

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, April 10, 2025**
4

5 **1. Call to Order**

6
7 President Anderson called the April 10, 2025, regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
8 at the CLFLWD office, 44 Lake Street South, and via online video conference.
9

10 **Managers Present:**

11 Jackie Anderson, President
12 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
13 Steve Schmaltz, Treasurer
14 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer (virtual attendance)
15

16 **Managers Absent:**

17 Christopher Loth, Vice President
18

19 **Staff Present:**

20 Mike Kinney, District Administrator
21 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
22 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
23 Adam Hjelm, Education & Outreach Coordinator
24 Blayne Eineichner, Project Coordinator
25

26 **Others Present:**

27 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
28 Cecilio, Olivier, Emmons & Olivier Resources
29 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources
30 Greg Grasko, Emmons & Olivier Resources
31 Kevin Biehn, Emmons & Olivier Resources
32 Britta Hansen, Emmons & Olivier Resources
33

34 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

35
36 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager
37 Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.
38

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth			X	

Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77

3. New Business

a) 2024 Water Monitoring Report and Presentation

Dr. Wilkinson explained that she completed and posted a pre-recorded video presentation about the District’s 2024 Water Monitoring Report on YouTube. A link is available on the District’s website. Dr. Wilkinson then presented an overview of the 2024 Water Monitoring Report including climate trends, lake highlights, stream highlights, and best management practice effectiveness monitoring highlights. She noted that 2024 was an above-average year for precipitation, and stormwater runoff was high. This resulted in poorer water quality than usual.in some lakes Even still, all the monitored lakes are meeting the state standard 5-year average for at least one parameter, and all lakes are equal to or improved from the 5 to 10-year average.

Dr. Wilkinson explained that small lakes such as Shields Lake, Moody Lake, School Lake, and Little Comfort Lake are much more responsive to increased stormwater runoff rates compared to larger lakes such as Bone Lake, Comfort Lake, and Forest Lake. Manager Schmaltz remarked that each of Forest Lake’s three basins seemed to respond to the increased stormwater runoff in 2024.

Dr. Wilkinson indicated that Shields Lake’s phosphorus and chlorophyll-a readings were above the state standard throughout the growing season. She explained that the alum treatment’s effectiveness may be waning, but the high growing season average is not driven by the internal load. She explained that alum treatment effectiveness monitoring in Forest Lake showed that the first dose of alum in 2023 reduced the lake bottom water phosphorus concentration significantly. This information was used in calibrating the next dose slated for fall 2025, which will complete the project.

Dr. Wilkinson noted that the District observed high chloride concentrations in Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake in 2023. In 2024 the District investigated further and took consistent grab samples throughout the season. The 2024 data showed low chloride concentrations. Dr. Wilkinson indicated that the high readings in 2023 may be due to equipment error, which isn’t uncommon for this type of equipment.

Dr. Wilkinson summarized conclusions and recommendations:

- Lake Recommendations
 - Continue monitoring per the 10-year monitoring plan.

