

Minutes- Approved: 3.11.26
Meeting Type: Personnel Committee
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: County Board Room, Carver County Government
Center, 602 East 4th Street, Chaska, MN 55318



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Barisonzi called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM CST.

Managers Present: Joseph Barisonzi, Theresa Kuplic, Carter McNew, Kyle Bakkum

Staff Present: Will Lytle, Damaris Canales

Before proceeding to a vote, President Barisonzi questioned why the agenda included sponsorship items for the Envirothon and the Eco Expo under the Personnel Committee. Lytle clarified that these items should properly belong under the Finance Committee, acknowledging they had originally been placed under Personnel due to a prior assumption that staff involvement would be requested. Based on this clarification, President Barisonzi asked whether the mover and seconder of the motion would approve removing Items 3.5 and 3.6 from the agenda. With no further questions or concerns, the amended agenda was put to a vote and approved unanimously.

Following adoption of the agenda, the committee moved to reviewing and approving the January meeting minutes. Before requesting a motion, President Barisonzi invited questions or comments. He then raised a concern regarding multiple instances in the draft minutes where actions recorded suggested that the committee itself had approved certain authorizations, when the committee's intention had instead been to forward those actions to the full board for approval.

He highlighted a specific example involving authorization for the administrator to spend up to \$1,000 on a pre-purchase related to the Savage Restoration, noting his belief that the committee had not actually authorized the expenditure, but rather had intended to advance the matter to the board. The administrator acknowledged this clarification.

The discussion concluded with the committee voting on the status of the January minutes. The result was two votes in favor and one against, carrying the motion to approval to table the 1.14.26 minutes.

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Action: Approve the amended 2.11.26 Personnel Committee meeting agenda.									
1st:		2nd:							
Kup.	Y	McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A
Motion Carried									

Action: Table the approval of the 1.14.26 Personnel Committee meeting minutes.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Kup.	Y	Bar.	N	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A
Motion Carries 2:1									

2. PUBLIC COMMENT & PRESENTATIONS

No formal public comment was received. PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

3. NEW BUSINESS

Starting with item 3.1 concerning the resignation of Manager Theresa Kuplic. President Barisonzi spoke about Manager Kuplic’s significant contributions to the district, citing her leadership in hiring, her dedication to board work, and her consistent role in providing candid and constructive guidance. Manager Kuplic apologized for the abruptness of her resignation, explaining that she did not realize her relocation to Florida required her to step down. President Barisonzi emphasized the district’s deep appreciation for her service and noted that a strong pool of interested candidates was already forming, including individuals from the Citizens Advisory Committee. Administrator Lytle added that Manager Kuplic would still have the option to join upcoming trainings remotely and be recognized at the next full board meeting. After discussion, the committee voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of her resignation effective March 1, and to direct staff to post the vacancy and prepare appropriate recognition.

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The committee then turned to the matter of concluding the district's legal services contract with attorney Ricky Noonan. President Barisonzi introduced the item with a request for a motion to recommend that the board acknowledge the contract's end and direct the administrator to conduct off-boarding and prepare for any related personnel actions tied to the current RFP process. Administrator Lytle explained that Noonan's firm had lost administrative support, limiting its capacity to maintain the contract, though no end date had been specified and Noonan remained responsive. He confirmed that an exit interview was scheduled and that several final items remained pending. The committee discussed the importance of continuity in legal representation. President Barisonzi stressed that the district must not be without counsel and that the existing contract ensured a transition period. He also noted that Noonan's early notice would allow the district to signal to potential applicants that the position was open, something that may improve competition. Manager Kuplic asked whether Noonan could remain available during the onboarding of a future attorney, and both Barisonzi and Lytle confirmed that continued support was essential. The committee revised the motion to clarify that acknowledgment of the contract's end would occur with the understanding that Noonan remain available for several months to support a transition. The amended motion was unanimously approved.

The next item concerned expanding the scope of the biennium RFP for major service contracts. President Barisonzi explained that staff recommended authorizing the administrator to revise the RFP to include all major service categories and to proceed with the 2026 solicitation cycle. Lytle described how recent discussions revealed gaps in the existing RFP. HDR, the district's web host, advised that the current website is outdated and would be better replaced with a minimalist, modular design integrated with SharePoint and internal systems. The district had never formally bid out web hosting, marketing, or communications services. Discussions regarding dredge site operations also made clear that opportunities existed for beneficial use and sale of dredged materials, which had historically been handled informally. Lytle then explained that several service categories, including financial services, IT support, clerical services, and some engineering and dredge-related tasks, had never been subject to competitive RFP processes. Expanding the RFP would increase transparency and potentially broaden the pool of qualified service providers. President Barisonzi highlighted that dredge-

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related activities have historically lacked clear oversight and commended Lytle for bringing that work into the open. With no further comments, the committee unanimously approved the authorization to expand and revise the biennium RFP.

