

Minutes Approved: Nov. 5th, 2025
Date & Time: October 15, 2025, 7:00pm CST
Location: Carver County Government Center, County
Board Room 602 East 4th Street Chaska, MN 55318
Virtual Location: Teams Meeting [Video of Meeting](#)



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Barisonzi called the meeting to order at 6:58 PM CST.

Managers Present: Joseph Barisonz, Theresa Kuplic, Carter McNew

Managers Absent: Lauren Salvato, Vinatha Viswanatha

Staff Present: Will Lytle (Administrator), Linda Loomis, Della Young (Young Environmental), John Kolb (Rinke Noonan),

Others Present: Commissioner Jody Brennan (Scott County), Commissioner Lisa Anderson (Carver County), Shannon Sweeny (Financial Advisor), Lori Cox (CURE/BWSR), CAC Members

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

3.1.1. [Letter of Resignation from Manager Salvato](#)

She is recognized as the longest-serving member of the current board. The board expressed sadness over her departure and acknowledged her significant contributions. It was noted that the county has initiated the process of selecting a replacement, and the board looks forward to onboarding and engaging with the new appointee once selected.

3.1.2. [Citizens Advisory Committee](#)

There have been changes within the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), involving the departure of long-time member and former chair Judy Berglund. Judy was one of the original leaders of the CAC and played a key role in shaping its early direction and activities. Her dedication and involvement in nearly all CAC initiatives over the years were acknowledged with deep appreciation. The board expressed gratitude for her service and hopes to formally recognize her contributions in the near future.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.1.1. [Review and Approve Past Board Meeting Minutes](#)

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A motion to approve the September 17, 2025 minutes was made and carried unanimously. Moved by McNew and seconded by Kuplic.

4.1.2. Approve Accounts Payable

A motion to approve the October 15, 2025 accounts payable report was made and carried unanimously. Moved by McNew and seconded by Kuplic.

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1.1. Permit Renewals

The renewal of three permits: 2020022, 2023013, and 2023017. Staff recommended approval of all three renewals with each permit being extended for a term of one year. *The motion to renew all three permits was carried unanimously.* Moved by McNew and seconded by Kuplic.

5.1.2. 2025-011_PompsTire

There was a review of permit application 2025011 for Pomp's Tire Service Center. Staff recommended conditional approval, contingent upon the receipt, review, and approval of several required documents: a copy of the NPDES construction stormwater permit, approval from the City of Savage including the Wetland Conservation Act Notice of Decision, an executed maintenance agreement with the City of Savage, a drainage easement for the stormwater basin discharge, final construction plans signed by a professional engineer, and payment of any outstanding permit fees exceeding the initial \$20,500. *A motion to approve the permit with these conditions was made and carried unanimously.*

5.1.3. 2023-008_ChaskaTechAmendment

Reviewed a proposed amendment to existing permit 2023008, referred to as the Chaska Tech Amendment. The amendment was presented along with a technical memorandum outlining the changes. Staff recommended approval of the permit addendum as detailed in the memorandum. *A motion to approve the amendment was made and carried unanimously.* Moved by McNew, seconded by Kuplic.

5.1.4. Area 3 Update

5.1.4.1. 2025-008 Area 3 Stabilization Bid Recommendation Construction Costs

5.1.4.2. Resolution 25-19 to Award Bid

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5.1.4.3. Area 3 Notice of Public Hearing

The Capital Improvement Project Area 3: Minnesota River Riverbank Stabilization Project, a long-standing initiative originating from a 2010 erosion assessment by the City of Eden Prairie. The project addresses severe erosion at River Mile 19, where a stormwater retention pond which was mandated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in the 1990s, was constructed in the path of a naturally shifting river bend. This placement inadvertently redirected the river's energy into a nearby bluff, accelerating erosion and sediment discharge. Naiad Consulting presented a detailed history and rationale for the project, emphasizing its urgency and the extensive collaboration with the City of Eden Prairie and MPCA. The board considered and moved to adopt Resolution 2518, calling for a special meeting and public hearing, and Resolution 2519, authorizing the award of construction. The project is funded through a combination of sources: a \$2.75 million grant from the State of Minnesota, \$400,000 from the City of Eden Prairie (based on its long-standing capital improvement plan), \$127,000 from a watershed-based implementation grant, and \$50,000 from Hennepin County. Additional costs have arisen from permitting, surveys, and property acquisition. Questions were raised regarding the proportionality of financial contributions, particularly the limited share from the city and local homeowners, despite their proximity to the affected area. Naiad Consulting clarified that the city's actions were in response to regulatory enforcement and that the primary concern is the significant sediment load from the site, which has regional water quality implications. The area was also identified by FEMA in 2014 as one of three high-risk zones in Hennepin County for slope failure. The board acknowledged the complexity and scale of the project, noting it as the first of its kind for the current board, and expressed concern about the sustainability of existing watershed district financing mechanisms. *A motion was introduced and seconded to adopt Resolution 2518, which calls for a special meeting to hold a public hearing on the project.* construction contract. Moved by McNew, seconded by Kuplic. Resolution 2519, which authorizes the award of the the construction contract was postponed until Nov. 5th, 2025.

