

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, March 26, 2026**

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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Anderson called the March 26, 2026, regular board meeting to order at 6:30
8 p.m. 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 Steve Schmaltz, Treasurer

13 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)

14 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer (virtual attendance)

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16 **Managers Absent:**

17 Jim Schottmuller, Vice President

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19 **Staff Present:**

20 Mike Kinney, Administrator

21 Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist

22 Blayne Einechner, Project Coordinator

23 Brad Jernberg, Business and Operations Manager

24 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator

25 Tori Philippi, Office Manager

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27 **Others Present:**

28 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)

29 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

30 Ted Hanson, Community Advisory Committee

31 Michael, online attendee (not further identified)

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33 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

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

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			

Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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3. Consent Agenda

- a) January 8, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- b) January 22, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- c) February 12, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- d) February 26, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

President Anderson noted her edits to the January 22nd minutes, for which redlines were posted online. She requested that the February 12th minutes be revised to note, within the body of the minutes, that Ted Hansen is a member of the Community Advisory Committee.

President Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda, with the indicated amendments to the January 22 and February 12, 2026, minutes. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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4. Public Open Forum

[6:36 pm]
There were no comments.

5. Advisory Committee Updates

[6:37 pm]
Aidan Read reported that the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on Tuesday, March 17th and discussed the GreenCorps host site application letter of support, Bone Lake South property public meeting, and 2026 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention & Management Plan.

6. New Business

- a) Draft 2025 Comprehensive Monitoring Report

[6:38 pm]
Anne Wilkinson presented a summary of the 2025 water monitoring report. Dr. Wilkinson’s presentation included climate trends, lake monitoring, stream

71 monitoring, diagnostic monitoring, recommendations, and conclusions. The
72 presentation slides are available at www.clflwd.org.

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74 [7:12 pm]

75 Manager Schmaltz asked what timing staff expects for being able to delist additional
76 lakes, since Bone Lake was delisted in 2024 and Comfort Lake will be delisted in 2026.
77 He suggested that the annual report be more specific as to the timing the District
78 foresees. Administrator Kinney said most lakes are close to the threshold, and the
79 District could put forward multiple lakes to be delisted when the list is next published
80 in 2028. Dr. Wilkinson explained that she and Emily Heinz met with MN Pollution Control
81 Agency (MPCA) staff last year. She explained that MPCA staff had indicated that Little
82 Comfort Lake and School Lake could potentially be delisted soon; whereas Moody
83 Lake and Shields Lake are not quite as close, but have vastly improved in recent years
84 and could be ready to be delisted if the next few years of data show positive results.

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86 Ms. Heinz noted that the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the official
87 Impaired Waters List biennially, and the next list will be released in April. President
88 Anderson indicated that this is an exciting milestone for the District and for Comfort
89 Lake.

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91 Manager Schmaltz stated that Forest Lake's water quality used to be in worse shape,
92 and Forest Lake was closer to the impairment threshold in the past. He said it is
93 important to share the data that the District has collected and describe how this work
94 extends the life of the lake.

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96 President Anderson commended Dr. Wilkinson and staff on the monitoring report.
97 She emphasized the importance of these data. She indicated she has several
98 comments on the report that she will share with staff.

99
100 President Anderson asked about monitoring equipment malfunctioning in 2025. Mr.
101 Eineichner explained that the ISCO stream monitoring units are powered by batteries
102 charged via solar panels. In 2025, there were issues with rodents chewing
103 connecting wires and disconnecting the power supply. Dr. Wilkinson indicated this
104 resulted in some loss of data, but the District was still able to collect some
105 supplemental data using grab samples.

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107 Manager Bakke indicated Bone Lake was once called one of the dirtiest lakes in the
108 state, and now according to this report, its water quality is second only to Lake
109 Keewahdin in the District.

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111 Manager Schmaltz said the visuals in the report were helpful, and Manager Toavs
112 agreed.

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b) Bush Foundation Grant Application

[7:28 pm]

Manager Schmaltz moved to authorize the District Administrator to submit a grant application to the Bush Foundation for Sequential Diagnostic Assessment and, upon advice of counsel, to execute the grant agreement if awarded. Motion seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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c) Green Infrastructure Grant East Comfort Pond Project Scope of Work

[7:29 pm]

Blayne Eineichner presented an update on the Green Infrastructure Grant and the associated East Comfort Pond Project. The District originally applied for and received this grant for a project off Goodwin Avenue, just upstream of Comfort Lake along the Sunrise River. That project relied on participation from private landowners. After the grant was awarded, these landowners changed their mind on participating in the project. As such, staff reached out to a different landowner whose site would allow for a similar water quality improvement project for Comfort Lake - the East Comfort Pond Project. The District was able to amend its Green Infrastructure Grant to shift grant funds toward this new project.

