

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, September 10, 2026**

1. Call to Order

President Anderson called the September 10, 2026, regular board meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. at the CLFLWD office, 44 Lake Street South, and via online video conference.

Managers Present:

Jackie Anderson, President

Steve Schmaltz, Treasurer

Jim Schottmuller, Vice President

Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer (virtual attendance)

Managers Absent:

Dave Bakke, Secretary

Staff Present:

Mike Kinney, Administrator

Adam Hjelm, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist

Blayne Einechner, Project Coordinator

Brad Jernberg, Business and Operations Manager

Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator

Tori Philippi, Office Manager

Others Present:

Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)

Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

Ted Hansen, Community Advisory Committee

Michael Miller

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Manager Schottmuller moved to approve the agenda as presented. 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			

3. Consent Agenda

- a) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2026
- b) Special Board Meeting Minutes – August 17, 2026
- c) Regular Board Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2026 (Redlined)

Manager Schottmuller moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by President Anderson. 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			

4. Public Hearing – 2027 Budget and Levy

[6:37 pm]

Emily Heinz presented a summary of the proposed 2027 budget and levy. The proposed expense budget is \$3,283,657. Estimated revenues total \$3,298,487, including \$957,435 in grants and other revenues and \$2,341,052 in ad valorem tax levy. The proposed tax levy is a 4.8% increase from the 2026 levy. Ms. Heinz summarized budget priorities, grants and other revenues, key programs and projects, historical budget information, and District accomplishments. She noted that the Board will continue to evaluate spending as the year goes on and may consider reducing the 2027 levy before the end of December.

[6:58 pm]

President Anderson opened the public hearing for comment. Ted Hansen indicated he was happy to see that the Board prioritized setting a balanced budget, paying off loans, and minimizing the levy increase. He suggested that staff adjust the budget history presentation slide to better identify grant revenues and loan proceeds.

President Anderson determined that no other members of the public wished to address the Board, and closed the public hearing.

5. New Business

- a) 2027 Budget and Levy

[7:01 pm]

President Anderson solicited comments from each of the board members regarding the proposed 2027 budget and levy.

Manager Schottmuller indicated he is happy with a 4.8% levy increase and is looking forward to the trajectory that the District is on.

Manager Toavs noted the board spent a significant amount of time workshopping the budget, and the budget is now in a good place. He indicated he fully supports the proposed budget.

Manager Schmaltz stated he is supportive of the 4.8% levy increase and it is a good compromise.

President Anderson said she is proud of the level of participation by all of the board members in the development of the budget. She indicated it was helpful for staff to continuously look for cost savings. She stated she is happy with the outcome, and this budget will serve the public well.

Manager Schmaltz moved to adopt resolution 26-09-01 adopting the 2027 budget and directing certification of the levy. Seconded by Manager Schottmuller. 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			

President Anderson noted that Manager Bakke was unable to attend this board meeting, and that he had expressed approval of the proposed budget and levy at the last budget workshop.

b) City of Forest Lake Letter of Support for Trees Grant

[7:05 pm]

Aidan Read explained the City of Forest Lake is applying for a grant through the Department of Natural Resources for funding to plant trees at Castlewood Park and Golf Course. He noted the City has requested a letter of support from the District, and the proposed tree planting project is consistent with the District's mission.

President Anderson moved to authorize the Board President to sign the attached letter of support on behalf of the Board of Managers and direct staff to forward the letter of support to the City of Forest Lake for its proposal to the Department of Natural Resources. Seconded by Manager Toavs.

Manager Schmaltz asked if this grant program is available to lake associations. Mr. Read indicated nonprofit organizations with 501(c) status may apply. President Anderson indicated the three lake associations within the CLFLWD are all 501(c) organizations. Staff will send information on this program to all the lake associations.

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			

6. Old Business

a) 2026 Mid-Season Monitoring Update

[7:10 pm]

Blayne Eineichner presented preliminary monitoring data from the 2026 season. He summarized early monitoring trends and comparisons to past years of monitoring data. In general, the 2026 data is indicating lake water quality has been better than average, which is common for a drier year.

President Anderson noted the reduced monitoring program budget and asked if the District is missing any critical information by scaling back its stream monitoring efforts. Mr. Eineichner indicated the District has a strong historic record of stream monitoring data, and the District continues to collect data through the Citizen Assisted Tributary monitoring program.

Manager Toavs asked if the Highway 8 road reconstruction project will take steps to address chloride loading to Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake. Dr. Wilkinson explained that while stormwater best management practices (BMPs) can help infiltrate runoff and reduce chloride input, chlorides still have the potential to get flushed during a big rain event. Currently, there is no cost-effective BMP to specifically address chloride, and the key is prevention through Smart Salting programs.

President Anderson requested that District staff check with Chisago County engineers regarding holding a public listening session related to the Highway 8 roadway project.

7. Project Update

[7:44 pm]

Blayne Eineichner provided updates on active projects including Conservation Corps Crew Projects, Heath Ave Iron Enhanced Sand Filter, East Comfort Pond Project, Bone Lake South Nature Area Restoration, and School Lake Agricultural Best Management Practices.

8. Report of Managers

[7:52 pm]

Manager Schmaltz indicated this will be his last meeting as a board manager. He recognized managers, staff, and consultants involved with the District. Managers and staff thanked Manager Schmaltz for his years of service.

President Anderson reported that there is abundant water lily growth on Comfort Lake which affects the area of Eurasian watermilfoil herbicide treatment allowable by the Department of Natural Resources.

Manager Schottmuller and Manager Schmaltz reported recent algae blooms on Forest Lake.

9. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

[8:05 pm]

The following board directives were summarized:

- Ms. Heinz will adjust the budget presentation materials to more clearly reflect grant revenue and loan proceeds.
- Mr. Read will send information to Manager Schmaltz about the tree grant and possible use by the lake association.
- President Anderson asked staff to follow up on the desired public information meeting involving Chisago County engineers and the Highway 8 roadway reconstruction project.

10. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – September 24, 2026

Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schottmuller. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 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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