

Minutes- Approved: 5.20.2026
 Meeting Type: Personnel Committee
 Time/Date: 7:00pm CST, April 8, 2026
 Location: 112 E. 5th Street, #102 Chaska, Minnesota 55318



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
 WATERSHED DISTRICT

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Managers Present: Joseph Barisonzi, Carter McNew, Kyle Bakkum

Staff Present: Will Lytle, Damaris Canales

Others Present: Rachel Kapsch

Action: Approve the 3.11.26 Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	Y				
Motion Carried									

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

3. NEW BUSINESS

The meeting segment began with staff and board leadership discussing whether certain elements of the organization’s standard work plan should be modified in light of current circumstances. The intent was to give the board flexibility to either continue with conventional procedures or alter the normal delivery approach for upcoming projects and initiatives. It was emphasized that the board did not need to resolve every emerging consideration immediately, but instead should focus on whether the presented work generally met the objectives established in the work plan.

Rachel Kapsch was then invited to present the Native Seed Propagation Program framework document. She explained that the framework document was designed to outline the full Native Seed Propagation Program. She said the work began with a review of MNL’s invasive species mapping and management report for the Lower Minnesota River, which had recommended prioritizing protection of the highest-quality fen communities. Based on those findings, staff focused on Seminary Fen and Gun Club Lake South. Kapsch described how staff reviewed indicator species associated with each fen and created a database identifying species suitable for native seed propagation and harvesting. The selection process intentionally excludes threatened or endangered species, hazardous plants, and species with invasive look-alikes. The

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program also prioritized hardy plants that could better withstand collection and propagation activities. After developing the list, staff shared the findings with Keylor Andrews, identified as the calcareous fen coordinator with the Department of Natural Resources, along with additional agency contacts for review and coordination.

The discussion then shifted toward watershed governance structures, district boundaries, and hydrologic considerations. Will Lytle explained that public permitting work consumes a significant portion of staff time and budget resources, and he noted that the material being discussed was intended primarily as a memo supported by visual boundary maps. He clarified that the maps illustrated current political and watershed management boundaries rather than purely hydrologic ones. Lytle stressed that hydrologic systems are not binary and that surface water flow can vary depending on terrain, groundwater interaction, and human development such as roads or fill placement.

Lytle further explained that many watershed management organizations operate with politically defined boundaries rather than strict hydrologic boundaries. He used HUC-12 and HUC-8 watershed examples to illustrate that even scientifically defined watershed boundaries would not necessarily align neatly with river systems or existing governance structures. He emphasized that discussions about changing district boundaries are complex because they involve environmental, hydrologic, operational, and political considerations simultaneously. According to Lytle, even relatively minor adjustments can become procedurally difficult, while major boundary revisions would require broad approval not only from the district itself but also from neighboring watershed organizations and affected municipalities or residents. He noted that there appeared to be little historical precedent for substantial contested boundary changes.

The conversation then moved into administrative and contracting matters. Lytle stated that any future staff recommendation related to these issues should include a defined allocation of staff time and identification of the corresponding budget line item. Members briefly discussed whether certain agenda items should proceed directly to the board instead of through the personnel committee because the issues were not strictly personnel-related. One participant suggested that item 4.2 still overlapped with personnel and contracting concerns because of its financial implications, prompting additional discussion.

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Attention then turned to dredge material contracts. Lytle explained that the district already understood where revised contracts needed to go procedurally, but implementation was being delayed until a new general counsel could update and standardize the agreements. He described the existing contracts, including one involving Cargill, as outdated compilations containing handwritten revisions, layered PDFs, and inconsistent terms. Staff intended to modernize the contracts for 2026 by incorporating clearer financial assurances, updated unit costs, and revised dredge sale provisions. Lytle noted that the district also needed to work with entities sending dredged materials and with purchasing groups to create structures that encouraged dredging activity rather than discouraging it through overly burdensome terms. He estimated that updated contracts could likely be distributed within a 30- to 60-day timeframe once legal review was completed.

Action: Direct staff to revise the recommendation memo for the financial services provider selection so that it included detailed numerical cost information and clearer financial comparisons between proposals before being presented to the full board for approval consideration.									
1st:		2nd:							
McN.	Y	Bar.	Y	Bak.	Y				
Motion Carried									

Action: To forwarding the service-provider recommendation to the full board along with a committee recommendation that the board approve it.									
1st:		2nd:							
Bar.	Y	McN.	Y	Bak.	Y				
Motion Carried									

Action: To approve and send a revised governance and communication letter to the boards of all four counties, addressed through each county board chair, with the discussed changes to continue formal good-faith dialogue and engagement between the watershed district and county stakeholders regarding governance and district relations.									
1st:		2nd:							
Bar.	Y	McN.	Y	Bak.	Y				

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Motion Carried

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM CST.

Action: To table all skipped and undiscussed agenda items.									
1st:		2nd:							
Bar.	Y	McN.	Y	Bak.	Y				
Motion Carried									