



**Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting
 MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 17th, 2026

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

Managers Present:	Bill Becker, Scott Klatt, Kevin Lahr, Paul Hartmann, Eugene Mensen, Jon Folkedahl, Donavon McKigney, David Zerr
Staff Present:	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager; John Kolb, Legal Counsel; Scott Wittkop, Ditch and Permit Manager; Garrett Monson, District Engineer; Allison Schugel, Environmental Technician.
Guests Present:	Randy Neumann, Paul Wildman, Jacque Heinen, Jerry Rapp, Bob Floerke, Hal Undersander, Jerry Zabinski
Manager’s Absent:	Russell Miller
Virtual Guests Present:	Michael Taylor

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. Discussion by Manager Lahr about the financial summary labeled as item number 2 under the consent agenda. **Manager Lahr 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. Monthly Financial Summary
 2. Fund Summary Report
 3. Checks for February
 4. Receipt Book
 5. Revenue Guideline
 6. Cash Balances
 7. Expenditure Report
 8. February 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

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. He reported the salary schedule update work is underway. The consultant is currently gathering wage information. Roeschlein reported that Noah Jensen from St. Cloud was hired as the seasonal technician for the 2026 field season. Noah’s first day full-time will be June 1st. In the meantime, he will be taking

some online training courses and possibly be working a day or two before the end of school for orientation in the office. Roeschlein informed the board that the SRWD office will be closed at 2:30 on Friday, April 3rd in observance of Good Friday. Manager expiration term letters have been sent out to Todd County for Manager Hartmann and Stearns County for managers Folkedahl and Miller.

1. Audio/Video Meeting Recordings-Retention Policy – Roeschlein presented a memo regarding the retention policy in connection with the audio and virtual meeting recordings. After discussion with legal counsel, it was recommended that the district adopt a policy on the retention of audio and video meeting recordings. There are several reasons to consider this. One being the size of the digital files as they can become very large. It was recommended that any audio, video or virtual recordings of Sauk River Watershed District or Sauk River Drainage Authority meetings be retained only until after the written minutes of said meetings has been approved by the board. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the policy stating that any audio, video and virtual recordings will be retained only until the written minutes of those meetings have been approved by the board. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. The motion passed with all in favor.**
- ii. Monitoring Department Report - The Monitoring Department written report was reviewed.
- iii. Education & Pubic Outreach Department Updates – The Education and Outreach Department written monthly report was reviewed. Manager Hartmann suggested that the Education and Public Outreach Coordinator consider publishing periodic news releases about the happenings in the Sauk River Watershed District to be circulated to all of the local newspapers.
- iv. Water Resources Manager Update- The Water Resources Department report was reviewed. Manager Lahr commended Steve Zeece III on a job well done on adding more summary information about each grant and what projects they are building.
 1. SRCWMP Minor Plan Amendment-Resolution- Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager, reported on the resolution to approve a minor amendment to the 10-Year Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Cold Spring Damn feasibility study. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve Resolution #02-2026 for a minor amendment to the Sauk River Watershed 10-year Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with majority in favor, one opposed.**
- v. Permit Manager Report – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, presented his monthly permitting report and permit summary table. Administrator Roeschlein reported that staff were recently approached by the City of Sauk Centre to inquire about the possibility that the Sauk River Watershed District would partner with the city to assist with assessing the condition of the industrial park stormwater pond located approximately a ¼ of a mile from the district office. This was an informational discussion only. Any further work that

would be done, which would include an agreement, will be brought back to the board for further discussion and approval.