5.1.5. MCEA- Support Request

The board considered a request from the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), which submitted a petition to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) seeking a rulemaking change. MCEA requested the board's support through either signing the petition or submitting a letter of endorsement. Staff reviewed the petition and its supporting report and acknowledged the importance of the issues raised. However, staff recommended that the board refrain from taking an immediate position and instead authorize staff to use the petition as a basis for broader engagement. The proposed approach involves convening other watershed districts and stakeholders to share the petition, gather feedback, and assess both the potential benefits and unintended consequences of the proposed rule changes. This strategy aims to avoid the perception

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of the district aligning with or against MCEA, and instead emphasizes the district's role as a neutral governmental unit (LGU) that represents counties and collaborates with diverse partners. A motion was made by Barisonz and seconded by McNew to authorize staff to proceed with this engagement and return with a recommended course of action at the next board meeting. One board member disclosed affiliations with multiple organizations that had signed the petition, including serving as an officer and advisor, and expressed personal support for the petition while underscoring the importance of maintaining the district's impartial role. Public comment was provided by Lori Cox, a resident of Carver County and representative of CURE and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), who voiced strong support for MCEA's efforts and emphasized the importance of addressing water quality and sedimentation issues. The board acknowledged the relevance of the petition to ongoing watershed challenges and affirmed the need for inclusive stakeholder engagement before determining a formal position. A motion to authorize staff to use the report and petition for rulemaking to engage other watersheds and stakeholders was moved by the Kuplic, seconded by McNew, approved unanimously.

5.1.6. Naiad Workplan_8-21-2025

The board reviewed and *approved the Naiad Consulting agreement*, which was brought forward by the Personnel Committee and seconded by Manager McNew. There were no questions, comments, or concerns raised by the board members regarding the agreement. The board expressed appreciation for the work of Linda and Will in transitioning the district's contracts and agreements toward an outcome-based deliverables model, emphasizing the importance of this shift in improving accountability and performance measurement. The motion to approve the agreement was carried unanimously.

5.1.7. Review of Petition to Establish the LMRWD and Mission Statement

The board had a rediscovery and reaffirmation of the original founding charter of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District or a similarly named organization. There is a desire to maintain consistency with the original vision and ensure that it is properly communicated across organizational efforts. The staff had successfully located the founding documents, including the mission statement and original petition, and shared them with the group.

A formal motion was proposed to *authorize staff to incorporate these documents into the organization's planning process and marketing platforms*. The motion was seconded and The board then urged members of the CAC, to review the documents thoroughly and internalize their significance. A new procedural initiative was proposed: beginning each future meeting with a reading of the founding documents to reaffirm the organization's mission and purpose. The speaker

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concluded with appreciation for the group's engagement and reaffirmed the importance of grounding future discussions in the foundational intent of the organization.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

6.1.1. Budget and Finance

6.1.1.1. September Financial Report

6.1.1.2. Finance Updates and Fund Balance

The board received an update from the Budget and Finance Committee. Although the committee met, it did not have a quorum; however, significant discussion has occurred since then regarding financial concerns. The board was provided with financial reports and an updated fund balance summary by the Administrator. He highlighted key issues, notably a shortfall in available funds, primarily due to unanticipated costs associated with the Vernon Avenue project, which, while important and well-funded, incurred higher-than-expected expenses. As a result, the district's current available balance stands at approximately \$250,000, which will decrease to around \$200,000 following the approval of accounts payable. The next expected revenue is from second-half property tax payments from Dakota, Hennepin, and Scott Counties, anticipated in late November to early December. Staff emphasized the need for immediate fiscal restraint, including pausing or deferring projects and payments until additional funds are received. It also stressed the importance of not using 2026 budgeted funds to cover 2025 expenses. Young's team identified four critical work plan elements for 2025 and 2026 that should not be delayed due to their near-term value and potential cost increases if postponed. Area 3 was cited as a key example, where delays could jeopardize grant funding or result in higher future costs due to potential flooding. The board acknowledged the financial challenges and the need for strategic planning to ensure sufficient cash flow and project continuity through the end of the year and into 2026.

6.1.2. Permit Program

6.1.2.1. Program Summary

6.1.2.2. Quarry Lake Tech Memo

6.1.2.3. Bathymetry Tech Memo

6.1.2.4. MAC Ponds Memo

6.1.2.5. [MPARS] Permit 1959-0286 - Burnsville Quarry Wheel Wash

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6.1.2.6. [MPARS] Permit 2025-3041 - Line 0808 Issued - Hennepin County

