



**Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting
 MINUTES**

Tuesday, August 19th, 2025

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

Managers Present:	Bill Becker, Scott Klatt, David Zerr, Eugene Mensen, Kevin Lahr, Paul Hartmann, Donavon McKigney, Russell Miller
Staff Present:	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; Hannah Schacherl Jansen, Legal Counsel; Scott Wittkop, Ditch and Permit Manager, Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager; Garrett Monson, District Engineer.
Guests Present:	Randy Neumann, Jerry Rapp, Robert Floerke, Paul Wildman, Jacque & Dennis Heinen, Carolyn Ploof, Rick Theisen, Megan Jacob
Manager’s Absent:	Mike Proell

Public Comments – None

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. **Manager Lahr made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. 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 July
 2. Receipt Book
 3. Revenue Guideline
 4. Cash Balances
 5. Expenditure Report
 6. July 15th, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the consent agenda with minor corrections to the minutes. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.
4. **Reports – Action Items, Reports and Project Updates** – *Administrator Roeschlein and staff*
 - a. Administration
 - i. Administrator Report – Administrator Roeschlein went through his monthly Administrator’s Report. He noted that the next radio visit is August 28th and added a couple more items to his report. The contract for the office copy machine is up in October. He has circulated requests for proposals to several office machine companies and has advertised it on the website. He also noted that the district has had a data request for information related to Permit #21-017 for the Leyk shoreline project. The request came from legal counsel for the permittee.

1. HR Consultant Contract – The board reviewed a memo in their packet and copy of the contract being proposed. After discussion, **Manager Lahr made a motion to enter into the contract with David Drown, Assoc and Partners for salary schedule annual maintenance as presented. The motion was seconded by Manager Hartmann. The motion passed with all in favor.**
2. Seasonal Technician Position Report – Roeschlein gave a report on the seasonal technician position. The seasonal technician, Brenna Moen, completed her last day with the district on August 12th, 2025. An exit interview was conducted at the end of her time with the district. She conducted 159 inspections and closed out 133 permits that were outstanding since 2018. She assisted with education events, monitoring work and also conducted JD 2 Sediment Pond inspections, ditch spraying, ditch inspections, surveying and staking in the Getchell project, and was a spotter for drone flights. The district also utilized her GIS skills to further improve our GIS program and database. She was able to generate several wall maps which are on display in the district office. In summary, the position proved to be very useful and productive for the Sauk River Watershed District. This was Brenna’s summer internship. The district budgeted for 6 months’ worth of work and utilized three. Staff will be reviewing workload needs for 2026 and presenting those reports to the personnel committee and budget committee in November. Manager Mensen asked if the district is caught up on permit inspections. The response was the district is never caught up with permit inspections but many of the older outstanding permits are now closed. Staff will be reviewing workload to determine if a seasonal technician can be justified in 2026. Manager McKigney asked for an update on the amount of BMP projects the district still has under contract. Roeschlein noted that several have reached the end of their contract and have been released but he will work on getting a report for the board at the next meeting.
 - ii. Monitoring Department Updates – There were some questions from the board about how heavy runoff and warm temperatures are conducive to high nutrients inputs and productivity in waterways. Roeschlein indicated with it being such a wet year, there’s significant runoff happening and sediment and phosphorus loads are higher than normal. There was some discussion on the delisting of Unnamed Creek from the impaired waters list.
 - iii. Education & Pubic Outreach Department Updates –Education and Outreach Coordinator’s report was reviewed. Roeschlein indicated that the coordinator noted the fair booths were a success. The Stearns County Fair had over 600 people stop by and visit with staff. They also participated in some education events for school districts that are on the outer edge of the watershed district sharing the message with another 406 students through the summer.
 - iv. Water Resources Manager Update- Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager, provided his monthly Water Resources report. Zeece highlighted some of the points in his report and fielded any questions that were asked. There were some questions about the Julig livestock exclusion project up near the Sediment

Ponds along JD 2. It appears that project is moving forward and fencing will be in place within a couple of weeks.

- v. Permit Manager Report – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, presented his report. He noted a couple of culvert washouts with the extreme weather events that have been happening this summer. Emergency permits for repairs for those crossings have been issued. One of them was over CD 15 and that crossing calls for a 72” pipe. The township indicated it would be 3 weeks before a 72” pipe could be delivered but they intend to repair it with a 72” pipe.