- 78 ○ Collect bottom water samples on several lakes to evaluate internal
79 phosphorus loading.
- 80 ○ Collect additional grab samples on Comfort Lake and Little Comfort
81 Lake to evaluate chloride levels.
- 82 ○ Collect follow-up sediment cores to evaluate alum treatment
83 effectiveness.
- 84 ○ Conduct DIY diagnostic monitoring in the Shields Lake subwatershed
85 to determine possible sources of high loading observed in July 2024
- 86 ○ The 2024 results from Nielson Lake support the continued nutrient
87 impairment, and the MN Pollution Control Agency should consider
88 developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).
- 89 • Stream Conclusions
 - 90 ○ In 2024, the peak flows were observed in spring, June, and late
91 summer for all sites.
 - 92 ○ Peaks in flow led to peaks in total phosphorus and total suspended
93 solids loads.
 - 94 ○ Total phosphorus and total suspended solids loads measured in 2024
95 were less than those measured in the most recent wet year (2019) at
96 the Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake inlets; this is likely due to the
97 load reduction projects implemented throughout the watershed.
 - 98 ○ Nitrogen levels were low, and no chloride readings exceeded state
99 standards at all sites.
 - 100 ○ The total phosphorus and total suspended solids flow weighted mean
101 concentrations at Comfort Lake and Bone Lake outlets exceeded the
102 state standard; this was driven by three sampling dates which were
103 higher than the rest of the sampling period or in-lake concentrations.
- 104 • Stream Recommendations
 - 105 ○ Continue long term stream monitoring to provide data-driven
106 watershed management.
 - 107 ○ Refine telemetry of stream sites to make data collection more
108 efficient.
- 109 • Best Management Practice Effectiveness Monitoring Conclusions
 - 110 ○ The County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter and the Sunrise
111 River/Highway 61 Wetland Enhancement Project are both performing
112 better than projected.
- 113 • Overall Conclusions
 - 114 ○ Although 2024 was a challenging year for lake water quality, 5-year
115 averages still show an improvement, and long-term trends are also
116 favorable.
 - 117 ○ Most of the lakes monitored in 2024 received water quality letter
118 grades of B or C.
 - 119 ○ A wet spring and summer, preceded by several dry years, led to high
120 nutrient loads which deteriorated water quality.

- 121 ○ The influence of the wet spring on water quality was more prevalent in
- 122 lakes with smaller surface area.
- 123 ○ There was no evidence that current management practices installed
- 124 in the District were not performing as expected.
- 125 ○ The effectiveness monitoring results demonstrated that management
- 126 strategies performed better than expected.
- 127 ○ 2024 only represents one year of data, and the District will continue its
- 128 robust monitoring program to provide evidence-based adaptive
- 129 watershed management.

130

131 President Anderson commended EOR on the report and indicated she always
132 appreciates the data in these reports. She noted the data illustrates how damaging
133 heavy rainfall events can be and demonstrates the importance of climate resiliency
134 work. Manager Bakke indicated he appreciates all the data in this report as well.

135

136 Mr. Kinney noted this topic will be on the April 24th meeting agenda so the board may
137 consider accepting the report. He asked that managers provide comments to Dr.
138 Wilkinson and staff by mid-week next week. Manager Schmaltz asked Dr. Wilkinson
139 to clarify the orthophosphate data for Forest Lake in comparison to smaller lakes like
140 Shields Lake and Moody Lake.

141

142 **b) Office Space Site Visits**

143

144 Kevin Biehn presented a summary of the office spaces visited by Administrator
145 Kinney and EOR staff, namely Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, Capitol Region
146 Watershed District, Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization, and
147 Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District.

148

149 Mr. Biehn summarized recurring themes and recommendations from the
150 organizations visited:

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

- Build for the future – try to predict future growth, and ensure the office provides enough space.
- The new office space serves as a staff recruitment advantage.
- Most organizations had 10-year return on investment periods.
- The office space endeavor takes more time than initially expected – this will be the primary focus for dedicated staff during peak planning.
- Include unique “wow” elements to make space more memorable and vivid.
- Use of the facility by outside organizations is generally free – compensation is in the form of watershed awareness and partnership building.
- Watershed district boards were opportunistic, united, and capitalized on opportunities such as land donations.
- Being a valued partner with immediate neighborhoods was evident.

