

**Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District Meeting Minutes**  
**July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the MFCRWD Office**

**Board of Managers Present:** Ruth Schaefer, Jeff Gertgen, Shane Braegelman, Amanda Toutges.  
Not present: Jay Hedtke

**Staff & Guests Present:** Dan Coughlin – District Administrator; Andy Johnson – Project Manager; Jon Morales – Program Manager; Leah Melges – Office & Finance Manager; Erin Vruwink – Summer Intern; Chris Meehan – District Engineer; and John Kolb – District Attorney; Ryan Schmidt – Schlenner Wenner Audit Firm; Brian Weist – DLARA President

1. President Schaefer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. President Schaefer recited the District’s mission statement: “We exist for the protection and preservation of water quality in the Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District.”
3. Additions / Corrections to the Agenda: A motion to approve the updated distributed agenda made by Manager Gertgen, seconded by Manager Toutges. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Financial Report
    - i. Finance Report
    - ii. Approval of Payables / Expenditures
  - b. Resolution 2024-15, 2024 WBIF Grant Subcontract Agreement with Wright SWCD
  - c. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Motion by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Braegelman to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Discussion / Business Items
  - a. 2023 Audit Presentation – Ryan Schmidt, Schlenner-Wenner:
    - i. Resolution 2024-16, Acceptance of 2023 Audit Report  
Motion by Manager Toutges, seconded by Manager Braegelman to accept Resolution 2024-16 Acceptance of 2023 Audit Report. The motion passed unanimously.
  - b. Calhoun Dam and Bridge Project
    - i. Resolution 2024-17, Engineering Agreement with Stantec, Inc. – Chris Meehan:  
A June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting with the project partners focused on discussion of bridge width and on-shore fishing availability. The existing concrete dam foundation below the water level will stay in place, with rock arch rapids staggered behind it at the outlet. Stantec added some additional survey work to the agreement for legal survey for the property on the east side, as well as more coordination meetings with the DNR. Anticipated start date for the project is fall of 2024, bidding late spring / early summer 2025, with construction starting late august early September timeframe. A motion by Manager Braegelman to approve the Resolution 2024-17 Engineering

Agreement with Stantec, Inc. Motion seconded by Manager Gertgen, motion passed unanimously.

c. Diamond Lake Issues:

i. Blue-Green Algae Toxin Detection

1. History & update on public notices:

Red-colored algae was noticed on Diamond Lake by a landowner on Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. MFCRWD staff went to the landowner's home and took a lake sample, which tested positive for blue-green algae toxins (cyanobacteria). Two locations were tested 3 days later which still resulted in positive results. MFCRWD will continue to test Diamond Lake each Monday during the month of July and will post results on MPCA's Bloom Watch. On Monday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 lake samples tested on Diamond Lake resulted in a negative test result.

2. Guidance on how to address similar situations in the future:

Revisit at the next board meeting possible signage for caution and informational resources. Put on agenda for August meeting.

ii. DLARA Discussions Re: Nanobubble Treatment, Mechanical Harvesting

1. Resolution 2024-18 – Authorization to Project Proposal to MPCA:

Following the presence of red-algae in Diamond Lake, DLARA (Diamond Lake Area Recreation Association) held a meeting to discuss potential treatment options to address blue-green algae, including herbicidal treatments, weed harvesting and nanobubble treatments.

Clean Water Fund loan program could provide some financing however it is required to go through local unit of government. Through the Diamond Lake Aquatic Plan Management plan, the DLARA board could levy a special assessment to fund a lake treatment. A formal resolution for a submittal for a loan application is required.

