

**Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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

<b>Managers Present:</b>	Bill Becker, Scott Klatt, David Zerr, Kevin Lahr, Paul Hartmann, Donavon McKigney, Russell Miller, Eugene Mensen
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; John Kolb, Legal Counsel; Scott Wittkop, Ditch and Permit Manager, Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager; Garrett Monson, District Engineer.
<b>Guests Present:</b>	Randy Neumann, Paul Wildman, Dennis Heinen, Megan Jacob, Jerry Rapp
<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. **Manager and staff introductions, Oath of Office**-Jon Folkedahl, Stearns County – President Becker called for introductions of board and staff to the new Stearns County board member, Jon Folkedahl. Folkedahl gave a brief introduction of his background and read and signed the Oath of Office.
3. **Additions/corrections to the agenda** – President Becker asked for corrections or additions to the agenda. There were 2 additions to the agenda. They were the personnel policy update and discussion about the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) Petition to the MPCA denial. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the agenda with additions. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**
4. **Consent Agenda**
  - a. Financial Reports/Meeting Minutes
    1. Checks for October
    2. Receipt Book
    3. Revenue Guideline
    4. Cash Balances
    5. Expenditure Report
    6. October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

**Manager McKigney made a motion to approve the consent agenda with one correction to the minutes. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with all in favor.**
5. **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.

1. 2023 Audit Report—Michael Peterson, Auditor, presented the 2023 Annual Audit Report. After review, questions, and answers, **Manager Miller made a motion to approve the 2023 Audit Report. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**
2. Personnel Policy Update – Administrator Roeschlein presented the Personnel Policy update to the board. He noted that in the policy, the corrections or additions that were highlighted are those that are required to keep the Watershed District in compliance with the Minnesota Paid Family Leave program. It reflects the items that the board approved at the last board meeting in regard to intermittent use and supplementing sick and vacation leave and short term disability to their Minnesota Paid Family Leave fees among other items. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the Personnel Policy updates. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.**
- ii. Monitoring Department Updates – The Monitoring Department Update was reviewed. There were no questions.
- iii. Education & Public Outreach Department Updates – The Education and Outreach Department report was reviewed. There were no questions.
- iv. Water Resources Manager Update- Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager, presented his monthly Water Resources report. There were no questions.
- v. Permit Manager Report – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, presented his monthly report and updated the board that there were several beavers that were trapped since the writing of the report. There were no questions.
  1. Permit Summary Table was presented.
- vi. Environmental Technician Report – Allison Schugel, the Environmental Technician, provided a written report. Roeschlein noted that the Technician provided the table of the outstanding BMP contracts as requested.
- vii. MPCA Denial MCEA Petition – The MPCA’s response to a petition from the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy was provided in the correspondence packet for the board. It essentially states that the petition was denied because the MPCA does not have authority to do what was asked.

b. Projects

- i. Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project Updates – Administrator Roeschlein reported on the Long (Higgins) Lake Project. In summary, the survey has been completed along the alignment of the proposed outlet pipe from Long (Higgins) Lake. The landowner granted permission for them to survey across his property. It is currently being drafted. The meeting between the Widseth hydrogeologist and the Minnesota DNR counterpart has not taken place yet. The district continues to try to get this scheduled and get the infiltration modeling results reviewed for concurrence. It was also noted that there has been discussion with State Representative Mike Wiener regarding the potential language amendment in the funding appropriation statute. Megan Jacob, spokesperson for the Long (Higgins) Lake landowners, was also present and said that they would be happy to help coordinate and participate in that discussion

with Representative Wiener. Roeschlein thanked the Long (Higgins) Lake landowners for their assistance with this effort.

