

Shell Rock River Watershed District
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025

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

Managers absent: Joe Pacovsky and Dan DeBoer

Manager Delger called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on January 14, 2025 at the Shell Rock River Watershed District, 305 S 1st Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007.

During the public forum, Kathy Niebuhr, 74438 240th St., Albert Lea, MN 56007, questioned the official notice of meetings.

Manager Lee offered the following motion:

Move to approve the agenda with addition: 6d. Motion to approve letter of support for the Winnebago River Watershed Management Coalition.

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 the consent agenda as presented.

- a. Minutes of the December 10, 2024 SRRWD Regular Board Meeting
- b. December 2024 Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- c. December 2024 Project Fund Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- d. Authorize Payment of Claims
- e. Authorize Payment of Project Fund Disbursements
- f. Quarterly Transfer

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

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

Natural Resources Technician Mike Wacholz spoke about potential grant funding to combat curly-leaf pondweed in Fountain Lake. He is communicating with a company out of Mankato, Minnesota.

Administrator Henschel spoke on behalf of Project and Program Manager, Courtney Phillips.

Courtney is requesting out of state travel on February 23-26, 2025, to attend the Upper Midwest

Stream Restoration Symposium in Dubuque, Iowa. The DNR and MNL will be discussing and presenting on a Shell Rock River restoration with trees and dikes.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve out of state travel for Courtney Phillips to attend the UMSRS in Dubuque, Iowa on February 23-26, 2025.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

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

Administrator Henschel discussed the 2025 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. The projected 2025 goal is 100 rain barrel incentives. Cost sharing is available for waterways, wells, cover crops, and other Best Management Practices (BMPs) with WBIF funding.

Manager Bakken offered the following motion:

Move to approve the 2025 cost share and incentive program.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

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

Administrator Henschel continued by providing project updates. Earth moving including scrapes and culvert replacements have begun at the Panicum Prairie project site. The project should be completed in a couple of weeks. Grant reporting is underway for LSOHC and BWSR. The District received CPL funding of \$25,000 for a 3-acre acquisition to add to the Bancroft property.

Administrator Henschel concluded with the amended agenda item. He explained that the Winnebago Watershed in Iowa is applying for a watershed planning grant offered by the Iowa DNR. They are asking for a letter of support to attach to their grant.

Manager Lee offered the following motion:

Move to approve letter of support for Winnebago River Watershed Management Coalition.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

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

Administrator Henschel proceeded with his agenda items. The SRRWD is consider switching from the current federal audit to a state audit. He compared and contrasted the federal and

Minnesota standard audit requirements. According to Andy Bernau of Hill, Benda, Skov and Bernau PA, it is estimated that the state audit would cost around \$14,500 and switching to the federal would cost around \$18,500. He suggested that we do not switch to the state audit and then switch back to the federal. This would take more time and money versus keeping it the same.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to approve federal standard or state standard audit.

Manager Lee seconded the motion.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken. All the managers were against the language of the motion. The motion failed.

Manager Hanson 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 Bakken offered the following motion:

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

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

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

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve continued services with Taft Law.

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 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 Hanson offered the following motion:

Move to approve continued service with Americana Insurance Group.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

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

Manager Hanson offered the following motion:

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

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 designate US Bank as the depository for District funds.

Manager Kramer 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 Statement of Economic Interest and Conflict of Interest forms.

Administrator Henschel and Manager Kramer, on behalf of MN Watersheds, discussed the 2025 session priorities including chloride reductions and the DNR permit timeline resolution.

Administrator Henschel continued by providing some updates. District staff, Manager DeBoer, local representatives, and engineers met with MN DNR Assistant Commissioner Bob Meier and Director of Ecological and Water Resources Division Katie Smith regarding the public waters permit for dredging East Main Bay and Bancroft Bay. The SRRWD submitted the public waters permit application to the MN DNR in May, 2024. According to the Water Permitting and Reporting System (MPARS), the status of the permit is "Reviewing for Completeness." The District expressed the burden of proof as to why the dredging project is important. The District contracted with J.F. Brennan to perform a topographic survey of Bancroft Bay which proved that sedimentation is filling in since it was surveyed the year prior. MN DNR disagrees about water quality monitoring, specifically the SRRWD Delft3D model versus the MN DNR Flux32 model. Progress is made regarding an avoidance and mitigation plan for the Blanding's turtle and an adaptive vegetative management plan. Administrator Henschel emphasized the difficulties with the permit delays including the bidding process, price, and contractor's upcoming spring schedules. The District relayed that a permit is necessary by the end of February to still dredge in 2025. Internal discussions have been had regarding bidding the project without a permit. MN DNR staff said they would get back to the District with a timeline of what is expected in the permitting process. The District will continue to put pressure on the DNR to resolve this issue.

The clean out of the inner cell 1 at the CDF will be completed this week. Soil erosion control measures including silt fence and hay will be implemented over the next few weeks. Upland grading and final seeding will take place this spring.

The District sold the Country Club property to the Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA) on December 27, 2024 for approximately \$257,000.00.

During Manager's Items, Manager Lee reported on the County board meetings he attended. Manager Bakken questioned the status of the County ditch inspector position and projects, such as the Judicial Ditch number nine and trees on tile lines, that need to be addressed once someone is filled. Manager Kramer discussed his participation at the DNR Roundtable and his recent election to the SWCD board.

The best value procurement training will take place after this board meeting. A dredge committee will be scheduled in the near future. The next board meeting has been scheduled for February 11, 2025.

Manager Kramer offered the following motion:

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Manager Hanson seconded the motion.

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