



**Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting  
 MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 16, 2024**

Located at: Sauk River Watershed District Office, Sauk Centre, MN at 6:00 p.m.

<b>Managers Present:</b>	Bill Becker, Paul Hartmann, Scott Klatt, David Zerr, Scott Wittkop, Eugene Mensen, Kevin Lahr, Donavon McKigney, Russell Miller
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; Hannah Schacherl, Legal Counsel; Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager
<b>Guests Present:</b>	Jerry Rapp, Randy Neumann, Paul Wildman, Bob Floerke, Jay Knebel, Larry Beebus, Don Lieser, Roger Uhlenkamp
<b>Manager’s Absent:</b>	

**Public Comments -**

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** – The meeting was called to order by President Becker at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **Additions/corrections to the agenda** – President Becker asked for corrections or additions to the agenda. Discussion and Action was added for the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Phase 5 project hearing. **Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the agenda as modified. The motion was seconded by Manager Hartmann. The motion passed with all in favor.**
3. **Consent Agenda**
  - a. Financial Reports/Meeting Minutes
    1. Checks for June
    2. Receipt Book
    3. Revenue Guideline
    4. Cash Balances
    5. Expenditure Report
    6. June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
    7. Permit Summary Table

**Manager Miller made a motion to approve the consent agenda with a correction to the minutes stating that Commissioner Steve Notch was present at the meeting. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor.**
4. **Board Reorganization – Officers, Committee Assignments** – **Manager Hartmann made a motion to keep the board officers in the same positions for the next year. President Bill Becker, Vice-President Dave Zerr, Secretary Scott Klatt, Treasurer Kevin Lahr. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with majority in favor, Manager Lahr opposed.** President Becker asked if any board members wanted to change the committees they were a part of. There were no requests, so President Becker appointed the committee membership as they were the past year.
5. **Reports – Action Items, Reports and Project Updates** – *Administrator Roeschlein and staff*

a. Administration

- i. Administrator Report – Administrator Roeschlein informed the board that there were no applicants for the Ditch & Permit Manager by the deadline. The position was reposted and is open until July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. He also reported that he has continued to coordinate the permit and drainage activities even with the assistance of Houston Engineering it takes time to keep all things working especially with the current high-water issues and the high volume of permit applications. He reminded the board that budgets for these two departments will be exceeded until we fill the position. The next KASM radio visit will be July 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. with Steve Zeece III and Abi Parker participating.
- ii. Outreach/Education Department Update – The Outreach and Education Department update was presented to the board in writing. There were no questions.
- iii. Monitoring Department Update – The monitoring department report was presented in writing. There were no questions.
- iv. Water Resources Manager Update- Steve Zeece III, the Water Resources Manager, presented his report. He highlighted the requirement for a public hearing for the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Sauk River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration, Phase 5 project. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to set the public hearing for the Sauk River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 5 for August 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. or thereafter as the agenda allows. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

b. Projects

- i. Little Birch Lake Outlet – Reconvene Public Hearing – President Becker recessed the regular meeting at 6:17 p.m. and reconvened the public hearing for the Little Birch Lake Outlet Modification.
  1. Review and adoption of Final Order - Legal Counsel Hannah Schacherl reviewed the order for the board. **Manager Zerr made a motion to adopt the Final Order for the Little Birch Lake Outlet Modification Project. The motion was seconded by Manager Wittkop. The motion passed with majority in favor, Manager Klatt abstaining.**
  2. Close public hearing. Reconvene regular meeting. - **Manager McKigney made a motion to close the public hearing for the Little Birch Lake Outlet Modification Project. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.** President Becker reopened the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- ii. Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project Petition – Administrator Roeschlein reported that the Engineer’s oath and bond are in the process of being signed and returned. Next steps in the process will include sending out a survey crew and wetland delineation team to begin the detailed survey work in the field. District staff are organizing a mailing list of the landowners along the alignment for the proposed outlet and will open a line of communication with them to keep them informed of the processes to come. The District has set up an email service for this and has encouraged landowners to subscribe. Roeschlein reported that he reached out to the State of Minnesota to discuss obtaining a grant agreement

for the \$1.4 million appropriation for this project. After having a discussion with the State of Minnesota, it was determined that it would be better to wait until the district is further in the process and are pretty confident the project will be constructed.

iii. JD 2 Sediment Pond Inspection Report – The board was presented with the latest JD 2 sediment pond inspection report.

c. Committees

i. Water Quality/Projects – Managers Becker, Hartmann, and McKigney – No report

ii. Rules – Managers Klatt, Lahr, Mensen - Meeting will be scheduled in the near future to discuss the stormwater rule and the regulatory review process being taken by the Comprehensive Water Management Plan Collaborative.

