SAUK RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS
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Sauk River Watershed District Regular Meeting
MINUTES
October 20, 2026
Located at: Sauk River Watershed District Office, Sauk Centre, MN at 6:00 p.m.

Position types	Names
Managers Present:	Bill Becker, Scott Klatt, David Zerr, Eugene Mensen, Jon Folkedahl, Russell Miller, Donavon McKigney, Paul Hartmann
Staff Present:	Jon Roeschlein, Administrator; Scott Wittkop, Ditch and Permit Manager; Garrett Monson, District Engineer, John Kolb, Legal Counsel, Allison Pfingsten, Environmental Technician
Guests Present:	Randy Neumann, Paul Wildman, Megan Jacob, Jerry Zabinski, Bob Floerke, Jerry Rapp, Steve Notch, Scott Johnson
Manager's Absent:	Kevin Lahr
Staff Absent:	Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager

Public Comments – Douglas County Commissioner Jerry Rapp and Todd County Commissioner Randy Neumann discussed the potential to do some monitoring on the JD 2 sediment ponds, namely, to get some turbidity tube readings. Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisor Ken Rutten has volunteered to go out and get those readings. Roeschlein noted that he would discuss this with the Environmental Monitoring Manager, Abi Borgerding, to see if there is anything staff can do to assist with equipment and training on how to do proper sampling and recording. It is likely that we'd be able to absorb some of this expense in the existing budget.

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 correction or additions to the agenda. Permit Manager Scott Wittkop asked to add item C. Special Conditions under the Permit Manager Report. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the agenda as modified. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

3. **2025 Audit Presentation – Brenda Nowak, Peterson Companies -** Brenda Nowak, through virtual connection, presented the 2025 audit. After review of the report, the board was asked if they had any questions. There were none. Brenda was thanked for her time.

4. **Treasurer Report –** Administrator Roeschlein reviewed the documents that were provided in the board packet. He indicated that the revenue section of the financial summary sheet is still somewhat under construction. He feels that there is a little more detail that will need to be provided in order to give a better picture of the revenue for the general fund. There were no further questions.
    a. Employee New Payroll Reporting-Policy Discussion- Roeschlein reviewed the memo he put together for net employee payroll reporting and indicated that Manager Lahr had asked about showing staff and manager net payroll amounts on the check summary

register. In preparation of the discussion, staff inquired with the accounting firm and legal counsel. Being this has been policy for many, many years with the Sauk River Watershed District, it is recommended that the board discuss this and provides policy direction on how to proceed. Roeschlein did note that the Expenditure Guideline Report that was omitted from the board packet earlier this year, due to the summary report being developed, could be put back in because it does identify gross payroll, the budget, and year-to-date and the month-to-date for the payroll and all expenses associated with that where financial oversight by the board would be appropriate. At this time, the board did not feel they wanted to include the net payroll check amounts in the check summary register and, upon Manager Lahr's return to a future meeting, this discussion can be picked back up and continued further. The board did, by consensus, direct Roeschlein to include the Expenditure Guideline report back in the board packet under the financial reports.

5. **September 15th, 2026 Minutes - Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the treasurer report and minutes of the September 15th, 2026 meeting. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with all in favor**

6. **Reports – Action Items, Reports and Project Updates** –
    a. Administration
        i. Administrator Report – Roeschlein noted in his administrators report that the Cold Spring Dam Feasibility Study had been initiated after holding a public information meeting on October 6th. The dam is aging and the group is determining if a rock arch rapids would be feasible to build in place of the fixed weir. Roeschlein also noted that
            1. Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) Manager Email Accounts – Roeschlein noted that for those managers who have set up their SRWD email accounts will be receiving all SWRD emails from him at those accounts. There are 5 board members that have not been able to get their accounts set up yet and they asked that Roeschlein have the district's IT consultant reach out to them individually and assist them in setting up their accounts.
            2. Salary Administration Policy – A copy of the amended policy, version 1.7 dated October 7th, 2026, was presented to the board for approval. A couple of changes that were directed by the committee are that the salary schedule will not be adjusted for 2027 as the pay ranges are currently within 4% of either side of the market. Also, quartiles were eliminated in an effort to simplify the evaluation process and reduce subjectivity. The merit increase rating process has been simplified. Roeschlein also reported that Dr. Melvin will be providing new draft evaluation forms to the Administrator for all positions for review and potential use this fall. The merit increase process is still currently based on a 5-point performance rating system. **Manager Zerr made a motion to approve the salary administration policy. The motion was seconded by President Becker. The motion passed with 6 in favor, 2 against.**

Manager Miller requested that Roeschlein provide a document that shows the changes that were made.

ii. Monitoring Department Updates – The Environmental Monitoring Department monthly report was reviewed. There were no questions.

iii. Education & Pubic Outreach Department Updates – The Education and Public Outreach Department monthly report was presented. There were no questions.

iv. Water Resources Manager Update- Steve Zeece III, Water Resources Manager, was not in attendance so Roeschlein presented his monthly general update. There were no questions.

v. Permit Manager Report – Scott Wittkop, Permit Manager, presented the Permit Department monthly report. There were no further questions.