1. Permit #25-062 – Stearns County Road #169 Exception Request.

Question a. Do special conditions apply to the applicant's property that do not apply generally to other property within the district? Yes, this is a linear project so the project has a limited right-of-way and the on-site soils are low-infiltrating. Constructing larger BMPs would require acquiring additional land that is either wetlands or high-production agricultural land. **Manager Hartman made a motion that special conditions do apply. The motion was seconded by President Becker. The motion passed with all in favor.** **Question b. Is there undue hardship to the applicant, as distinguished from mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the rules is carried out?** Yes, the applicant would need to acquire a significant amount of additional right-of-way. **Manager Hartman made a motion that there is undue hardship to the applicant. The motion was seconded by Manager Mensen. The motion passed with all in favor.** **Question c. Will the proposed activity for which the exception is sought not adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare; or not create extraordinary public expense; and will not adversely affect water quality, water control, or drainage in the district.** Yes, the project is not expected to have any adverse effects. It is in a rural township so requiring the purchase of additional right-of-way would be infeasible due to the extraordinary public expense and relatively low traffic. Furthermore, the proposed project is in a rural area and will be providing a greater amount of treatment than there is under existing conditions. **President Becker made a motion that the project is expected to have no adverse effects. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.** **Question d. Is the intent of the district's rules met?** Yes, the treatment is being maximized on site to the extent practicable: grassed filtration swales and native vegetation are to be used as BMPs to treat stormwater. **President Becker made a motion that the intent of the district's rules is met. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

All four exception standards have been met. Exception Granted.

2. Permit Summary Table was presented.
 - vi. Environmental Technician Report – The Environmental Technician written report was reviewed. There were no further questions.
 - vii. Engineer Report – Garrett Monson, District Engineer, reported that he participated in a couple of different committee meetings and with the JD 2 project team meeting that was held on Monday, March 16th. He noted that they were in the process of completing the efficacy review of the JD 2 sediment ponds and noted that some corrections had been made to survey information from last year and explained those corrections that brought the information into alignment with what they were seeing in this year's survey.

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- viii. Legal Counsel Report – John Kolb, Legal Counsel, reported to the board that there were some changes being made to the Wetland Conservation Act to bring it more into alignment with the NRCS Swampbuster program.
 - b. Projects
 - i. Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project Updates – Administrator Roeschlein reported on the Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet project. Water sampling was completed on February 23rd and the group is now waiting for the results to be returned from the lab. Once those results have been returned, staff will review with the engineer and he will proceed with project design and a preliminary report. Total expenditures on this project to date is \$63,048.
 - ii. JD 2 Sed Ponds – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, provided a monthly inspection report for the JD 2 sediment ponds. There were no questions or concerns.
 - c. Committees
 - i. Water Quality/Projects – Managers Becker, McKigney, and Folkedahl
 - ii. Rules – Managers Klatt, Lahr, Mensen
 - iii. Public Relations/Education – Managers Zerr, Miller, Hartmann
 - iv. Budget Committee – Executive Board
 - v. Personnel Committee – Executive Board
 - 5. **Items for Upcoming Meetings or of Interest**
 - a. MN Stormwater Seminar – MN Watersheds – March 19th 2026 (see correspondence packet for more information).
 - 6. **Upcoming Meetings to be Announced**
 - a. Regular Board Meetings
 - 1. Tuesday, April 21st, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
 - 2. Tuesday, May 19th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
 - b. Other Meetings
 - 7. **Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 7:06 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Lahr. 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 7:06 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 and noted that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has approached staff to install 2 private crossings in Pope County Ditch 11. It was noted that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to pay for all design and construction of these crossings and there would be no expense to the assessed landowners of the ditch system. Discussion ensued regarding what would happen if there would be a beaver dam that would plug that culvert or other future maintenance. Roeschlein noted that it was clear that future maintenance on the culvert would be US Fish and Wildlife Service, such as crossing failure. It was not clear about beaver dams plugging the culvert and who would pay for clearing that obstruction. When the final agreement is ready for approval, the board will be briefed on all of the details that are in it. Staff will work with legal counsel to put it together.
- b. CD #9 Buffer Violation – Attorney review and update on status – John Kolb, the district Attorney, reported that there hasn't been anything back in writing from Mr. Yarke's attorney in regard to whether or not he intends to reseed that buffer by June 1st.

5. Items for Upcoming Meetings or Information of Interest –

6. Upcoming meetings to be announced

- a. Regular Drainage Meetings
 - i. Tuesday, April 21st, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
 - ii. Tuesday, May 19th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

7. Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting – Manager Lahr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Klatt. The motion passed with all in favor.