- 163 - Mississippi WMO wanted its own office space, as opposed to a shared space, so
164 as to give more recognition to the organization and its mission. A key justification
165 was that the facility would be a vibrant and activated community asset.
166 - Capitol Region Watershed District followed guiding principles, which became
167 essential for prioritization and coalescing around a common vision. It also
168 assigned various initiatives/programs to staff leaders and teams to delegate
169 workload and pair needs with interests/talents.
170

171 Mr. Kinney added that Nine Mile Creek Watershed District's office site was donated to
172 the District by a private resident. He noted that the Mississippi WMO is a younger
173 organization than the CLFLWD.
174

175 Manager Bakke indicated the board could identify guiding principles for the office
176 space during its strategic planning process. President Anderson recommended the
177 building guiding principles be separate from the strategic planning effort.
178

179 President Anderson asked for more information about EOR's involvement in
180 designing Capitol Region Watershed District's office. Mr. Biehn explained EOR
181 designed the outdoor site plans, and a building architect designed the interior of the
182 building. President Anderson noted EOR received an award for its work on that
183 project. Mr. Biehn noted that EOR has a long history with the architectural firm
184 involved in that building renovation.
185

186 Manager Schmaltz noted the District visited some of these sites in the past already
187 when Beth Carreño was on staff. He said it was good to see these sites again. He
188 found it notable that the process takes longer than originally expected. Manager
189 Schmaltz indicated he would like more detail on what an education center would
190 entail, and that the Board should refine the building concept in alignment with the
191 District's mission before retaining an architect for design work. Manager Bakke said
192 this could be part of the guiding principles. President Anderson said external
193 demonstrations, such as native plantings, are very valuable education tools.
194 Manager Schmaltz said the site should have natural features such as forest and/or
195 wetlands.
196

197 President Anderson noted the District has outgrown its current space, and it is in need
198 of a new space soon. She recommended the Board hold special workshops to
199 discuss this topic further.
200

201 Mr. Kinney noted that Mr. Hjelm compiled a review of nature centers nearby. He also
202 stated that he has also reached out to Hamline University to help inform the
203 education center component. President Anderson said local universities may be a
204 good resource to partner with on this matter.
205

206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239

c) Office Space Architect

Mr. Kinney clarified that the District is not yet ready to develop a design and construct a building. Rather, the purpose of engaging an architect at this stage would be to help create a rendering of what an office space could look like.

Britta Hansen explained how the District might engage an architect during the present phase, which could be considered the “pre-design” phase. She indicated it is important for the District to have a clear vision and list of needs for the facility. The enclosed scope of work is for EOR’s support in the conceptualization of the space, and EOR can work with a building architect. The final deliverable will be a detailed pre-design report and concept rendering. Since there is no specific site location selected yet, the rendering would be a generalized image. It would need to be customized once a site is ultimately selected.

President Anderson moved to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with EOR in an amount not to exceed \$13,500 in accordance with the April 3, 2025 scope of work. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz.

Manager Bakke asked how the contracting would work between EOR and the building architect. Mr. Biehn explained EOR would essentially serve as the general contractor and go-between with the architect. Manager Toavs noted this seems it would result in efficiencies. Mr. Biehn concurred, and suggested that regardless of the contracting with the architect, EOR’s involvement is expected to result in efficiencies with the overall effort. Mr. Biehn said there will be tangible returns resulting from this effort, whether the ultimate space is new construction or renovation.

Manager Bakke asked when this effort will conclude. Ms. Hansen estimated the effort would be finished around August.

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			

240

241 Manager Schmaltz indicated it will still be a couple of years before the new space is
242 ready. He recommended looking to expand the current office space, temporarily, in
243 the meantime in order to improve staff's working conditions.

244
245 President Anderson suggested the District update the Workload Analysis Study that
246 it completed in 2020.

247 248 **4. Old Business**

249 **a) 2024 Year-In-Review, Annual Report, Progress Report Presentations**

250
251 Emily Heinz summarized the three reporting documents. The Year-In-Review is a
252 one-page infographic meant to be easily accessible to readers and give a brief
253 overview of the District's work. The Annual Report goes into greater detail and
254 highlights each program and water quality project from the year. The Progress
255 Report goes into greater detail and analyzes progress toward the District's water
256 resource goals, such as water quality and lake impairment delisting. Ms. Heinz noted
257 the District has made a lot of progress toward lake nutrient impairment delistings.
258 However, there are some factors, beyond water quality data, to consider when
259 delisting a lake such as projects that are in-progress/planned and associated grant
260 seeking. She explained that the Progress Report summarizes the data, and she
261 recommended managers discuss other lake delisting considerations.

