

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



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, Carter McNew, Vinatha Viswanathan, Kyle Bakkum, Steve Devich

Staff Present: Will Lytle, Linda Loomis, Laura Robey, Damaris Canales, Jim Davis

Others Present: Joe Barton, Jody Brennan

The meeting opened with the formal Oath of Office for Steve Devich, who had been appointed to serve on the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers. The oath affirmed his commitment to support the U.S. and Minnesota Constitutions and to faithfully perform the duties of watershed district manager according to law and to the best of his judgment and ability. His appointment was stated as commencing August 19, 2026, and expiring March 31, 2027, or until the Dakota County Board of Commissioners makes a subsequent appointment. Following the oath, the board welcomed Devich and acknowledged his extensive background in civic and municipal affairs, as well as his preparation and research into the board and the complexities of watershed district governance.

The meeting then proceeded to the agenda. The chair asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A motion was made by Manager McNeil and seconded by Manager Barkham. The chair invited questions, concerns, comments, additions, or changes to the proposed agenda. No objections or requested changes are reflected in the provided transcript, and the meeting proceeded with the agenda as presented.

Action: Approval of the Seat for Steve Devich to Board of Managers of Dakota Co.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bak.	Y	Vis.	Y	Bar.	Y		
Motion Carried									

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

The public hearing on the proposed 2027 budget and levy was called to order at approximately 7:02 p.m. The Finance Committee chair presented the preliminary levy and explained that it had been amended from the original submission by approximately 0.5%. The board was reminded that once the preliminary levy is established, it represents a maximum amount that can subsequently be reduced but cannot be increased. A significant difference in projected revenue was attributed to the completion of the Area 3 project, while the projected ending fund balance also reflected the district's effort to absorb some increased costs rather than passing the full financial burden on to taxpayers.

A central focus of the hearing was the financing and repayment strategy for the Area 3 project. The project had been financed through approximately 15-year bonding, but the district's financial strategy is to repay the debt as quickly as permitted. The board discussed a seven-year repayment timeline, noting that the debt cannot simply be paid off earlier without restrictions or potential penalties. The proposed levy increase is therefore tied specifically to building the funds necessary to meet the seven-year repayment objective. The discussion emphasized that the additional levy revenue is intended for debt repayment rather than general spending. The board characterized retiring the debt within seven years as an important financial objective because the bond carries an interest rate of approximately 4.44%, with an estimated taxpayer savings of roughly \$500,000 if the debt can be retired on that schedule.

The board also addressed an outstanding financial commitment to Shakopee. The Finance Committee had previously undertaken a review of how to properly satisfy a commitment that had been made by prior boards but had not been fully documented through the necessary paperwork. The issue involved earlier payments and discrepancies in the supporting records, prompting the Finance Committee to determine how the remaining commitment could be fulfilled in good faith. Rather than spreading the remaining payment over two years, the board's financial restructuring contemplated paying the outstanding amount in a single sum. The discussion indicated that this commitment was incorporated into the broader budget rebalancing and that the payment would be formally documented and completed.

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

The Finance Committee's broader financial restructuring was also discussed, particularly its implementation of zero-based budgeting. Rather than simply carrying forward prior-year appropriations, the district had begun stripping the budget down and rebuilding it around current needs and future projects. Although the overall budget total may appear similar to the prior year's figure, the underlying line items have changed substantially. The board emphasized the importance of assigning expenses to meaningful categories so that taxpayers and board members can readily understand what district funds are being used for. Some historical expenses had been categorized under broad headings such as engineering, making it difficult to determine the actual purpose of expenditures. The new approach is intended to improve transparency, facilitate ongoing financial review, and ensure that expenditures are directed toward the district's highest-priority projects.

During the levy discussion, board members clarified that the approximately 0.5% increase is specifically associated with a restricted line item for the bond's seven-year repayment. The funds are not intended to be redirected to unrelated projects. The discussion acknowledged that extraordinary circumstances could potentially require the board to use the money differently, but doing so would require unanimous board approval, and the stated Finance Committee intent was still to ensure that the money was ultimately available for repayment of the bond. The board therefore connected the levy increase directly to a defined financial liability rather than treating it as a general increase in operating revenue.

