

Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Tuesday, December 16th, 2025

Located at: Sauk River Watershed District Office, Sauk Centre, MN at 5:00 p.m.

Managers Present:	Bill Becker, Scott Klatt, David Zerr, Kevin Lahr, Paul Hartmann, Donavon McKigney, Eugene Mensen, Jon Folkedahl
Staff Present:	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; John Kolb, Legal Counsel; Scott Wittkop, Ditch and Permit Manager, Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager; Garrett Monson, District Engineer; Abi Borgerding, Environmental Monitoring Manager
Guests Present:	Randy Neumann, Paul Wildman, Dennis Heinen, Jerry Rapp, Bob Floerke, Kaden Pfingsten, Hal Undersander, Jerry Zabinski, Matt Symalla, Kory Klebe, Allison Schugel
Manager's Absent:	Russell Miller

Public Comments – None

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** – The meeting was called to order by President Becker at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **Additions/corrections to the agenda** – President Becker asked for corrections or additions to the agenda. Administrator Roeschlein added responses to Manager Lahr's list of questions. **Manager Klatt made a motion to approve the agenda with additions. 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 November
 2. Receipt Book
 3. Revenue Guideline
 4. Cash Balances
 5. Expenditure Report

Administrator Roeschlein mentioned that the minutes from the November meeting were not included in the consent agenda as they were not ready for review and approval due to a family emergency. **Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. 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 presented his written report. There were no questions from the board. Managers that attended the Minnesota Watersheds Conference gave a brief report. Both Managers Mensen and Folkedahl said that the workshops they attended were very informative and helpful.

1. CY 2026 Wages Approval – Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the staff compensation rates for 2026. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor.
2. Final CY 2026 Budget Approval – The Budget Committee recommends the budget for calendar year 2026 to be set at \$1,292,318.67. Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the budget to be set at \$1,292,318.67. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor. The budget committee recommended to allocate \$292,318.67 of reserves to the budget and set the 2026 levy at \$1 million dollars even, thus having a zero percent increase for calendar year 2026. Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the calendar year 2026 levy at \$1,000,000. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor.
3. Minnesota Paid Family Medical Leave Employee (Board) Notices – Administrator Roeschlein noted that the Minnesota Paid Family Leave Employee Notices were distributed to the board members. Each board member needs to sign the notice and return it to staff before they leave. Roeschlein noted that he would scan and email everyone a copy of their notice for their file.

- ii. Monitoring Department Updates – Abi Borgerding, the Environmental Monitoring Manager, gave her Monitoring Department Update. There were minimal questions.
- iii. Education & Public Outreach Department Updates – The Education and Outreach Department written report was reviewed. There were no questions.
- iv. Water Resources Manager Update- Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager, gave his monthly Water Resources report. There were no further questions.
 1. Sauk River CWMP FY24 Workplan Revision – Resolution – Zeece explained that each collaborative member had to approve this workplan revision as recommended by the Collaborative Policy Committee. Roeschlein explained that policy committee has representation from this board on it as well. Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve workplan #4 Amendment for FY 24. The motion was seconded by President Becker. The motion passed with all in favor.
- v. Permit Manager Report – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, presented his monthly report. There were no questions.
 1. Permit Summary Table was presented.
- vi. Environmental Technician Report – Allison Schugel, the Environmental Technician, provided a written report. There were no further questions.

b. Projects

- i. Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project Updates – Administrator Roeschlein presented the Long (Higgins) Lake Project update. A meeting between the hydrogeologist has not been completed yet to discuss the infiltration calculations that were developed. In corresponding with the Minnesota DNR Area Hydrologist Mark Anderson, staff have learned that the DNR won't be putting in any in-depth preliminary review into the model information. They

have indicated that the review will take place when the district submits the application for the actual permit. Because of this response, Roeschlein directed the engineer to proceed with developing the construction plans and Engineers Report for the project. He also stated that staff is planning on spending time with legal counsel to assist in drafting language to Representative Wiener to introduce and amend the current language for the project from the State of Minnesota. It is intended to allow for some flexibility on where the infested waters are discharged from Long (Higgins) Lake, whether it's discharged into Sauk Lake or to an infiltration basin. After the initial drafting of this report, Mark Anderson provided more detailed feedback about the concept. He indicated that his people mentioned concerns about water quality and how this infiltration concept might affect wells in the vicinity of the infiltration basin. Abigail Borgerding, Environmental Monitoring Manager, was brought into the discussion. With the consultant, staff are making a plan to address his concerns.

ii. JD 2 Sed Ponds – No report.

c. Committees

- i. Water Quality/Projects – Managers Becker, McKigney, and Folkedahl– Folkedahl appointed to this committee.
- ii. Rules – Managers Klatt, Lahr, Mensen –
- iii. Public Relations/Education – Managers Zerr, Miller, Hartmann
 1. Appoint new member. Hartmann shifted to this committee.
- iv. Budget Committee – Executive Board – met December 9, 2025
- v. Personnel Committee – Executive Board –

5. Items for Upcoming Meetings or of Interest

- a. January 20th, 2026 – Board Workshop (3 of 3) Rules Revision

6. Upcoming Meetings to be Announced

- a. Regular Board Meetings
 1. Tuesday, January 20th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
 2. Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
- b. Other Meetings

7. Manager Lahr made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 6:03 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Klatt. 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 6:03 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 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. Drainage Specific Public Comment Period – None

4. Reports

- a. Ditch & Permit Manager – Scott Wittkop, the Ditch Manager, provided his monthly report. He had a brief discussion about branch 2 of Stearns County ditch #15, in the upper portion. There has been some confusion on where the true beginning of branch 2 is. District staff have now researched some of the original documents from the 1905 legal establishment and then met with the current landowner and his 87-year-old father. Site inspection revealed that the approximately 400 feet of original channel is still visible and prominent but it appears to be in disrepair due to many decades of pastured cattle passing through the channel. District staff plan to address this issue at a future date.
- b. CD 17 Tree Removal – Wittkop gave an update on Stearns County ditch #17 work. The period is open for having quotes provided by contractors to do tree removal. There was some discussion about whether the intention of the drainage authority was to clear both sides of the channel or just 20 feet on one side and the channel itself to allow for a survey to be completed. Wittkop felt that it was important to consider clearing the whole works if it was eventually going to be done anyway as the price may be better. Wittkop has requested the contractors to put an additional quote in for clearing the remainder of the area on the other side of the ditch, at least to the width of the buffer. After discussion, the board wished to review the quotes from the contractors at the January meeting and further their discussion to assist in making a decision.
- c. Legal Counsel Hourly Rates for 2026 – **President Becker made a motion to approve the 2026 hourly rates for Rinke Noonan. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

5. Items for Upcoming Meetings or Information of Interest –

6. Upcoming meetings to be announced

- a. Regular Drainage Meetings
 - i. Tuesday, January 20, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
 - ii. Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

7. Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting – Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor.