to
136 the messages it is communicating.

137

138 Managers discussed top values and consolidated the list into five values:

- 139 1. Fiscal Responsibility + Accountability and Transparency + Responsible Governance
- 140 2. Collaboration + Community Engagement and Education
- 141 3. Scientific and Metric-Driven Approach + Innovation
- 142 4. Service Oriented Mindset
- 143 5. Equity and Inclusivity

144

145 Mr. Arhontoulis indicated he will clean up the list and associated descriptions. President
146 Schmaltz asked Ms. Heinz to format the resulting list into the one-page mission, vision,
147 values template that was presented earlier.

148

149 3. Adjourn

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151 **a) Next regular board meeting – November 21, 2024, 6:30 pm**

152 **b) Next special board meeting – December 3, 2024, 5:30 pm**

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154 Manager Bakke moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by President Schmaltz.
155 Upon a vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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Dave Bakke, Secretary -----