The board also discussed the procedural reason for acting on the preliminary budget and levy during the public hearing rather than waiting for a subsequent meeting. Because the next regular meeting would occur after the deadline for submitting the preliminary budget and levy to the affected counties, the board needed to act at this meeting. The proposed action included approval of the preliminary 2027 budget and levy and certification of the preliminary figures to Carver, Scott, Hennepin, and Dakota Counties. The board noted that the levy could still be reduced later in the process if additional revenue is identified or project costs can be offset, but it could not be increased after the preliminary levy was established.

The public-hearing portion concluded with a vote on the preliminary budget and levy. The motion was presented for approval, seconded, and put to a voice vote. The motion carried,

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

with the recorded response being in favor and no opposition reflected in the transcript. The chair then formally closed the public forum. The meeting subsequently moved to the consent agenda, which consisted of the meeting minutes and materials presented to the Personnel and Finance Committees. A motion was made and seconded to approve the consent agenda, followed by another voice vote. The motion carried, with the transcript recording affirmative votes and no opposition.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Action: Approval of the 8.19.2026 Board Meeting Agenda.docx as is.									
1st:		2nd:							
Dev.	Y	McN.	Y	Bak.	Y	Vis.	Y	Bar.	Y
Motion Carried									

5. NEW BUSINESS

The board began its new-business agenda with consideration of conditional approval of the Carver Levy Improvement Project. The proposed approval was contingent upon the district receiving and reviewing additional materials identified in the technical memorandum. Board members questioned why the list of outstanding materials was substantial and whether staff could explain the rationale. Staff explained that the district had been working closely with Carver representatives, consultants, project engineers, and state officials and had received another batch of materials shortly before the meeting. The principal concern was ensuring that project drawings and engineering information were accurate and consistent among the district, the City of Carver, and the state before construction proceeds. This was particularly important because the project involves FEMA funding, and failure to construct the project in accordance with applicable FEMA standards could jeopardize reimbursement.

Staff emphasized that the conditional approval was intended to prevent the district's review process from delaying the project, rather than to obstruct construction. The approval would allow the city to proceed with putting the project out for bid while the remaining technical issues were resolved. Staff characterized the outstanding matters as primarily detailed engineering calculations, figures, and documentation rather than

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

fundamental changes to the project's scope or design. There had initially been some confusion over which governmental entity was responsible for conducting the most thorough review, with both the state and district apparently believing the other was taking the lead. Once that was recognized, the parties began coordinating more closely. Staff reported direct communication with the mayor, project engineers, supporting engineering consultants, and state officials and expressed confidence that the remaining issues could be resolved cooperatively.

The board also discussed the value of the district's technical staff and its relationship with local government partners. Members noted that the district's environmental and engineering expertise provides value to projects even though the district does not currently charge public entities for this type of assistance. The board viewed the review as a partnership intended to ensure that projects are technically sound and that public and federal resources are protected. The board president reiterated a prior commitment to Carver that the district would not unnecessarily interfere with the project and would devote whatever resources were necessary to help move it toward completion. Following discussion, the board approved the conditional approval.

The next item was a Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District concerning permitting for the Minnesota project identified in the transcript as SP2775-25. Staff explained that although the agreement appeared significant, its practical effect was relatively limited. Most of the water associated with the project drains into the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, making it more efficient for that district to handle the permitting work. The agreement would not transfer the district's statutory authority or prevent the district from conducting inspections or intervening if necessary. Instead, it would avoid duplicating essentially identical work between the two watershed districts. The board therefore approved authorization for the board president to execute the Joint Powers Agreement.

The board then considered the Shakopee Downtown BMP project cost-share agreement and reimbursement, described as the second and final step associated with two payments connected to the Riverbank Stabilization Project. The board had previously modified the budget to create the necessary funding capacity and had authorized staff to establish the agreement. The motion before the board authorized the administrator to execute the cost-

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

share agreement with the City of Shakopee for the Lewis Street/2nd Avenue BMP project and the Riverbank Stabilization Project, including the specified \$100,000 and \$92,000 amounts, and authorized reimbursement of eligible project costs in accordance with the agreement and approved project budget.