Mr. Eineichner explained that staff have been in contact with the landowner of the new project site and the City of Wyoming to develop this project. He explained that the proposed project will clean out and enhance the abandoned stormwater feature. The project is estimated to reduce phosphorus loading to Comfort Lake by 5 pounds per year. He noted that the proposed engineering costs will be funded entirely by the grant.

President Anderson moved to authorize the Administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with Emmons & Olivier Resources in accordance with the March 17th scope of work and in an amount not to exceed \$14,074.75. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz.

President Anderson indicated she would like to review the project location map more closely. Mr. Kinney indicated staff will print a copy of the presentation and map for her.

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150 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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153 **d) Draft 2025 Year-In-Review, Annual Report, Progress Report**

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[7:42 pm]

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Emily Heinz summarized the proposed review timing of these regularly occurring annual reports, which provides managers with a month to review and comment on the documents. She noted that some Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members have reviewed the reports and provided comments to staff.

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Managers set a deadline of April 7th for board members and CAC members to provide requested edits to the annual reports.

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Manager Bakke noted the board received an email from CAC member, Ted Hansen, with a comment on the Annual Report. Mr. Hansen recommended the District avoid suggesting loan disbursements are “revenue” in the budget summary of the Annual Report because loan disbursements are separated out in the audit report. President Anderson asked Mr. Hansen to include this comment with the rest of the CAC comments due to staff by April 7th.

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170 **e) University of St. Thomas Sustainable Communities Program**

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[7:50 pm]

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Administrator Kinney reported that he has been in communication with the University of St. Thomas regarding a research project to quantify the benefits of stormwater best management practices, such as those required by the District’s permitting program. Mr. Kinney noted a white paper the Sensible Land Use Coalition issued recently containing a recommendation that watershed districts leave stormwater regulation to cities. He explained that a research study demonstrating the benefits of stormwater regulations would be a useful tool when discussing of the role of watershed districts in local stormwater regulation.

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Manager Bakke noted that the memo mentions that the District might provide mileage reimbursement to study participants. Mr. Kinney estimated the mileage reimbursement would cost approximately \$100 total. President Anderson asked Mr. Kinney to review the budget and determine whether there is funding available for mileage reimbursement.

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President Anderson moved to accept the proposal to work with the University of St. Thomas as part of its Sustainable Communities Program, but to limit mileage reimbursement to what is in the District’s existing budget. Seconded by Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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7. Old Business

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a) Cost-Share Program Update

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[8:00 pm]

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Aidan Read presented an update on the cost-share program including site visits, approved projects, allocated funding, project closeouts, linear feet of shoreline restored/enhanced, and acres of habitat planted. The presentation slides are available at www.clflwd.org.

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[8:11 pm]

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Manager Schmaltz noted that water quality doesn’t appear to be a primary marketing factor, but water quality improvement is an outcome of shoreline restoration projects. President Anderson encouraged staff to break out results by lake management districts in the future.

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President Anderson asked if there is anything in the law that prohibits board managers or CAC members from participating in the District’s cost-share program. Mr. Holtman indicated there isn’t anything specific in the law. However, there is a statutory framework that allows the District to do business with a board manager, provided that the manager recuses from the board’s consideration of that contract, and that the board’s vote is unanimous aside from the recused manager. He stated that participation in the cost-share program is analogous to this framework. He recommended that, if a manager were to apply to the cost-share program, staff could bring that application to the board for consideration.

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Mr. Read encouraged board members and CAC members to sign up for a free soil testing site visit.