Brian Weist, DLARA President, reported that they will continue with herbicidal treatment next year on Diamond Lake, with possible increase in acreage of treated area. The board is also considering weed harvesting of Curly Leaf Pondweed, but they will hire out the work rather than purchasing a harvester. Manager Gertgen will obtain some quotes for weed harvesting for the DLARA board. A nanobubble treatment is another option with preliminary costs ranging around \$1.2-1.5 million dollars. (\$ 800,000 for the unit, \$800,000 for electric / power hook-up, site prep, land acquisition, etc.) A motion by Manager Toutges to approve the Resolution 2024-18 Authorization to Project Proposal to MPCA. Motion seconded by Manager

Braegelman, motion passed 3-0 with Manager Gergten abstaining.

d. Project & Activity Updates:

Nanobubble treatment operations continue on Tadd Lake in Atwater, MN. 40 dump trucks of Curly Leaf Pondweed were harvested out of Tadd Lake prior to the nanobubble trailer being installed on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Daily monitoring is occurring via staff, as well as data collected by the In-situ buoys.

e. Agenda Additions / Other Matters:

None.

6. Reports & Updates

a. Administrator – Dan Coughlin:

None.

b. Program Manager – Jon Morales:

WPLMN contract finalization should happen before the August board meeting, renewing and taking over fiscal agency of the grant. If the contract becomes finalized before the next board meeting, would the board of managers be willing to authorize District Administrator Dan Coughlin / Program Manager Jon Morales to sign the contract on behalf of the full board. A recommendation was made to authorize the President and Administrator, with cursory review by the attorney to act on behalf of the full board. Manager Gertgen made a motion for the Administrator to act on behalf of President to approve the updated WPLMN contract. The motion was seconded by Manager Toutges, motion passed unanimously.

Landowner Mike Steffl is upset about an easement on Kenny Johnson's land, historical sample site MFC4, with some confusion on the property lines. Jon clarified the property lines and the easement that has been filed with the county on our behalf.

Follow up on underwater drone: NL-S Toolcats has interest from alumni and students to pursue the building of the drone, not this year, but maybe the following year.

The Westby Intern, Gavin Radabaugh, is helping out this week with sampling and monitoring.

c. Project Manager – Andy Johnson:

Joel Peterson from Nest Lake Association wanted to discuss establishing a standard water level at the dam between Nest Lake and Green Lake. Along with the County, we should coordinate and evaluate what procedures are in writing and establish if they are being followed. Plan this fall to get all parties involved together to review procedures.

Water Trail Meeting for New London with Colin Wright and Roger Imdieke to further discussions regarding ADA handicap compliance with entering and exiting the Middle Fork Crow River in New London. The exit point is private land, however the entry point is very likely and DNR Parks and Trails has funding available to use.

Today surveyors from Stantec were out surveying the Bergstrom 2-stage ditch. Initial design plans could be completed as early as 2 months. They are also looking at Elkhorn Lake wetland area (first initial concepts). Project Manager Johnson would submit both projects for 1W1P funding. Johnson recently attended a PTM App training (prioritize target measure application), which is a GIS modeling-based tool used to assist in estimating reductions of nutrients in sediment for BMP concepts and projects.

d. Finance Manager – Leah Melges:

Finance Manager Melges reported that all the first-half of county property tax settlements have been received and 2024 Quarter 2 Payroll Tax Returns have been filed. With payroll being processed through Banyon, we are now able to have a more accurate, and current view, of the district's finances. The subscriptions to QuickBooks have been cancelled and all the historical data has been digitally saved to the server. The Rambow clothing order should arrive around the end of July.

e. Summer Monitoring Tech – Erin Vruwink:

Intern Vruwink reported that she has been working on social media and website updates, as well as working with Moleaer on the Atwater Nanobubble deployment. Vruwink has also been assisting Program Manager Morales with the monitoring season, which has been busy and going well.

f. District Engineer – Chris Meehan:

District Engineer Chris Meehan reported that there will be more to update on the Lake Calhoun Bridge project next month. As far as the potential BMP's out there, Project Manager Johnson deserves a lot of credit for his work with landowners on partnering for potential projects.

g. District Attorney – John Kolb:

None.

h. Other Reports from Managers / Staff: No additional comments offered.

7. Public Access Forum: DLARA Weed Fest is Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and someone from MFCRWD will be in attendance to discuss potential lake treatment options.
8. Adjournment: Motion made by Manager Braegelman, seconded by Manager Toutges to adjourn the meeting was made. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting declared adjourned by President Schaefer at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by,

Leah Melges  
Recording Secretary  
Office & Finance Manager