During discussion, staff explained that the district's budget contained three Shakopee-related items: the Water Resources Restoration Fund, the Lewis Street BMP project, and the Riverbank Stabilization Project. The Water Resources Restoration Fund had already received authorization earlier in the year, while the action before the board addressed the other two projects. Staff stated that the work had been completed and that the projects had appropriate documentation and were consistent with the district's mission and funding standards.

The board also used this item to discuss improvements to its financial oversight and authorization procedures. Members acknowledged that previous difficulties involving payments to Shakopee had resulted from miscommunication and incomplete paperwork. The board had since clarified that a budget allocation does not itself constitute authorization to spend funds; a separate board authorization process is required. A Finance Committee has also been established to track projects through their various phases and monitor the district's financial commitments. Staff further noted that the district had changed financial-services providers. Board members expressed appreciation for the work undertaken to correct the previous issue and preserve the district's commitments to Shakopee. The reimbursement and agreement were approved.

The board next considered sponsorship of the 2026 Salt Symposium, a long-standing partnership focused on road salt and chloride-related environmental issues. The proposed sponsorship was at the \$500 Bronze level, with authorization for the administrator to execute the sponsorship agreement and handle payment and reporting. Staff described the symposium as an initiative focused primarily on reducing road-salt impacts, while potentially expanding into other chloride sources such as water softeners and municipal water treatment. Discussion highlighted the symposium's role in encouraging innovation in building design, stormwater design, and other practices that can reduce the amount of salt entering the environment.

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



Staff also described related "low salt" design initiatives being explored in communities such as Eden Prairie and Bloomington. The concept is to consider salt use and its long-term environmental and operational consequences during the initial design of buildings and infrastructure, rather than attempting to address those impacts after construction. The board viewed the symposium as a relatively modest investment that could help disseminate effective practices across the region. Members were also encouraged to attend the event, with the district able to provide some funding for manager attendance where necessary. The sponsorship was approved.

The final item in this portion of the transcript concerned authorization relating to Riverview Road repairs associated with the Area 3 stabilization project. Staff requested authority to negotiate and execute a cost-share agreement and any related work orders, contract amendments, or other documents necessary to address the road repairs, with the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District's contribution capped at \$20,000, funded from the existing Area 3 project budget.

Staff explained that the Area 3 project involved construction on a steep bank where a former public road had eroded away. The district had purchased property associated with the erosion and construction access was provided from two roads, one of which passed through an existing neighborhood. That neighborhood road was already degraded before construction began, but the project team had documented its condition and anticipated that repairs might ultimately be necessary. In addition, a private driveway sustained minor damage during construction. Staff indicated that there was no dispute that some damage occurred, although the parties had not yet determined how responsibility for the approximately \$23,000 estimated repair cost should be divided among the district, city, contractor, and potentially the affected property owner.

A significant consideration was the City of Eden Prairie's \$400,000 cost-share commitment to the Area 3 project. Staff explained that the city would not release that contribution until the project was closed out, making resolution of the road-repair issue important to completion of the overall project. The requested \$20,000 authorization was therefore intended to give staff flexibility to negotiate a settlement without having to return to the board for another authorization. Staff stressed that authorization of up to \$20,000 did not mean the district would necessarily pay that entire amount. The intent was to establish a



The board ultimately voted in favor of the authorization, allowing staff to negotiate the cost sharing and proceed with the necessary documentation. Staff expressed the hope that the matter could be resolved promptly and ideally before the board's next meeting.

Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

Action: Approval to authorize Area 3 Road Repair Cost Share									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Vis.	Y	Bak.	Y		
Motion Carried									

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

6. OLD BUSINESS

Below is an in-depth summary of the portion of the board meeting transcript you provided, followed by any motions or formal actions reflected in the discussion.

The board discussed one item of old business concerning an update to a draft boundary change petition. At the outset, a board member noted that the supporting document or link for the boundary change petition was not included and requested that it be distributed to the board. The discussion then turned to the status of the request and the review process that had been established for boundary change applications.

Will Lytle explained that the boundary change request had initially been received by email and that the organization is now using a checklist to evaluate boundary change applications or requests. He stated that the submitted materials were not sufficiently complete for staff to provide an opinion or recommendation. In particular, there were discrepancies between the written draft and the accompanying maps, creating uncertainty about the precise scope of the proposed boundary change. Questions remained regarding which areas or entities were intended to be included in the proposed change.