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Manager Bakke reported that the City of Scandia mayor recently met with the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District to discuss jurisdiction over shoreline

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222 property improvement projects on Big Marine Lake. He indicated that he had
223 suggested the mayor include the CLFLWD in future conversations on this topic.
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225 **8. Report of Staff**

226 **a) Administrator**

227 [8:17 pm]

228 President Anderson asked that Mr. Kinney provide to the managers a regular report
229 aggregating permitting activity.
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232 Manager Toavs noted that the District's Facebook videos are very effective materials
233 and appear to be receiving a lot of engagement. Mr. Kinney encouraged board
234 members to follow the District's Facebook account, if they aren't already doing so.
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236 President Anderson asked if Mr. Kinney or Mr. Holtman had anything notable to report
237 from the MN Watersheds legislative session meetings. Mr. Holtman indicated he did
238 not attend this event, but Smith Partners tracks bills that may be of interest to
239 watershed districts. He stated that there are not any major items of concern to report
240 at this time.
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242 Administrator Kinney indicated that staff are taking photos of ongoing work, and he
243 will try to share these during the Administrator's Report. Mr. Eineichner reported that
244 staff and EOR held a pre-bid meeting for the Heath Iron Enhanced Sand Filter project
245 earlier that day with 6 contractors in attendance.
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247 **b) Emmons and Olivier Resources**

248 [8:23 pm]

249 Dr. Wilkinson reported EOR attended the Heath Iron Enhanced Sand Filter pre-bid
250 meeting. She reported that EOR is undergoing wetland sampling and concept design
251 for the Sunrise River Headwaters Project Development Accelerated Implementation
252 Grant.
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254 **c) Smith Partners**

255 [8:24 pm]

256 Nothing to report.
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258 **9. Report of Treasurer and Approval of Bills**

259 [8:24 pm]

260 Tori Philippi explained that last month's Treasurer's Report had an error which resulted in
261 the board approving an incorrect amount for the total expenses for the period. The report
262 indicated total expenses for the period of \$110,138.14, but this number only included
263 electronic payments and excluded the checks from that month. The correct total

264 expenses for the period were \$286,854.47. The recommended motion authorizes the
265 difference in expenditures.

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267 President Anderson moved to authorize payment of bills in the amount of \$176,716.33 as
268 presented on the February 26 check register, in addition to the amount of \$110,138.14
269 previously authorized, and to ratify all such payments already disbursed. Seconded by
270 Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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273 Treasurer Schmaltz reported income for the current period of \$56,370.57 and expenses
274 in the amount of \$145,571.13. President Anderson pointed out the District received \$4,276
275 in passive income via interest revenue from the District's bank accounts.

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277 President Anderson moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, transfer funds in the
278 amount of \$420,000 and pay the bills in the amount of \$145,571.13. Seconded by Manager
279 Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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

283 [8:27 pm]

284 Manager Bakke reminded meeting attendees of the Bone Lake South Property
285 Informational Meeting scheduled for Monday at 6:00 pm. He reported that the Bone Lake
286 Association (BLA) met last week and decided to increase its funding contribution for
287 watercraft inspection program. Additionally, the BLA is developing an Aquatic Invasive
288 Species (AIS) Action Plan which includes a review of dock service providers to prevent
289 the spread of AIS through dock installation and removal activities.

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291 Manager Schmaltz reported that Timm's Marina on Forest Lake recently petitioned the
292 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and City of Forest Lake to expand its boat slips
293 and parking area. He explained that Timm's Marina applied for a variance for the project,

294 but the Planning Committee voted against granting it. He indicated that the DNR
295 provided several recommendations to protect the lake. However, the City did not follow
296 those recommendations, including enforcing tree planting requirements. Timm’s Marina
297 has the option to appeal the decision at the next City Council meeting.

298
299 President Anderson provided an update on the Watershed Based Implementation
300 Funding (WBIF) metro convene meeting where the District’s funding proposal was
301 rejected. All of the FY27 metro WBIF grant funds will be pooled with the Lower St. Croix
302 Watershed Partnership. She indicated she met with Mr. Kinney and Ms. Heinz afterward,
303 and there is a plan in place to proceed with a grant proposal through the Partnership
304 when funds become available next spring.

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

307 [8:33 pm]

308 The following board directives were summarized:

- 309 • Manager Schmaltz asked for staff to provide color coded comments on Annual
310 Reports. The deadline for board manager and CAC member comments is April
311 7th.
- 312 • Regarding the cost-share program President Anderson asked that program
313 results be broken out by lake management district in the future.
- 314 • In the Administrator’s Report, President Anderson asked that staff, on a regular
315 basis, provide an aggregated permit report.

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317 **12. Adjourn**

318 **a) Next regular board meeting – April, 9, 2026**

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320 Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Toavs.
321 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:34
322 p.m.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller			X	
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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325 Dave Bakke, Secretary -----