- 1. Permit Summary Table

- vi. Environmental Technician Report – Allison Schugel, the Environmental Technician, provided a written report. There were no further questions from the board.
- vii. President Becker called the budget hearing to order at 6:26 p.m. Roeschlein gave an introduction to the budget hearing indicating that the preliminary budget levy is set at \$1,322,995. The general administration budget is \$162,568.96 below the statutory limit currently. Upon approval, this preliminary levy will be certified to the counties to meet the Truth in Taxation requirements. President Becker opened up the discussion for public comment. Todd County Commissioner Randy Neumann asked where in the budget spreadsheet it showed the amount each county would have to pay. Roeschlein indicated that it was on page 1 of the large spreadsheet. Pope County Commissioner Paul Wildman noted that in 2024, the Pope County levy was at a certain level and the 2025 levy was less than that and in 2026, it’s proposed to be higher. He asked for an explanation. Roeschlein explained that in 2024, the board did not utilize any reserve funds to reduce the levy amount. In 2025, the board did supplement some reserve funds to reduce the levy and in this preliminary levy, there are no reserve funds scheduled to be used for levy reduction. **Manager Miller made a motion to close the public comment portion of the hearing. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor. Manager Lahr made a motion to authorize Administrator Roeschlein to certify the 2026 preliminary budget levy to the counties as required. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

- b. Projects

- i. Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project Updates – Roeschlein presented an update on the Long (Higgins) Lake Project. He reported that soil borings were completed on August 1st in the gravel pit that is being investigated for a potential infiltration site. The gravel pit could potentially be used to infiltrate water from Long (Higgins) Lake. The soil boring report is due to the engineer by August 19th and once staff gets a summary of that, it will be reported to the board. The engineer has completed the topographic survey of the gravel pit area and the drafting of the results of that survey are underway. This is being done to determine the volume of water that could be placed there. Roeschlein also reiterated that the district is taking this one step at a time and won’t go through extensive engineering report development until staff are aware of the results of the geotechnical survey and topographic survey to see if it is even feasible to

utilize this gravel pit for water drawdown of Long (Higgins) Lake. Several landowners along the lake were in attendance at the meeting with one indicating their concern about how long the project is taking, although, they understand it takes time to do this, they've had to come up with additional funds to cover their loan for the cash surety that they posted.

- ii. JD 2 Sed Ponds – Roeschlein noted that the elevation numbers of the primary pond and the secondary pond were incorrect and those should be ignored. They will be adjusted and staff will provide more accurate information next time. He assumed there was a fluke in the survey or it was just typographical errors.

c. Committees

- i. Water Quality/Projects – Managers Becker, Hartmann, and McKigney
- ii. Rules – Managers Klatt, Lahr, Mensen –
- iii. Public Relations/Education – Managers Zerr, Miller, Proell –
- iv. Budget Committee – Executive Board –
- v. Personnel Committee – Executive Board

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

- a. September 16th, 2025 – Board workshop; City of Freeport Wastewater Treatment and municipal Water system. Getchell Creek Proposed Project Sites.

6. **Upcoming Meetings to be Announced**

a. Regular Board Meetings

1. Tuesday, September 16th, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, Freeport Senior Center
2. Tuesday, October 21st, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

b. Other Meetings

7. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 6:49 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. 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 Miller. The motion passed with all in favor.**
3. **Drainage Specific Public Comment Period** – Todd County Commissioner Randy Neumann had a question on the preliminary budget indicating that there were no budget amounts for legal or

engineering fees under the drainage department. Administrator Roeschlein indicated that there are typically no budget amounts under that line item in the drainage department because the engineers and legal counsel bill directly to the ditch systems so it does not affect the regular administrative levy. Some discussion ensued and Roeschlein said he would look into it to see how numbers could be put in. Commissioner Neumann's concern was that the district was using administrative funds to cover legal and engineering fees in the drainage department. Roeschlein assured him that was not the case but will look into how it can be shown better on the budget spreadsheet.

4. Reports

- a. Ditch & Permit Manager – Scott Wittkop, the Ditch Manager, provided his monthly report. He noted that water was coming over the Krantz Lake weir pretty significantly and he was unable to cross that area to do spraying. He later found that the reason for so much water was a beaver dam in branch 1 of Pope County ditch 6 to the north causing water to back out of the ditch and into the Krantz Lake area. The beaver dam is scheduled to be removed as soon as possible.
- b. Buffer Violation-CD 9 Albert Yarke – Roeschlein informed the board that Albert Yarke was served with papers from the order that was developed at the last board meeting in July. Mr. Yarke has 60 days to appeal the order. Legal counsel, Hannah Schacherl Jansen recommended that the board consider a closed session for discussion on this at the October meeting.

5. Items for Upcoming Meetings or Information of Interest –

6. Upcoming meetings to be announced

- a. Regular Drainage Meetings
 - i. Tuesday, September 16th, 2025 – Freeport Senior Center – 312 2nd Ave. SW, Freeport MN 56331-9007
 - ii. Tuesday, October 21st, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

7. Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting – Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Mensen. The motion passed with all in favor.