Because of these uncertainties, staff requested additional information before proceeding with the review. Lytle indicated that the additional information was needed not only to clarify the geographic scope of the request, but also to evaluate potential tax implications and considerations regarding how priorities might be allocated among the affected entities or authorities. He reported that he had communicated these information needs to Vanessa Strong, director of the Scott WMO, and Paul Moline, deputy services director and head of the Carver WMO.

Based on the incomplete information and unresolved questions, Lytle stated that he did not have a recommendation for board action at this time. He emphasized that the matter would likely require additional communication and several rounds of clarification before staff could provide an informed opinion or recommendation. Consequently, the board did not appear prepared to take substantive action on the boundary change itself during this portion of the meeting.

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

The board chair/member then reminded the group that the board had previously taken action authorizing the use of the boundary-change checklist as the framework for evaluating such requests. Because there was a new board member, the speaker recommended that the checklist be distributed to the entire board before the next meeting so that all members have access to the framework previously authorized by the board. The speaker also suggested that, if desired, the board could revisit and discuss the checklist itself at the next board meeting under old business. This was presented as a potential agenda item rather than as a new formal action.

The discussion concluded with an invitation for additional questions or comments concerning the old business item. Based on the transcript provided, there was no final determination on the proposed boundary change, and no new motion concerning approval or denial of the boundary change was made or passed during this discussion.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Below is an in-depth summary of this portion of the board meeting, with the discussion organized by topic and a separate section identifying motions or formal actions.

The board moved from old business into the administrative reports, with Will Lytle providing updates on personnel administration, finance and treasury matters, internal permitting and project reviews, channel maintenance and dredging, watershed planning, legislative and regulatory matters, and upcoming events. The administrative reports included information carried forward from the Personnel Committee and the Finance and Treasurer Report Committee. Lytle indicated that the board did not need to review every linked document in detail during the meeting, but highlighted several matters he considered particularly important.

One significant update concerned flood monitoring capabilities within the district. Lytle reported that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) had reinstalled some monitoring equipment, specifically a stage gauge. However, a velocity gauge has not yet been reinstalled within the district. He explained that the velocity gauge is an important component of flood forecasting and that

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



its absence remains a significant gap in the district's monitoring capabilities. Staff intends to follow up with the relevant agencies regarding the status and anticipated restoration of the velocity gauge. In the meantime, the reinstallation of the stage gauge means that a new stream of monitoring data is once again available.

Lytle also provided an overview of permitting and project-review activity occurring throughout the district. He referenced substantial activity in downtown Chaska as well as numerous other projects that are being permitted by outside entities but are subject to the district's ability to review or comment. He characterized most of these matters as routine and indicated that they generally do not rise to the level of major or high-stakes issues directly affecting the district.

A more complicated property and access issue was discussed in connection with a riverbank stabilization area and property previously acquired by the district. Lytle explained that the district had purchased an entire road as part of an earlier project. The road had historically functioned more like a city road, although it had gates and was not necessarily a conventional public-access road. The individual from whom the district purchased the property had previously owned property on both sides of the road. When the acquisition was initially contemplated approximately a decade earlier, it had been expected that ownership might be divided; however, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ultimately required the district to own the entire road in order to proceed with the project.

The former property owner has since contacted the district about whether he can continue using the road to access property he still owns and manage vegetation there. Lytle noted that the district does not control the gate or the road leading into the district's road because that portion remains associated with the city. This has created a question about whether the city road has been formally decommissioned or whether it continues to have legal road status despite no longer physically functioning as a road. Lytle indicated that the district may eventually receive a request for an easement allowing the property owner to access his remaining property. He emphasized that the district did not acquire the road with the intention of preventing the former owner from accessing his property for routine vegetation management, but he also did not believe the district needed to aggressively pursue a resolution immediately. The matter involves interactions among the state, the

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

city, the private property owner, and the district. Lytle also noted that the property owner has significant outstanding back taxes and has been unresponsive for several years, although he has recently become more communicative. Staff will monitor the situation and determine whether further action is appropriate, including whether outstanding financial obligations can be resolved.

