



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

MEETING NOTES OF THE COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 2025 Budget Workshop Tuesday, September 16th, 2025

Attendees: Keith Kuhnly, Tom Furey, Randy Schumacher, Ted Hansen, Jerry Grundtner

Others: Mike Kinney, Adam Hjelm, Aidan Read

Agenda

The agenda was amended to include a budget discussion item following the watershed update.

Watershed Update

As there was no regular meeting in August due to the CAC budget workshop and the Bone Lake pontoon tour, this month's watershed update was longer and more detailed. Updates on programs and projects included information about AIS activities, the Bone Lake South Wetland acquisition, staffing and Board membership changes, and information about upcoming events and workshops.

Budget Discussion

The budget discussion began with a refresher of recent budget discussions. Several CAC members attended recent budget discussions with the Board of Managers, as well as the August CAC workshop. Aidan Read updated the Committee that the public hearing for the levy is scheduled for the next Board meeting on September 25th, and a levy has been proposed of between \$2,167,012 and \$2,233,828.

One question from the Committee was regarding how increases in the future levy were planned. Both Jerry Grundtner and Ted Hansen stated that it was discussed that large increases would likely be needed in future years. Ted Hansen shared several comments, noting that permit fees seem to not account for a large percentage of eligible expenses, and that the District has not been as successful with funding programs through grants compared to projects. Mr. Read and Mike Kinney provided some comments on these observations, with Mr. Kinney noting that significant effort has been made to improve cost recovery in permitting, and that a fee increase is underway. The difficulty in funding ongoing programs through grants was also discussed.

Randy Schumacher and others mentioned that the accumulation of debt is concerning, regardless of the suitability of the loans for past projects. It was Mr. Schumacher's



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suggestion that future projects and programming should be postponed until the debt situation be improved, noting that the District risks losing the trust of the taxpayer. A specific suggestion was that the District implement a “red flag policy” for project cost overages that might prevent future debt accumulation.

The budget discussion continued, with members being encouraged to attend the public hearing at the end of the month.

Wakeboat Discussion

With very little time remaining for the meeting, Aidan Read gave a brief overview of the Phase II study results from the Healthy Waters Initiative. The resulting recommendations were discussed by the committee, and it was requested that staff continue to monitor the situation and seek information on what other policies were being implemented by counties or watershed districts.

Closing

The meeting ended without election of a Chair. The next regularly scheduled Committee meeting will be Tuesday October 14th.