1. Permit Summary Table – The Permit Summary Table was reviewed by the board. There were no questions.
2. Permit #26-018, Osakis Main Street Construction-Exception Request – Permit Manager Wittkop asked the 4 questions to grant an exception to the rules.
    a. Do special conditions apply to the applicant's property that do not apply generally to other property within the district? Staff answer – yes, the project is reconstructing a public linear project within developed city right-of-way. **President Becker called for a vote. There were 6 managers in favor, and 2 opposed.**
    b. Is there undue hardship to the applicant, as distinguished from mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the rules is carried out? Staff answer, yes there are limited options for right-of-way acquisition due to residential single-family homes adjacent to the project. On-site soils are clay which prevents the use of infiltrating BMP's. A substantial increase in construction to excavate and replace underlying clay soils might be contrary to the District's administrative rules. **President Becker called for a vote. There were 6 managers in favor, and 2 opposed.**
    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? Staff answer, yes, the project will improve public health, safety, and welfare by replacing or improving the existing public utilities (sanitary sewer, watermain, and storm sewer). The proposed consistent road width will improve safety and the ease with which the public moves through the project corridor. The project proposes a very minimal increase in impervious surface area, .08 acres; modeling confirms that this minimal increase does not increase runoff rates from existing to proposed conditions. **President Becker called for a vote. There were 6 managers in favor, and 2 opposed.**

d. **Is the intent of the district's rules met?** Staff answer, yes, the intent of the district's rules is being met because the project is being partially treated by a regional BMP, the King Street stormwater system. This BMP is in need of maintenance, but the city proposes to clean and maintain the stormwater pond over winter of 2026/27. The dredging and maintenance of the King Street Pond will be required within the SRWD's permit term of this project. **President Becker called for a vote. There were 6 managers in favor, and 2 opposed. By majority vote, the exception request has hereby been granted.**

3. Proposed special conditions for SRWD Permit #26-018 Osakis Main Street Construction –
   a. Revised Operation and Maintenance plan shall be developed. This plan is to include a maintenance schedule with specific metrics for determining when repair or sediment removal is necessary and a requirement for annual inspection including a condition report.
   b. If the revised Operation and Maintenance Plan indicates that the King Street Pond stormwater system is out of repair, it shall be repaired to it's as-built condition within 3 years of the issuance of the SRWD permit. Upon satisfactory completion of the Main Street reconstruction project AND the King Street stormwater pond repair, the SRWD will close out the permit.
   c. The City shall provide the SRWD staff ((320) 352-2231) with survey data following the cleanout of the King Street stormwater system's fore pond and main pond. **Manager McKigney made a motion to approve SRWD Permit #26-018 with the special conditions listed. The motion was seconded by Manager Klatt. The motion passed with 6 in favor, and 2 opposed.**

vi. Environmental Technicians Reports – the Environmental Technicians monthly reports were presented. There were no questions.

vii. Engineer Report – Garrett Monson, Engineer, reported that they are developing a task order for assisting with the Freeport Stormwater Management Plan and a task order for assisting with managing the rating curves at SRWD Monitoring sites as well as developing regression analysis.

viii. Legal Counsel Report – Attorney John Kolb reported that he is working to review the draft of the rules revisions and he'll be providing easement language for the Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet Project along with SCD #17 letters for the landowners in regard to abandonment of the system.

b. Projects
   i. Long(Higgins) Lake Outlet Project – Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, reported on the Long (Higgins) Lake Outlet project, primarily describing the work staff are doing with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in an attempt to get the permit processed and approved.

ii. JD #2 Sed Ponds- Inspection – The JD #2 sediment ponds inspection report was provided to the board.
    1. Bank erosion – Permit Manager Wittkop presented a report on the erosion problem on the south bank of the secondary pond and copies of estimates to repair approximately 100 feet of the pond bank. The JD 2 drainage authority is also considering doing about 100 feet downstream from the pond within the ditch system for erosion control issues as well. Staff plan to coordinate this work with the contractor so that it can be done at the same time. The estimate of the bank repair was $6,000. It is noted that the entire bank should be armored because wave action is eroding it. The 100 feet that has been selected is the most critical portion of that to be taken care of right now. The estimate to complete the entire south bank of the secondary pond was $71,150. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to authorize staff to proceed with the $6,000 100-foot bank repair on the south bank of the JD 2 sediment pond secondary basin. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with 6 in favor, and 2 opposed.**

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

7. Items for Upcoming Meetings or of Interest

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8. Upcoming Meetings to be Announced

a. Regular Board Meetings
    i. Tuesday, November 17th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
    ii. Tuesday, December 15th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
b. Other Meetings

9. Manager Hartmann made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 7:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager McKigney. The motion passed with all in favor.