262
263 Manager Anderson indicated she doesn't have many edits to the Annual Report this
264 year, except for a few wordsmithing changes. She indicated she appreciates the
265 formatting and use of white space in the Annual Report to make it easy to read.
266 Manager Bakke indicated he appreciates the information in these reports. He asked
267 that staff look into representing the District's \$1.9 million Lessard-Sams Outdoor
268 Heritage Fund grant in the report. Although it wasn't a 2024 grant, it is still an
269 important grant for the District's work and should be noted. Manager Schmaltz asked
270 that staff alter the font color on the Year-In-Review to more clearly emphasize the
271 key points. He suggested adding a second page on the back so it can be printed out
272 and distributed with content on both the front and back; President Anderson
273 indicated Mr. Hjelm can design this.

274 275 **5. Program/Project Update**

276 **a) Project Update**

277
278 Blayne Eineichner reported that the District is making progress on the Heath Iron
279 Enhanced Sand Filter and is slated to close on the property acquisition next week. He
280 noted EOR is currently working on project design.

282 Mr. Kinney noted the District was recently awarded two new grants. Ms. Heinz
283 explained the District was awarded a total of \$260,800 in grant funding for two
284 projects:
285 - \$225,800 through the Board of Water and Soil Resources Green Infrastructure
286 grant program for the Goodwin Avenue Stormwater Wetland project just
287 upstream of Comfort Lake.
288 - \$35,000 through the MN Pollution Control Agency's Local Climate Action grant
289 program for shoreline resiliency planning and outreach.

290
291 Manager Schmaltz indicated that he would like to see the District de-list two nutrient
292 impaired lakes this year, if possible. He suggested Comfort Lake and Little Comfort
293 Lake. Mr. Kinney said there's the facts about whether the water quality data qualify
294 these lakes for delisting, but there are also many other considerations such as
295 climate conditions. Mr. Kinney indicated the District doesn't need to decide
296 immediately. Manager Schmaltz indicated zebra mussels have an impact on water
297 quality that is yet unquantified.

298 299 **6. Report of Officers and Managers**

300
301 Manager Bakke reported that he and Manager Schmaltz held Administrator Kinney's first
302 quarterly performance review on March 31st. He indicated Mr. Kinney is going to send out
303 the associated checklist to the rest of the managers. Manager Bakke indicated the
304 remaining quarterly reviews this year will occur in June, September, and December. He
305 asked Mr. Kinney to send out dates for the next meeting.

306
307 Manager Toavs noted he has recently observed returning waterfowl with the
308 improvement of water quality on Moody Lake.

309
310 Manager Schmaltz reported the Forest Lake Lake Association has its annual meeting on
311 April 17th at the American Legion Hall. Manager Anderson indicated she is interested in
312 attending.

313
314 President Anderson reported she attended the Wyoming City Council meeting earlier
315 this month. She explained the Council discussed the Shallow Pond land donation and
316 had positive things to say about working with the CLFLWD. She noted that the City is
317 primarily concerned about maintaining the walking path on the upland portion of the
318 property. She indicated that it seems the City will likely ask the District to take on
319 ownership of the property.

320 321 **7. Summary and Approval of Board Direction**

322
323 The following board directives were summarized:

324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341

- In the 2024 Annual Report, staff will represent existing grant funds, particularly the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund grant.
- Manager Schmaltz asked that the font colors in the Year-In-Review be altered so as to better emphasize key information.
- Mr. Hjelm will look to incorporate a mission statement and general information on the back side of the Year-In-Review.
- Administrator Kinney will send out a date for the June performance review quarterly meeting.

8. Adjourn

- a) Next special board meeting – April 15, 2025, 6:30 pm**
- b) Next regular board meeting – April 24, 2025, 6:30 pm**

Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by President Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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

342
343

Dave Bakke, Secretary -----