iii. Public Relations/Education – Managers Wittkop, Zerr, Miller

iv. Budget Committee – Executive Board

v. Personnel Committee – Executive Board

6. **Items for Upcoming Meetings or of Interest**

a. MN Watersheds Newsletter (Separate Cover)

b. August 20, 2024 SRWD Budget Hearing

7. **Upcoming Meetings to be Announced**

a. Regular Board Meetings

1. Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

2. Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Regular Board Meeting, location to be determined

b. Other Meetings

i. SRWD Board Tour - TBD

8. **Manager Wittkop made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 6:50 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

**Regular Drainage Authority Meeting**  
**MINUTES**

1. **The Drainage Authority meeting was called to order by President Becker at 6:50 p.m.**

2. **Additions/corrections to the agenda item** – President Becker asked if there were changes or additions to the agenda. There were none. **Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Manager Wittkop. The motion passed with all in favor.**

3. **Drainage Specific Public Comment Period** – Jay Knebel, Knebel Family Farms, was present and questioned what the plan was for work on Zion/Munson ditch.

4. **Reports**

- a. Ditch & Permit Manager Status Update – Administrator Roeschlein informed the board that there were no applicants for the Ditch & Permit Manager by the deadline. The position was reposted and is open until July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. As of the writing of the report, there have been 5 applicants by students and by the night of the meeting, there were 9 applications. He also reported that there may be a couple of other individuals locally that may have interest.
- b. Ditch & Permit Manager – The Ditch & Permit Manager report was presented. There were no further questions.
- c. Ditch System Vegetation Issues – Roeschlein reported that drone inspections of the public drainage systems were conducted and several problems are being found with vegetation choking channels and bank sloughing causing capacity and flow issues. Staff are of the opinion that drought conditions over the past couple of years has caused significant vegetation growth in the channel bottoms which is obstructing the flow of water. Roeschlein requested authorization from the Drainage Authority to proceed with work to remove vegetation in areas of the ditch systems that significant blockages are occurring. He noted that the costs associated with doing this may exceed the drainage policy limits, therefore, he was seeking 2 authorizations. First authorization was ratification of the action taken on CD 6 and Stearns/Pope JD 1 to remove vegetation and the second authorization was to proceed with work on the other 11 systems as necessary under the District’s authority where issues are being found. **Manager Lahr made a motion to authorize Administrator Roeschlein to proceed with vegetation removal in necessary areas. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with all in favor. Manager Lahr made a motion to ratify authorization to clear vegetation and obstructions from Pope CD 6 and Stearns/Pope JD 1. The motion was seconded by Manager Mensen. The motion passed with all in favor. Manager McKigney abstained.** Don Lieser, CD 9 landowner, asked to speak to the board. Mr. Lieser has concerns with CD 9 as vegetation has severely limited flows in the system. Roeschlein also reported that noxious weeds are being sprayed by Kanati Land Management.
- d. Pope CD 6/JD 1 Issues – Roeschlein noted that Pope CD 6 repair did not include the work from CSAH 33 on the north end to 150<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 7100 linear feet. It was noted in the repair plans that this portion of the ditch system was out of repair with significant sediment deposition during the recent runoff events where flows were severely hampered in CD 6 and JD 1. This repair stretch was noted to have not been completed based on landowner response to the repair process. Roeschlein requested that the drainage authority repair this stretch to legal grade. **Manager Lahr made a motion to authorize Administrator Roeschlein to hire a contractor by the hour to repair this stretch of CD 6 from 150<sup>th</sup> Street to the north CSAH 33 crossing and to keep engineering costs to a minimum, do whatever staking is necessary to complete the repair. The motion was seconded by Manager Hartmann. The motion passed with majority in favor, Manager McKigney abstaining.** Administrator Roeschlein reported his concerns over the irrigator bridge crossings on the lower portion of Pope CD 6, potentially serving as an obstruction to the channel as they are set within the banks of the channel and not necessarily on the top of the channel. There is evidence on the irrigator bridges where flows were high enough that debris was caught on those bridge crossings significantly reducing capacity in the ditch system. It was suggested by the drainage authority that the district meet with the landowners involved and discuss the

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potential to raise those crossings to the top of the ditch banks. Roeschlein suggested that staff invite these landowners in to the August board meeting for that discussion. By consent of the board, Roeschlein was instructed to do that.

**5. Items for Upcoming Meetings –**

**6. Upcoming meetings to be announced**

a. Regular Drainage Meetings

- i. Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – SRWD Office
- ii. Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - TBD

**7. Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting – Manager Wittkop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with all in favor.**