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Regular Drainage Authority Meeting
MINUTES

1. **The Drainage Authority meeting was called to order by President Becker at 7:20 p.m.**

2. **Additions/corrections to the agenda item** – President Becker asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. **Manager McKigney made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with all in favor.**

3. **Drainage Specific Public Comment Period – None**

4. **Reports**
    a. Ditch & Permit Manager – Scott Wittkop, Ditch Manager, discussed his report briefly with the board. He pointed out the drone spraying that was completed, the allocation of herbicide, and the cost per drainage system for those systems and miles that were sprayed.
    b. CD #9 Buffer Violation-Attorney review and update on status – Legal Counsel, John Kolb, Rinke-Noonan, gave a brief verbal update on the CD #9 buffer violation. He indicated that he did get time in front of a judge and they have delayed further action on the violation until sometime in mid-November because it is foreseen that Mr. Yarke was able to get the buffer reestablished on his property. Wittkop will be in contact with Mr. Yarke as directed by Kolb to inspect the buffer and take a look at the seed mix that was used. Wittkop will report back and an update will be given to the board at the November board meeting.
    c. Stearns County Ditch 17 Update- Staff reported the progress being made on a letter that will be mailed out to landowners of Stearns CD #17 to determine their interest in an abandonment proceeding on this ditch system. Legal counsel Kolb indicated that he still has it on his list to draft the letter. He will get it to staff as soon as he can. Administrator Roeschlein indicated that the drainage authority may be reconvening the hearing at the November meeting only to continue it to a later time if results from the mailing are not available by then.
    d. Private Crossings CD #19 and #26 – Wittkop proceeded to discuss the private crossings on Stearns CD #19 and #26.
        i. CD #19 Linz Crossing - It was recommended to approve the installation of the Linz crossing #2, as Linz crossing #1 had been previously approved. The engineer's opinion of probably cost were $14,725. This is in compliance with the Drainage Authority's Drainage Policy on private crossings. **Manager McKigney made a motion to approve Linz crossing #2 on CD #19 to be installed. The motion was seconded by Manager Hartmann.**
        ii. CD #26 Schmidt Crossing – Wittkop reviewed the Schmidt crossing and noted that this crossing location is very close to where a structure may be placed for what is known as the Site 17 Storage Project on Getchell Creek. It is possible that this structure can be combined with a crossing from Mr. Schmidt and potentially be mostly covered by grant funds if the project can come to fruition. Wittkop recommended the drainage authority board of managers discuss this crossing and potentially delay moving it forward. Managers directed Wittkop to

have a discussion with Mr. Schmidt and see what his feelings were about delaying the installation of this crossing.

e. Ditch and project assessments 2027- Roeschlein presented an update to the ditch assessment exercise that was held in September at the drainage authority meeting in Osakis. There was a question of why one ditch fund had such a large balance because it's a relatively small system under our jurisdiction. Roeschlein indicated after he investigated further, he found that there was a coding error on where assessment receipts had been assigned into which fund. Stearns/Pope JD 1, with the updated correction, has a positive fund balance of around $149,000, whereas, the Zion-Munson ditch system has a $14,000 deficit. Roeschlein recommended that the board remove the assessment for Stearns/Pope JD 1 that was slated at the September meeting and pay the outlet fee to Pope CD 6 by fund transfer and to set an assessment for Zion-Munson ditch at $25,000 payable 2027 and revisit to potentially set an assessment of $25,000 payable 2028. This would bring Zion-Munson close to their balance goal. **Manager Hartmann made a motion to approve the readjustment of the payable 2027 assessments. The motion was seconded by Manager Zerr. The motion passed with 6 in favor, one opposed, and one abstained.** It was recommended that Roeschlein develop safe guards to catch and correct errors such as this going forward.

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

6. **Upcoming meetings to be announced**
   a. Regular Drainage Meetings
      i. Tuesday, November 17th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office
      ii. Tuesday, December 15th, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, SRWD Office

7. **Adjournment of Drainage Authority Meeting – Manager Zerr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. The motion was seconded by Manager Miller. The motion passed with all in favor.**