Next, the committee considered staff's request for the district to sign the Rivers Leader Agreement as an initial step toward participation in the emerging Mississippi River Compact. Barisonzi explained that this action would also involve inviting counties and cities within the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District to participate and direct staff to return with recommendations on further strategic engagement. Administrator Lytle provided background, explaining that he had reviewed a governance analysis proposing a Mississippi River Basin Compact, similar to the Great Lakes Compact. Though various basin groups exist, no formal, binding compact spans multiple states, federal agencies, and tribal governments. The group leading the effort has commitments from around twenty mayors and tribal leaders but none yet from the Minnesota River Basin. Because the district already has comprehensive watershed management and implementation plans, signing on would require little additional work and would position the district as a regional leader in collaborative water governance. The committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

The committee's final item of new business concerned scheduling an IT support work session. Administrator Lytle recommended holding a one-hour session before the March committee meetings to allow the district's IT contractor to assist members with email synchronization, calendar integration, message forwarding, and general cybersecurity, including responding to recent phishing attempts. He noted that if Dakota County appointed a new board member, this session would allow early onboarding even before formal seating. A motion to approve the session was made and seconded. With no objections or additional questions, the committee unanimously approved the proposal.

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Action: Acceptance of Manager Kuplic’s resignation effective March 1, and to direct staff to post the vacancy and prepare appropriate recognition.										
1st:		2nd:								
McN.	Y	Kup.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A	
Motion Carried										

Action: Recommend to the Board that it acknowledge the end of the legal services contract with attorney Ricky Noonan, and have Lytle conduct off-boarding and prepare personnel for transitions associated with the RFP process and clarify that Noonan will remain available for several months to support transition and onboarding of new legal counsel.										
1st:		2nd:								
Kup.	Y	McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A	
Motion Carried										

Action: Authorize Lytle to revise and expand the biennium RFP to include all major service categories and proceed with the 2026 solicitation cycle.										
1st:		2nd:								
McN.	Y	Kup.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A	
Motion Carried										

Action: Recommend to the Board that the district sign on to the Rivers Leader Agreement as the first step toward participation in the emerging Mississippi River Compact, invite counties and cities within the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District to participate in the collaborative effort, and direct staff to return with recommendations on additional strategic engagement.										
1st:		2nd:								
McN.	Y	Kup.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A	
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Action: Approve scheduling a one-hour IT support work session prior to the March committee meetings to provide troubleshooting, email synchronization assistance, cybersecurity review, and onboarding support for current and incoming members.										
1st:		2nd:								
Kup.	Y	McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	N/A	Vis.	N/A	
Motion Carried										

4. OLD BUSINESS

Beginning with an update on the CAC bylaws and orientation packet. Administrator Lytle noted one procedural point before proceeding: because Manager Kuplic was leaving the board, the district would need to nominate a new board secretary. President Barisonzi clarified that this item did not need to go through the Personnel Committee and would instead be placed directly on an upcoming board meeting agenda.

Returning to the CAC bylaws discussion, Manager Bakkum provided an update on the draft orientation packet that had been circulated the previous month. He reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee had reviewed the materials at their recent meeting and would continue refining them at their next session on March 3. He outlined three primary areas of revision: expanding committee membership to include targeted groups, clarifying the process through which the CAC submits recommendations to the board, and defining duties and expectations for CAC members as their role expands. Bakkum invited committee members to provide any feedback, and Manager Kuplic affirmed that the draft looked strong. The final revised orientation materials will be brought back to the Personnel Committee and the full board in the coming months.

The discussion then shifted to updated grant information. Lytle shared that the district had recently been awarded a grant that had been applied for in December. Although relatively small, it represented successful collaboration between staff and external partners, including GeoSyntec and Young Environmental. He noted that a more detailed overview would be provided at a future board meeting.

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5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

The committee briefly reviewed the administrative report. Administrator Lytle highlighted legislative and strategic meetings that had taken place over the last month, explaining that staff capacity did not currently allow for full written reports on every strategic activity. He noted upcoming travel that would not interfere with meeting schedules and confirmed that required end-of-year reports had been submitted with staff support.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM CST.