

Minutes- Approved: 8.12.2026
 Meeting Type: Personnel Committee Meeting
 Time/Date: 7:00pm CST, July 8, 2026
 Location: 112 E. 5th Street, #102 Chaska, Minnesota 55318



1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Manager Bakkum called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM CST.

Managers Present: Carter McNew, Kyle Bakkum

Absent: Joseph Barisonzi

Staff Present: Will Lytle, Damaris Canales

Others Present:

Action: Approval of the Consent Agenda with the amendment to remove the Performance Review item under New Business as requested by Lytle.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bak.	Y						
Motion Carried									

Action: Approval of the 4.8.2026 Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes.docx as is.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bak.	Y						
Motion Carried									

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

No formal public comment was received.

3. NEW BUSINESS

The primary item of new business was an annual review and update of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Communications Policy. Staff recommended amending the policy to include an internal communication request classification and work authorization protocol. During the discussion, the administrator explained that the communications policy had originally been adopted the previous year as part of a broader effort to formalize practices that had historically been informal. While some policy elements remain only partially implemented due to staff capacity constraints and shifting priorities, staff identified a need to expand the policy further. The proposed amendment

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WATERSHED DISTRICT

arose in part from feedback from a contractor and recognizes the growing need to categorize internal communications, clarify work authorization procedures, and eventually update records retention and archiving requirements. The administrator described practical examples where emails regarding funding opportunities or significant projects could create uncertainty regarding staff actions and resource commitments, highlighting the need for clearer communication classifications and authorization protocols.

The meeting later transitioned into discussion regarding a professional services relationship that had originally been structured around approximately a year-long transition period and a budget commitment of roughly \$22,000. Board members questioned whether hourly tracking was still occurring and learned that it was not. As a result, there was no direct comparison available between actual costs and what services would have cost under a tracked hourly arrangement. While board members expressed interest in reviewing the relationship more closely at a future meeting, the administrator indicated confidence that meaningful work had been performed and deliverables had been provided, though additional review of invoices would occur before further discussion.

Several administrative updates were then presented. Preparations were discussed for the next board meeting at the City of Carver. The mayor was expected to provide a presentation before the meeting, and an informal site walk was anticipated afterward while daylight remained. The administrator also indicated plans to invite members of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to participate in the walk-through.

The board reviewed the status of a vacant Dakota County CAC seat. County officials had received two applications and were conducting an initial review. Because no appointment action had been taken at the most recent county meeting, the board discussed waiting until the county's next scheduled meeting before requesting additional follow-up from legal counsel if no action occurred. Administrative housekeeping matters were also addressed, including processing reimbursement requests and adding them to the next accounts payable cycle.

The administrator informed the board of planned travel to the Boundary Waters later in the month, noting the possibility of limited cellular connectivity but expressing confidence that no pressing district business was expected during that period. Discussion also touched on board meeting practices, including meeting locations and hybrid participation. The administrator recommended

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maintaining the current format, citing concerns that eliminating or significantly reducing current meeting systems could create governance and transparency risks.

A significant portion of the administrative report focused on operational and financial system challenges. The administrator described a series of complications involving banking, payment processing, QuickBooks, and Bill.com integrations. Transition issues between service providers resulted in automated clearing house (ACH) transaction failures, frozen payment cards, loss of access to financial management platforms, and potential increases in software costs. These issues reportedly consumed approximately twenty hours of staff time and contributed to delays in preparing performance evaluation materials.

Finally, the administrator outlined concerns regarding organizational capacity and staffing needs. He emphasized the value of obtaining an additional part-time professional resource, potentially serving in a project management or deputy administrator-type role. The proposed position would focus on implementation and operational support rather than strategy development. Board members requested that any future staffing proposal be supported by written justification and a defined work plan. The administrator agreed, noting that budget limitations, levy caps, and broader work-plan considerations would need to be addressed before such a recommendation could move forward.

Action: Approval of staff recommendations to be presented to the board regarding the Annual Review and Update Communications Policy 7.1.2026									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bak.	Y						
Motion Carried									

4. OLD BUSINESS

This portion of the meeting focused primarily on old business items, including grant opportunities, watershed management planning, dredging-related contracts, records management, and long-term document digitization strategies. No substantive board action was taken during this segment, and the discussion largely consisted of administrative updates, project status reports, and future planning considerations.

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The board first reviewed updated grant opportunities. Staff reported that no board action was required at this time. Discussion centered on several funding programs currently being monitored by the district. Staff noted ongoing conversations regarding potential opportunities, including the Lessard Sams grant programs, although these initiatives remain in early stages and are not expected to require immediate board involvement. The administrator also referenced two upcoming Water-Based Infrastructure Funding (WBIF) cycles, explaining that project recommendations would first be evaluated through committee processes in which district representatives would participate before any formal consideration by the board.

The discussion then turned to the district's existing watershed management planning efforts. Board members recalled previous conversations about revising the district work plan and potentially updating aspects of the watershed management framework. The administrator explained that while a recommendation to revise the work plan had previously been discussed, the details were never formally returned to the board for consideration. As a result, no changes have been initiated. The consensus appeared to be that further action would wait until a more complete proposal is developed and formally reintroduced.

A substantial portion of the conversation focused on the revision of dredged materials contracts and related agreements. The administrator explained that he had met several times with the district's attorney, who is still becoming familiar with the district's unique operational and legal requirements. Staff identified dredging-related contracts as a key area requiring attention because state appropriations designated for dredging activities must generally be spent on eligible dredging purposes. The administrator noted that many of the district's current agreements originated decades ago, some dating back to the 1980s, and have only undergone minor modifications over time. While these agreements continue to function, they no longer fully reflect modern practices, operational realities, or strategic goals. Consequently, the district plans to undertake revisions for 2026 that will address needed updates in the short term while also exploring broader long-term improvements. Existing dredge material sales agreements were similarly described as outdated and in need of modernization to align with current best practices and regulatory expectations.

The board also discussed the district's records management and document digitization efforts, particularly in connection with anticipated policy revisions. Staff reported that a draft framework exists but has not yet been sufficiently updated to reflect key decisions that still need to be made regarding document archiving and retrieval. A central question involves determining the appropriate

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level of detail required when digitizing historic district records. The administrator explained that the district possesses a substantial volume of physical files, potentially totaling hundreds of thousands of pages. One option would involve individually reviewing and tagging documents so that each page becomes searchable and categorized after digitization. Alternatively, the district could conduct a more streamlined sorting process by determining which materials should be retained or discarded, digitizing the retained records in larger collections, and then relying on modern AI-powered search tools to locate information within the digitized archive.

This discussion highlighted the importance of deciding on the desired end state before updating records retention and digitization policies. The administrator emphasized that the level of indexing, tagging, and organization selected by the district will directly affect project costs, staff effort, and long-term usefulness of the digital archive. Understanding these expectations in advance is therefore necessary before finalizing policy revisions or issuing directives regarding records management procedures.

After completing discussion of the remaining agenda items, the board concluded its business and formally adjourned the meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM CST.