

Minutes- Approved: 1.14.26

Time/Date: December 3, 2026 @ 7:00 pm CST,
Location: 6601 Auto Club Rd Minneapolis, MN 55438
Virtual Location: [Teams Meeting](#) | [Transcript](#)



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 (Clerk)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Lytle explained that delays in setting up a previous board meeting highlighted the absence of a robust emergency protocol for the board, staff, and advisory committees. He presented a preliminary spreadsheet designed to collect primary and secondary emails, phone numbers, and emergency contacts, as well as to outline different types of emergencies and the information needed to appropriately triage them. He also discussed ongoing work to ensure backup meeting hosts, such as assigning Damaris Canales (Clerk) co-host rights, and described efforts to expand the emergency contact list to include more staff members and field-related information. Lytle reported that recovery emails and many phone numbers for key staff are already included and that the protocol will continue to be developed.

The board next discussed the TAC and CAC agenda item, during which Lytle reported on ongoing conversations with Bakkum regarding strengthening integration between the board and the CAC. Lytle noted that Bakkum had volunteered to serve as a formal liaison to the CAC and had drafted a revised purpose statement and updated bylaws aligned with both short and long-term operational goals. He stated that formal elections for the CAC Executive Committee would be held at the December meeting, and staff requested that Bakkum be officially designated as the board representative to the CAC. Board members acknowledged this direction, and discussion continued with McNew expressing that, as a newer member, he would prepare questions and coordinate with Lytle to better understand the CAC's historical activities. Kuplic raised concerns about the lack of meaningful reporting from the CAC beyond their newsletter, noting a desire for clearer information on how the CAC advocates for the district and with whom they engage. Lytle agreed to relay these expectations to the CAC ahead of an upcoming work session. Barisonzi added that he would review the original proposal and

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interview materials from when the CAC's external representation services were contracted, to ensure the board can compare promised deliverables with actual performance. He requested time to pull these records so they could be included in a preparatory memo rather than raised unexpectedly at the meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS

Lytle reported that there were no significant new developments to present. He informed the board that he was currently attending the Minnesota Watersheds Annual Meeting and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA) Conference. He noted that while individual administrators at the event were welcoming, he would not recommend that the organization rejoin MAWA at this time due to ongoing institutional issues. Despite these challenges, Lytle stated that attending the conference remained valuable.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Lytle opened the next agenda section with an overview of the email and SharePoint orientation materials, noting that while no action was required, board members should review the guidance to ensure proper use of district email accounts and to understand that district communications whether conducted via official or personal devices; it may be subject to public data requests under FOIA. He emphasized that using district email systems protects both board members and the organization, and he recommended setting up forwarding and shared calendars to avoid missed communications. Lytle added that any technical issues should be directed to the IT administrator and stated that upcoming training needs would include refreshers on open meeting laws as well as added cybersecurity training, given the expanding access board members will have to district files and systems.

He explained how he will utilize the next 30 days to prepare 2026 work plans for personnel committee review and stated that while Della Young's team submitted work plans with strong descriptions of purpose, they lacked justification for 2026 funding levels and did not provide sufficient detail on what work must occur specifically in that year. He explained that

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recommendations received so far defaulted to fully funding everything as high priority, without the nuance needed for zero-based budgeting. Lytle noted additional emerging needs including office cleanout, creating physical and cloud-based server backups, and establishing grant-writing capacity that are not reflected in current work plans. He also referenced a draft work plan received from the Dakota SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) that included a small rate increase and new elements, illustrating the broader effort to reconcile existing practices with the newly adopted budgeting approach. Barisonzi reiterated that 2026 work plans should have been approved at this meeting but were delayed due to zero-based budgeting, creating complications for both his and Young's contracts, which require defined deliverables. He asked Lytle to propose a short-term solution, such as a temporary one to two-month work plan, focused on developing the full work plan layout, or a plan outlining how to suspend nonpriority activities; in order to allow the district to continue operations while final work plans are completed.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM CST.