

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, May 22, 2025**
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5 **1. Call to Order**
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7 President Anderson called the May 22, 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.
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10 **Managers Present:**

11 Jackie Anderson, President
12 Christopher Loth, Vice President (virtual attendance)
13 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
14 Steve Schmaltz, Treasurer (virtual attendance)
15 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer
16

17 **Staff Present:**

18 Mike Kinney, District Administrator
19 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
20 Jackie Bussjaeger, Technician
21 Katherine Miller, Seasonal Technician
22 Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist
23 Mike Sandager, Permitting Coordinator
24

25 **Others Present:**

26 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources
27 Greg Graske, Emmons & Olivier Resources
28 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
29 Kevin Miller, Forest Lake City Councilmember
30 Mark Statz, Forest Lake City Administrator
31 Leif Erickson, Forest Lake City Councilmember
32 Blake Roberts, Forest Lake City Mayor
33 Randy Schumacher, CLFLWD CAC Member
34 Mark Goldberg, David Drown Associates
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36 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**
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38 A salary study presentation was proposed to be added to the New Business portion of
39 the agenda as Item 6.a2.
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41 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda with the proposed addition. Seconded
42 by Manager President Anderson. 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. Consent Agenda

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a) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2025

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b) Special Board Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2025

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c) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – April 24, 2025

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d) Special Board Meeting Minutes – April 29, 2025

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President Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager Toavs. 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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4. Public Open Forum

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There were no comments.

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5. Advisory Committee Update

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Administrator Kinney reported that at its May 13 meeting, the Citizen Advisory Committee discussed a recent wake boat impact study and the upcoming District boat tour in July. He also noted that the budget process is commencing, and the community is encouraged to continue participation.

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6. New Business

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a1) Permit 25-004 North Shore Trail

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Representatives from the City of Forest Lake staff and city council attended to discuss the details of the North Shore Trail road improvement project. Administrator Kinney presented an overview of the project. Dr. Anne Wilkinson of EOR explained that this project triggers the District’s erosion control and water crossings rules, and that concurrence on the erosion control approach has been reached with the City.

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73 Forest Lake City Administrator Mark Statz described the road improvements,
74 consisting of reclaiming, shaping, compacting and paving, and stated that the work
75 would create conditions similar to a gravel road. The surface would not be in a
76 disturbed state for more than a few hours at a time. He added that perimeter control
77 is not usually needed for gravel roads, and that it should not be required for this work.
78 He estimated the erosion control required by District rules would cost the City \$12,000.

79
80 Dr. Wilkinson responded that although the risk with this project may not be high, all
81 construction projects have elements of uncertainty. Some areas of the North Shore
82 Trail project are located within 25 feet of high value water resources, with few grassy
83 buffers or swales where runoff can filtrate before entering water resources. The
84 erosion control practices being discussed are at these sensitive locations.

85
86 President Anderson stated that the District has invested more than \$6 million
87 cleaning up Forest Lake and is taking necessary precautions to protect its water
88 quality with its erosion control requirements. She also pointed out that the erosion
89 control requirements for the project have already been relaxed at the City's request.
90 She suggested using the District's stormwater impact fund to share the cost of
91 erosion control with the City.

92
93 Legal Counsel Holtman interjected that the stormwater impact fund is restricted to
94 use only for permanent stormwater treatment purposes.

95
96 Manager Schmaltz stated that the District has been successful in funding many of its
97 projects through grants, and that the District may have been able to assist the City
98 in finding grant funding if the City had approached the District earlier in the planning
99 process. Greg Graske of EOR added that advance notice would allow the District to
100 coordinate with the City on seeking funding sources and planning BMP installation
101 for future projects.

102
103 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve permit application #25-004 with conditions
104 stated in the May 19, 2025 Engineer Report. Seconded by President Anderson. Upon a
105 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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a2) Salary Study Presentation

109 The results of a staff salary study were presented by Mark Goldberg of David Drown
110 Associates (DDA). The new salary structure has increased the minimum pay for
111 District employees from 2.2% below benchmark market rates to 2.0% above, and the
112 maximum from 3.3% below market to 3.2% above. This adjustment will allow
113 compensation to keep pace with inflation rates and ensure positions remain
114 competitive.

115
116 **b) Impact of Federal Funding Cuts**

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118 Administrator Kinney reported that for the last few years, CLFLWD has benefited from
119 the service of individual placement employees through the Minnesota GreenCorps
120 program. In April, \$400 million was cut from the AmeriCorps budget, impacting more
121 than 32,000 AmeriCorps members and roughly 1,000 programs.

122
123 Since summer 2024, Julia Grabow has been serving as a GreenCorps member at
124 CLFLWD. As a result of the budget cuts, she will no longer receive the health and
125 tuition benefits from Minnesota GreenCorps. With emergency assistance from the
126 MPCA, Minnesota GreenCorps will be able to sustain this position through its full term
127 ending in August, but CLFLWD will not be eligible to receive temporary employees
128 through that program in the future. Administrator Kinney added that he expects the
129 District can expect to see more competition for the limited federal funds available in
130 the future.

