

Minutes- Approved: 2.18.2026  
Meeting Type: Board Meeting  
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST, 1.21.2026  
Location: County Board Room, Carver County Government  
Center, 602 East 4th Street, Chaska, MN 55318  
Virtual Location: [Teams Meeting](#) | [Transcript](#)



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER  
WATERSHED DISTRICT

## 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Barisonzi called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM CST.

**Managers Present:** Joseph Barisonzi, Theresa Kuplic, Carter McNew, Vinatha Viswanathan, Kyle Bakkum

**Staff Present:** Will Lytle, Della Young, John Kolb, Damaris Canales

**Others Present:** Michael Heckman, Jody Brennan, Joe Barten

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

## 3. PUBLIC HEARINGS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

The first discussed the Winter Salt Week Proclamation by explaining that Winter Salt Week is part of a larger regional and northern initiative intended to promote wise and efficient use of salt on roads, sidewalks, and driveways. The initiative emphasizes the interconnection between road maintenance, drainage systems, and local waterways, highlighting how excessive or improper salt use can negatively impact environmental and water quality outcomes. The proclamation being considered was drafted specifically for the district, with the goal of supporting and promoting best practices for salt use.

During the discussion, staff requested coordination with additional watershed district partners, specifically a check-in with Young's team and Lauren Salvato to ensure that any existing or planned activities during Salt Week are publicized and supported. Board members were informed that the Green Crew Minnesota Valley chapter of the Izaak Walton League, in partnership with the district-funded River Watch program, would be conducting chloride water-quality testing on Tuesday, February 27th. This event was listed on the National Registry of Salt Week activities.

The board approved the staff's recommendation regarding the Winter Salt Week Proclamation. This action formally endorsed participation in and promotion of Winter Salt Week, a regional initiative encouraging responsible and environmentally mindful salt usage on roads, sidewalks,

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and driveways. By passing the motion, the board agreed to advance public communication and coordination efforts, including working with partner organizations and promoting ongoing watershed district activities related to salt-use awareness and chloride water-quality monitoring.

The board then moved to the second item: a letter received from the City of Savage regarding Fen acquisition. The chair provided contextual background, explaining that the district had commissioned a report evaluating potential strategies for addressing issues affecting the fen, including but not limited to property acquisition. This report was still in draft form, had not been formally presented to the board, and was circulated only for feedback among technical staff. Because of this preliminary status, the City of Savage's strong response which was included in the board packet due to its intergovernmental nature was understandable.

Staff added that several concerns raised in the city's letter aligned with concerns held by district staff as well. While some timing and communication misalignments occurred, the issues identified by the city were considered valid. Staff noted that multiple ongoing efforts related to the fen were not fully captured in the draft report. These included recent discussions on restoration strategies, invasive species management, and a complex emerging enforcement issue involving federal, state, county, and local entities related to property encroachment. Staff emphasized that the fen is a regional resource and that successful management requires collaboration across jurisdictions. They also clarified that the draft report did not propose district-wide acquisition of the entire fen, which would not be feasible or financially practical. Staff added that technical reviews were still underway, and that while the city's letter did not delay the process, it also did not accelerate it. The goal is to finalize the report so that it becomes actionable for the board.

**Action:** Approve district support and promotion of Winter Salt Week initiatives as recommended by staff.

**First:** Viswanathan

**Second:** Bakkum

**Decision:** Motion Carried.

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### 3. CONSENT AGENDA

The board proceeded to consider the Consent Agenda, which consisted of eight items.

- Review and approve past Board Meeting Minutes
- Receive Committee Draft Minutes
- Designation of 2026 Official Newspaper
- Designate Depositories for LMRWD Funds
- Authorize and Schedule Monitoring Reports
- Authorize RFP Cycle
- Authorize WMP Legal and Technical Pathways
- Approve Accounts Payable

The chair noted that all items had followed the district’s established review procedures, having been vetted either through the Finance Committee or the Personnel Committee prior to being brought before the board. With those steps confirmed, the chair requested a motion to formally place the Consent Agenda on the floor for consideration.

<b>Action:</b> Approve the Consent Agenda.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Bak.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Y	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

### 4. ACTION ITEMS

The Board proceeded to review the receivable components of the 2023 audit and the associated staff recommendations. The Finance Committee Chair introduced the item, noting that four distinct audit-related components were under consideration and that the Committee had previously reviewed these materials. The first of these components was the 2023 Governance Letter, which outlines audit findings, governance practices, and recommended

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improvements. Discussion emphasized the importance of aligning audit review processes with the district’s developing zero-based budgeting framework, ensuring that future financial decisions are rooted in transparency, necessity, and mission alignment.

During broader discussion, members reflected on how the audit and related financial decisions integrate with long-term strategic thinking, including the district’s role in fostering community engagement and supporting innovative educational and ecological initiatives. Additional discussion involved the communications team’s capacity to support outreach tied to the initiative. Staff indicated that while the team is operating leanly, it can still support the project through social media, partner engagement, and promotional modeling as needed.

<b>Action:</b> Receive 2023 Audit and Authorize the Staff Recommendations and approve the staff recommendations developed in response to the 2023 audit and governance letter.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Bak.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Y	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

<b>Action:</b> Receive the CBB budget and post it for public notice and hearing at the next board meeting.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Y	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

<b>Action:</b> Approve the resolution required to appropriate Department of Natural Resources (DNR) funds specifically for the Area 3 riverbank stabilization project, fulfilling the legal requirement for authorization.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Bak.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Y	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

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<b>Action:</b> Approve the resolution for the Shakopee Water Resources Restoration Fund (WRRF) project, formally adopting the funding commitment previously approved.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>Bak.</b>	Y	<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Y	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

<b>Action:</b> Approve the Savage Fund fundraising authorization, allowing the administrator to spend up to \$1,000 to pre-purchase the Savage Fen restoration puzzle for outreach, fundraising, and educational purposes.									
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>							
<b>McN.</b>	Y	<b>Kup.</b>	Y	<b>Bak.</b>	Y	<b>Bar.</b>	Abstain	<b>Vis.</b>	Y
Motion Carried									

## 5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

The Board began with the Administrator’s general report. It was noted that several standing report areas such as channel maintenance, permitting, and financial items had been consolidated into a single document, with bookmarks added to allow board members to navigate directly to specific sections (e.g., channel maintenance updates). This formatting adjustment was intended to make recurring report elements easier to access while maintaining continuity across meetings.

They highlighted that progress had begun on the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) legal and technical pathways, including early drafting work and a planned meeting to continue development. Staff also received new information from the permitting team regarding projects that proved more complex than initially understood, particularly those involving layered or unclear ownership structures. In response, staff were examining updates to internal cost-recovery policies, which will be presented in draft form to the Finance Committee next month. Lytle emphasized that these policy updates would address both immediate needs and longer-term structural improvements.

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The Board reviewed the components tied to the Administrator’s report, which included the Treasurer’s Report, permitting and project review updates, progress on the Area 3 Riverbank Stabilization Project, and updates on dredging and channel maintenance. Committee reports, along with strategic planning updates, were also included. A request was made to have the next meeting include a more comprehensive overview of legislative and regulatory matters, indicating this would assist in board-level planning and oversight.

The Board then reviewed upcoming calendar events. The next meeting will be held on February 18, beginning with the annual Open Meeting Law Training. This training is required for new board members, and several current members indicated they would attend as a refresher. Lytle committed to locating an alternative session and providing a recording with closed captioning to ensure compliance.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM CST.