The board also received an update on channel maintenance and dredging activities. Lytle reported on a two-day event involving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, USGS, and other agencies. The event included tours and discussions primarily focused around Hastings and Pool 2 and involved major projects using dredged material as well as ecosystem restoration and related efforts. Lytle noted that he has participated virtually in several of these meetings and that representatives travel from throughout the region, including as far away as St. Louis, to participate on a recurring basis. He viewed the local event as a valuable opportunity to engage with the agencies and observe major projects taking place relatively close to the district.

Dredging schedules have also been posted identifying material that will be dredged from within the district and placed at the district's dredge site. This information is now available as part of the district's ongoing channel-maintenance planning and coordination efforts.

Another major topic was development of the district's watershed issues, goals, and strategies. Lytle explained that the board had previously received an issues list for review and comment, and that the next document to be circulated would address goals and strategies. Board members were expected to have approximately two weeks to provide comments. Lytle emphasized that this upcoming review period is particularly important because the district is moving closer to drafting the actual plan and eventually presenting a draft to the Technical Advisory Committee, after which the document will move toward public review.

Lytle encouraged board members to use the upcoming two- to three-week period to carefully examine the goals and strategies and identify anything they believe is missing or inadequately addressed. Although issues can still be added during the subsequent public-review and public-comment process, he stressed that the current stage represents an important opportunity for board members to ensure that their concerns and priorities are

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

properly reflected before the draft advances. A board member reported having already submitted comments near the end of the initial comment period and having copied the full board. That member encouraged other board members to provide feedback on those comments and forward their thoughts to Lytle so that the discussion could continue among the full board. The member also requested consideration of adding approximately 30 minutes to a future board meeting agenda to discuss the topic in greater depth.

The board then turned to legislative and regulatory matters. A board member raised a concern regarding the district's historical use of a lobbyist and the implications of eliminating that position from the budget. The member explained that the district had historically retained a lobbyist to advocate for district interests at the state legislature. One of the lobbyist's important responsibilities had been advocating for continued state funding to support dredging. The speaker explained that dredging represents a responsibility that should not be funded solely by the district because the state has historically recognized that dredging costs extend beyond the district's own financial responsibilities. State support for dredging is not automatically included in the standard budget and must be approved annually.

The district had eliminated its lobbyist position after determining that the approximately \$20,000 annual expenditure did not appear to provide sufficient value relative to its cost. According to the discussion, the lobbyist had primarily provided reports and had not been sufficiently effective in advancing the district's priorities. The position was therefore eliminated from both the current budget and the following year's budget. Nevertheless, the board member stressed that eliminating the lobbyist does not eliminate the need for the district to monitor legislative and regulatory developments. Public-affairs and legislative issues could have significant operational and financial consequences for the district.

The board member encouraged board members and staff to work creatively with partner organizations and stakeholders to ensure that the district's legislative priorities remain visible and that important matters, including dredging funding and drainage issues, continue to be monitored and reported back to the board. The board member specifically encouraged the district's relevant partner and advisory groups to have conversations about how this work should be handled going forward. Board members were asked to think about possible approaches and provide ideas to Lytle so that the board could potentially take

Minutes- Approved: 9.16.2026
Meeting Type: Board Meeting
Time/Date: 7:00pm CST,
Location: Community Room, Shakopee Community Center
1255 Fuller Street, Shakopee, MN 55379



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

action at a September or October meeting. Historically, by the October meeting, a lobbyist would have been present to facilitate a discussion of legislative priorities; the board now needs to determine an alternative mechanism for accomplishing that function without restoring the prior \$20,000 lobbying arrangement.

The board then briefly reviewed the calendar and upcoming events. Lytle noted that several events were approaching and indicated that he would be out of town the following week attending the National Waterways Convention in Moline. He also referenced the Salt Symposium as an upcoming event that had not yet been added to the calendar. Board members and partner representatives were given an opportunity to raise additional matters or comments. Della Young indicated that she had nothing further to add, and the chair congratulated her on her ten-year anniversary, referencing her related social media posts. No additional substantive issues were raised by managers, board members, or participants.

The meeting concluded after the chair confirmed that there were no further questions or comments. The chair stated the meeting was adjourned at 7:52, and the meeting was formally brought to a close.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at PM CST.