

**Shell Rock River Watershed District  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2026**

Managers present: Al Bakken, Mike Lee, Mike Hanson, Mick Delger, Brad Kramer, and Dan DeBoer

Managers absent: Joe Pacovsky

Manager Delger called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on January 13, 2026 at the Shell Rock River Watershed District, 305 S 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007.

No one wished to speak during the public forum.

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve the agenda.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- a. Minutes of the December 9, 2025 SRRWD Regular Board Meeting
- b. Minutes of the January 7, 2026 SRRWD Personnel Committee Meeting
- c. December 2025 Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- d. December 2025 Project Fund Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- e. Authorize Payment of Claims
- f. Authorize Payment of Project Fund Disbursements

Manager DeBoer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Program and Project Manager, Courtney Phillips, provided a grant update. The SRRWD's application for the Soil Health Financial Assistance Program for \$13,500.00 to purchase a No-Till-Drill has been selected. The grant covers 50% of the approximate \$23,000.00 cost. The drill will be used to seed District properties. The potential to rent out the equipment was discussed. Courtney also reported that the District will apply for BWSR Watershed Based Implementation grant funding. Funding requests need to be submitted by April 30, 2026.

Under Minnesota Statute section 13D.05, subd. 3(b), the meeting will be closed for attorney-client privilege to discuss the Fountain Lake Restoration permit appeal.

Manager Delger reopened the meeting.

Administrator Andy Henschel discussed the District's annual audit options, as offered by Andy Bernau of Hill, Benda, Skov and Bernau PA. He compared and contrasted the current federal audit versus the Minnesota standard audit requirements.

Manager DeBoer offered the following motion:

Move to approve the federal standard audit.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Andy Henschel introduced the following annual statutory motions:

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve audit services with Hill, Larson, Walth & Benda, P.A.

Manager Bakken seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Lee offered the following motion:

Move to approve continued services with Larkin Hoffman.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve continued services with Peterson, Kolker, Haedt & Benda, LTD.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager DeBoer offered the following motion:

Move to approve continued service with Americana Insurance Group.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Bakken offered the following motion:

Move to designate Albert Lea Tribune as the official legal newspaper.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Manager Bakken offered the following motion:

Move to designate US Bank as the depository for District funds.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel reminded the Board of Managers to complete the annual Statement of Economic Interest and Conflict of Interest forms.

Administrator Henschel and Manager Kramer, on behalf of MN Watersheds, discussed the 2026 session priorities including MN DNR permitting, chloride reductions, and insurance.

Administrator Henschel also reminded the Board of Managers of the upcoming Minnesota Watersheds Legislative Event in March.

As a result of the closed session, Manager DeBoer offered the following motion:

Move to conditionally approve District staff to continue to work with MN DNR and Attorney General to resolve natural repose, Vegetative Management Plan, and policy/procedure to handle permit conflicts.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel reported that the District recently updated the Personnel Handbook and it is the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to approve the Personnel Handbook.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to introduce Resolution 2026-01

**Resolution 2026-01**  
**Approval of Personnel Handbook**

WHEREAS, the Shell Rock River Watershed District Board of Managers (“Board of Managers”) pursues the mission of implementing reasonable and necessary improvements to the water-related and other natural resources within its boundaries;

WHEREAS, changes in state and federal laws have caused the need for the District to update its current Personnel Handbook;

WHEREAS, the Board of Managers, having reviewed the proposed updated Personnel Handbook, has determined that the Handbook is necessary and, in the District’s, best interests;

THEREFORE, the Board of Managers hereby approves the updated Personnel Handbook as recommended by the Personnel Committee.

NOW THEREFORE:

The District hereby approves the proposed updated Personnel Handbook as recommended by the Personnel Committee to be implemented effective January 13, 2026.

Dated: January 13, 2026

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the resolution was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel discussed the 2026 cost share and incentive program. The amount will be the same as the previous year including a \$10 cost share for the purchase of a rain barrel.

Manager Bakken offered the following motion:

Move to approve the 2026 Cost Share and Incentive Program.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Administrator Henschel provided a sales tax update. The current sales tax will reach its referendum limit by February, 2026. After joint meetings between the City of Albert Lea and the SRRWD, the City has proposed splitting the amount collected 50/50 with the City's portion to support projects such as trails and the library. The language of the bill and the ballot questions are still being discussed. The legislative session begins in early February. If the legislature moves forward with the bill, it would go before voters in November. If approved, the sales tax would start no earlier than April, 2027.

During Managers Items, Manager Lee provided an update from his attendance at the previous County board meeting.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Manager Bakken seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.