

Minutes Approved: 12.3.2025
Meeting Type: Personnel Committee
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST, 11.5.2025
Location: County Board Room, Carver County Government Center, 602 East 4th Street Chaska, MN 55318 Virtual
Location: Teams Meeting [Video of Meeting](#)



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Barisonzi called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM CST.

Managers Present: Joseph Barisonzi, Carter McNew, Theresa Kuplic, Kyle Bakkum (not yet seated-ex officio)

Managers Absent:

Staff Present: Will Lytle (Administrator)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

3. STANDING BUSINESS

Administrative Report on standing business delivered. Kyle Bakkum is identified as the incoming Carver Co Manager. Committee has created recommendations on acting roles for the executive committee. Barisonzi- President, Mc New- VP, Kuplic – Secretary, Viswanathan- Treasurer, Bakkum- TBD. Discussion on the importance on recruiting additional CAC members as well as engaging with them more closely. Potential to increase the breadth and depth of CAC with working groups. Mailings and houseplans were pitched by Pres. Barisonzi, as well as the importance of the Admin connecting with CAC members. WMP vs E&O budgetting. Mc New requested enhanced digital recruiting, engagement with videos, podcasts, the Dig in Shakopee. Need for a non-profit to receive funds that align with the district mission so house parties can help raise funds. Branding the LMRWD is not a priority, but increasing recognition of the river is of vital importance- we can partner with successful groups.

Description and discussion on the deferred invoice payments and the plan to resume payments tied to deliverables.

Request for scheduling a 30-minute session on Open Meeting Law prior to an upcoming board meeting, with a suggestion to bring in an external speaker for that session.

The conversation emphasized the importance of compliance and transparency, particularly in light of ongoing political challenges. A speaker expressed concern about protecting

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board members from potential Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) issues and other legal complications. To address this, the group discussed implementing district-issued email accounts for all board members to ensure official communications are properly managed and archived. A timeline was proposed: district emails should be created and operational by the next board meeting, with all communication migrated to these accounts. The emails will be role-based and include shared mailboxes for positions such as President and Secretary to facilitate smooth transitions when roles change. It was noted that the IT department could begin creating these accounts immediately, with full implementation targeted by December.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A draft of orientation materials were reviewed and all were encouraged to provide comments to help identify gaps, particularly for new members. The discussion then shifted to professional organizations, specifically Minnesota Watersheds, which includes MAWA (Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators). Minnesota Watersheds offers membership at a cost of \$7,500 per year, but the board has historically opted not to join due to both the high fee and significant conflicts of interest. Their legislative agenda at the Capitol often opposed the district's positions, such as on chlorine testing and drainage authority, meaning membership would effectively fund lobbying against the district's priorities.

Instead, it was agreed that attending events without full membership is more practical. One participant plans to attend the December administrator meeting, estimating a cost of approximately \$500 for three days, compared to the \$10,000 membership fee. The board reaffirmed that previous decisions against joining were based primarily on policy conflicts rather than cost alone. However, there was interest in reassessing the organization's current agenda and exploring whether dues could be renegotiated to a more reasonable level in the future. It was suggested that the executive director be approached to discuss revising the dues structure, which is currently based on geographic area rather than population or other equitable measures. The district's unique situation, having the highest percentage of publicly owned property (around 25%), was noted as a factor in the current dues calculation. The possibility of joining in two years, once operations stabilize and if conflicts are resolved, was left open for consideration.

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5. NEW BUSINESS

The committee discussed an opportunity to secure representation on the Clean Water Council, an appointed body with an open seat designated for a watershed district. It was noted that the position could be filled by either staff or board managers, and the group agreed it would be in the district's best interest for Lytle to apply, provided eligibility is confirmed. The role involves attending monthly meetings, typically lasting 2 to 3 hours, and would represent watershed districts collectively rather than voting on behalf of the Lower Minnesota Watershed District specifically.

A motion was introduced and seconded to recommend that the board authorize support for Will's application to the Clean Water Council. The motion was carried unanimously. The committee clarified that this support does not designate Will as the district's representative but rather endorses his application for the watershed seat. It was agreed that a formal letter of support from the district would accompany the application, and legal counsel may be consulted to confirm there are no conflicts of interest. The action item will be forwarded from the Personnel Committee to the full board for approval.

Action: To officially authorize support for Lytle's application to the Clean Water Council for the watershed district seat.

First: Barisonzi

Second: McNew

Decision: Carried unanimously

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM CST.

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