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132 **7. Old Business**

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134 **a) Strategic Plan Formatting and Distribution**

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136 A vote on the strategic plan formatting and distribution was postponed to a future
137 meeting, when Planning Coordinator Emily Heinz will be present to advise.

138
139 **b) Impairment Delisting Requests**

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141 Dr. Wilkinson gave an overview of the delisting process to provide context for the
142 Board's decision as to which of the District lakes will be submitted for removal from
143 the MPCA Impaired Waters List in 2026. Delisting criteria require that a lake meet state
144 standards for at least two years, exhibit a trend of improvement over the past 10
145 years, and/or have had a significant intervention project such as alum treatment.
146 According to the 2024 Progress Report, Comfort Lake is considered the highest
147 priority for delisting. Little Comfort and School Lake are rated as a medium-high
148 priority, while Moody and Shields Lake fall into a lower priority category.

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150 President Anderson moved to direct staff to submit Comfort Lake for delisting
151 assessment by the MPCA. Seconded by Manager Bakke.

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Manager Schmaltz questioned whether the District should include Little Comfort and School Lakes as a tool to learn more about how to effectively navigate the delisting process. President Anderson responded that the delisting requirements are clearly stated. Administrator Kinney expressed concern about lakes being delisted prematurely if the sedimentation within them is not fully understood, which may threaten funding for future improvement efforts.

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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c) Lower St. Croix Water Partnership 10-year Plan

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the Lower St. Croix 10-year plan amendment as presented. Seconded by Manager Toavs. 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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d) Standard Project Signage

Staff presented a visual concept for project signage to the Board for review. Manager Schmaltz requested that more designs be presented. Manager Bakke questioned whether the \$10,000 is the actual cost of each of the proposed signage installations. Administrator Kinney explained that it is an estimated cost requested by the District based on the size the signage will need to be to be visible from the roadway.

Action was postponed until the June 12 Regular Board Meeting to allow managers time to send design feedback to Education and Outreach Coordinator Adam Hjelm. The Board set a deadline of June 5th to provide comments to staff.

182 **8. Report of Staff**

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184 **a) Administrator**

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186 Seasonal Technician Katherine Miller introduced herself to the members of the Board.

187
188 Administrator Kinney reminded the Board about the upcoming Minnesota
189 Watersheds Summer Tour. He also reported that a final purchase agreement
190 document has been drafted and submitted to the owner of the Bone Lake South
191 Property. The District has submitted a second Lessard-Sams restoration funding
192 request related to anticipated work on this property.

193
194 Administrator Kinney notified the Board that Forest Lake will be included in a study
195 about visitor perceptions of water quality being conducted by the University of
196 Minnesota.

197
198 President Anderson requested that staff distribute a list of the Board’s budget
199 priorities for 2026 to the managers.

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201 **b) Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)**

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203 Dr. Wilkinson shared that heavy rain has led to several water sampling events within
204 the last few weeks. EOR has a new staff member, Ali Stone, who is supporting water
205 monitoring efforts within the watershed district. EOR staff have continued work on the
206 flood resiliency project and identifying architects for future building visioning.

207
208 **c) Smith Partners**

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210 No update.

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212 **9. Report of Treasurer**

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214 **a) Approval of Bills and Treasurer’s Report**

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216 Treasurer Schmaltz reported income for the period of \$323,860.22 and expenses in
217 the amount of \$492,439.36.

218
219 Manager Schmaltz moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, transfer funds in the
220 amount of \$192,560 and pay the bills in the amount of \$492,439.36. Seconded by
221 Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

222

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			

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

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224 **10. Report of Officers and Managers**

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226 Manager Bakke shared that a tree has become stuck in the middle of Bone Lake, where
 227 it poses a hazard for recreation. The Bone Lake Association reached out to the DNR. The
 228 Bone Lake Association may assume removal costs to improve safety.

229

230 Manager Anderson prompted the Board to consider two questions posed by the MPCA
 231 climate subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee is intended for LGUs to inform
 232 the next update to the MPCA climate plan. The questions are: What are some projects
 233 that the District could immediately implement if the funding became available? What
 234 are projects the District would like to do that lack usual funding sources?

235

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

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238 The following board directives were summarized:

- 239 • Staff will distribute a list of 2026 budget priorities to the Board
- 240 • Staff will consider a list of potential projects requested by MPCA climate
 241 subcommittee

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243 **12. Adjourn**

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245 **a) Next special board meeting – June 5, 2025, 6:00 pm**

246 **b) Next regular board meeting – June 12, 2025, 6:30 pm**

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248 Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Bakke.
 249 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:39
 250 pm.

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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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253 Dave Bakke, Secretary -----