- ii. JD 2 Sed Ponds – Staff presented the monthly inspection report for the JD 2 sediment ponds. There were no further questions on that.
- iii. Krantz Lake 2025 Annual Inspection Report – Staff presented the annual Krantz Lake inspection report and noted that the weir appears to have raised about 0.2'. Staff indicated that they would verify that with another survey next spring and report back. Roeschlein noted that when the district took over this project, the weir elevation was higher than what it was when it was initially installed. After completion of the JD 1 and CD 6 repairs, a contractor was hired to reset the weir at the appropriate elevation and it was completed. If the weir is rising periodically, it seems that this is not an uncommon phenomenon for this project. Staff will keep the board informed.

c. Committees

- i. Water Quality/Projects – Managers Becker, Hartmann, and McKigney –
- ii. Rules – Managers Klatt, Lahr, Mensen –
- iii. Public Relations/Education – Managers Zerr, Miller –
- iv. Budget Committee – Executive Board – to meet end of November/first part of December
- v. Personnel Committee – Executive Board –

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

- a. December 3-5, 2025 – MN Watersheds Annual Conference, Nisswa, MN
- b. Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Board Workshop, Rule Revision
- c. Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 SRWD Holiday Meal to follow Board Meeting

7. **Upcoming Meetings to be Announced**

- a. Regular Board Meetings
  - 1. Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
  - 2. Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
- b. Other Meetings

8. **Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 6:55 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 6:55 p.m.**
- 2. **Additions/corrections to the agenda item** – President Becker asked if there were changes or additions to the agenda. One addition item was added to discuss buffer enforcement. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the agenda as modified. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. 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 and a private crossing memo on CD 15. There were no further questions.
  - i. Wittkop Crossing – CD 15
- b. CD 19 – Engineer Garrett Monson explained that in reviewing the request for a private crossing, that there is no current or modern elevation data on the legal grade of the ditch. Monson gave the board several options of how they could proceed. Mainly, determining the legal grade at the site of the crossing and setting the pipe at the legal grade, which could potentially be significantly below the existing grade and therefore cause problems with maintenance moving forward until such time that the entire ditch is repaired. He noted that if the board was considering a repair, that they should authorize the reestablishment of the legal grade and modern survey datum, at which time staff could determine the location of where that pipe should be placed. The other option was to just place the pipe at the current grade with the expectation that sometime in the future, the pipe would need to be reset which would constitute an additional cost to the ditch system. After discussion, **Manager Klatt made a motion to authorize staff to survey the entire ditch system and determine its current condition and potential need for repair. Once that is complete and the report is finished, staff were directed to organize an informational meeting for the landowners to present that report for discussion. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.**
- c. Crooked Lake Project – Partial Abandonment JD #2, Legal Conflict of Interest (COI) Discussion – Attorney Kolb discussed the process of a partial abandonment of JD 2 with the board because they represent both the watershed district and both the Douglas and the Todd County drainage authorities. There is a potential for a conflict of interest. The conflict of interest issue can be addressed and spelled out with what kind of work Kolb would be able to provide. Kolb didn't anticipate it being a problem but he needs to talk to both clients about it. Discussion amongst the board indicated that they would have no issue with legal counsel Kolb providing services to draft the petition and assist staff in working through the legal process for this project. Attorney Kolb indicated that the district will not be able to clear this conflict of interest issue today. He has some legwork to do and will follow up with the board at a future meeting.
- d. Buffer Enforcement – Attorney Kolb had a discussion about buffer enforcement and informed the board that Mr. Yarke had been served with enforcement action notice approximately a week and a half ago and they are waiting to hear if he's going to respond to any of that. He explained the process going forward in regards to whether or not Mr. Yarke responds to this enforcement action and, if not, that the district would proceed with district court action.

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

**6. Upcoming meetings to be announced**

- a. Regular Drainage Meetings
  - i. Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office



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ii. Tuesday, January 20, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

7. **Closed Session – Administrator Performance Evaluation** – President Becker closed the meeting for the Administrator's performance evaluation. Upon completion of the performance evaluation, President Becker re-opened the meeting to the public to review that evaluation with Administrator Roeschlein.
8. **Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting** – Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Klatt. The motion passed with all in favor.