In the permit program section, the Administrator presented an update on the Quarry Lake technical memorandum and the accompanying Bethany Metric survey. These two reports, previously delivered to the board, were discussed together as they provide complementary insights into the ecological conditions and historical context of Quarry Lake, a relatively new waterbody formed after quarry operations ceased in the 1990s. The Bethany Metric survey included detailed imagery and bathymetric data collected using a UAV boat to assess lake depth and conditions. The reports addressed key questions regarding water quality, native and invasive species, and the lake's potential as a recreational and ecological asset. The Citizens Advisory Committee recently reviewed the findings and visited the site, observing active recreational use such as water skiing and mountain biking. Staff emphasized the importance of balancing ecological restoration with the promotion of brownfield redevelopment and public access. The reports were praised as high-quality deliverables from Young Environmental, with contributions from multiple team members and responsiveness to feedback from staff, the board, and the Citizens Advisory Committee. The project was not intended to determine immediate capital investment but to fill critical knowledge gaps about the lake's current state. Additionally, the board was updated on the Area 3 public hearing notice and the status of the MAP Ponds memo. It was reported that sampling for PFAS at the MAP Ponds site is scheduled for the upcoming Monday, with coordination between Landmark (a third-party monitoring firm) and MAC for joint sampling and data sharing. The board expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts and looked forward to results confirming the absence of PFAS to support continued progress on the project. The last 2 items (6.1.2.5 / 6.1.2.6) were noted as informational updates from partner-led permitting efforts, including the Line 808/08 and Burnsville Quarry Wheel Wash projects.

6.1.3 Channel Maintenance and Dredging

Administrator provided a verbal update and visual documentation regarding ongoing dredge material management at the channel undredging site. The site is currently receiving both private and public dredge material, with a notably large volume being processed. Operations are proceeding efficiently, with active barge unloading and material handling. He engaged in discussions with site personnel about potential opportunities for beneficial reuse of dredge material, including innovative approaches such as incorporating biochar or fungi (e.g., mushrooms) to enhance material management. Site operators expressed openness to exploring such alternatives, acknowledging associated costs. The private dredge material, primarily sourced from slips in the Port of Savage, arrives in a highly saturated state and is stored in a designated holding pond for dewatering, a process that can take up to two years. While the current volume may be slightly higher than usual, the operations remain within expected parameters. The administrator

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concluded that the site is functioning well and commended the team for their effective management of the material and willingness to consider sustainable reuse strategies.

6.1.5. Strategic Planning and Initiatives

6.1.5.1. Water Planning Timeline

6.1.5.2. LMRWD Design Sprint

The board's attention was directed to two key planning documents: the updated Lower Minnesota River Water Planning Timeline and the Design Sprint overview. Board members were encouraged to review both documents and to submit any questions, comments, or concerns directly to the administrator. These materials are intended to inform upcoming planning and coordination efforts, and board engagement was requested to ensure alignment with strategic priorities and stakeholder expectations.

6.1.8. Calendar/Events

6.1.8.1. Oct 23 For Love of a River Revival Event

6.1.8.2. Oct 29 WMP Kick-off Meeting

6.1.8.3. Nov 5 Hearing and Committees Education & Outreach

The board was informed of several upcoming events: the "For the Love of the River Revival" event hosted by partners in New Ulm on October 23, which will feature participation from key regional stakeholders including Scott Sparling, John Hickman, and Rita Weaver; the district's own kickoff meeting scheduled for October 29; and the public hearing set for November 5. Staff also highlighted a resource link to a conservation grazing hub, encouraging members to explore it for further insight into innovative land management practices.

6.1.9. CAC

Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) were invited to share updates and perspectives. Katie Johngrass, a CAC member for just over a year, highlighted recent community engagement efforts, including tabling events at local farmers markets in Savage, Eden Prairie, Carver, and Burnsville. These events focused on educating the public about environmental practices such as rain gardens and native plantings. She also summarized recent CAC activities, including training for the Riverboat 2 Air volunteer event, a guest presentation from Metro Blooms, a site tour of Quarry Lake, and the beginning of the CAC's 2026 visioning and calendar planning. She noted that applications for the fall educator mini-grants are open through October 20 and will be reviewed at

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the next CAC meeting. Board members acknowledged the CAC's critical role in community education and outreach and encouraged the committee to consider engaging with the MCEA petition by potentially

inviting a speaker to a future meeting. Patty Thompson, another CAC member from Bloomington in Hennepin County, shared her motivation for joining the committee, citing a personal concern about declining amphibian populations and a desire to better understand and communicate the watershed's work. She emphasized the importance of public awareness, fiscal responsibility, and sustainability, expressing concern about the financial implications of large-scale projects like Area 3. She urged the board to explore more cost-effective and sustainable approaches to riverbank stabilization in light of increasing climate-related challenges. The board expressed appreciation for the CAC's contributions and emphasized the importance of incorporating their insights into future planning and decision-making processes.

7. ADJOURNMENT

At the conclusion of the meeting, Barisonz invited any final comments from online participants and in-person attendees. Legal counsel Kolb confirmed he had no additional remarks but noted that materials would be prepared in advance of the upcoming November 5 public hearing for the board's review. Young also indicated she had no further comments. Commissioners Brennan and Anderson similarly confirmed they had nothing additional to add. With no further questions or discussion, Barisonz thanked all attendees for their participation and concluded the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM CST.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025.