

Shell Rock River Watershed District
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2025

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

Managers absent: Mike Hanson

Manager Delger called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on February 11, 2025 at the Shell Rock River Watershed District, 305 S 1st Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007.

No one wished to speak during the public forum.

Manager Pacovsky offered the following motion:

Move to approve the agenda.

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 January 14, 2025 SRRWD Regular Board Meeting
- b. Minutes of the January 22, 2025 SRRWD Dredge Committee Meeting
- c. January 2025 Treasurer's Report Subject to Audit
- d. January 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.

Project and Program Manager Courtney Phillips discussed applying for the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant for phase 2 of the Twin Lakes Stream Restoration Project. This portion of the project would include Depot St. to the County ditch. There is a lot of erosion and an old railroad bed that is impeding flow. CPL funding does require a 10% match. The city of Twin Lakes received federal funding to replace the culvert under Depot St. and that can be used as match.

Manager Lee offered the following motion:

Move to apply for Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

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

Courtney concluded by providing project updates. The Panicum Prairie Restoration Project, including wetland scrapes and culvert replacements, is complete minus retainage and final seeding. Using Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) funding, a subscription to No-Till Farmer was sent to producers in the Shell Rock and Winnebago watersheds. The SRRWD is drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit engineers for the channel restoration project between Fountain Lake and Albert Lea Lake. Next steps include sending the RFP to the City of Albert Lea for review and then posting to QuestCDN. The project will be funded through the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Administrator Henschel discussed curly-leaf pondweed. Lack of snow and improved water quality in Fountain Lake, enables the sun to penetrate deep into the lake much earlier than normal. This helps aquatic plants grow and thrive for a longer period of time. Due to the life cycle of aquatic plants, unfortunately curly-leaf pondweed is one of the first plants to grow. This invasive species grows in dense mats and can choke out healthy, native aquatic plants. The plant tends to die down by the Fourth of July. He also spoke about dredging and the curly-leaf pondweed seedbeds. Natural Resource Technician Mike Wacholz spoke about the differences between mechanical and chemical management options. He also informed the Board of Managers that the District applied for a grant to purchase chemicals but was not awarded it this year. The District will work with the City of Albert Lea and the DNR for permitting.

Andy and Mike continued by discussing the Goose Lake Fish Barrier located on the Green Lea Golf Course. The current high voltage electric barrier design was flawed due to lack of flow. The District is looking into alternative methods to control carp such as mechanical or low voltage electric barrier. Manager Bakken questioned an alternative barrier location such as Bridge Avenue but the electricity and generator are already in place at the Goose Lake site.

Administrator Henschel continued by discussing the Fountain Lake Restoration - East Main Bay and Bancroft Bay. Using a map, Andy showed where the District is requesting to dredge in Bancroft Bay including setbacks and phosphorus removal. He also explained the areas where the District conceded to the DNR regarding the Blanding's turtle. The District will still dredge the Blanding's Turtle Avoidance Areas but only during June 1-September 15. Additional dredge avoidance areas were discussed including areas with Yellow Pond Lily. The DNR has reached out to the District's engineers regarding areas around the island but the District is not in favor of that due to flow. The Adaptive Management Plan was discussed including invasive management control and assisted native vegetation growth in 3-5 years after dredging. The Dredge Committee continues to meet regularly.

Andy concluded with an update on the Confined Disposal Facility (CDF). The cleanout of the inner cell 1 at the CDF is complete. Retainage is still in place for soil erosion control measures, upland grading, and final seeding. A potential change order for the final completion date including management of spoils area was discussed.

During Manager's Items, Manager Kramer reported that MN Watersheds is changing the legislative and resolution process. In order to add hybrid meetings to the by-laws, a special board meeting is necessary. Two board managers must be selected as delegates to vote on behalf of the SRRWD at the upcoming special board meeting on March 21, 2025 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. He also provided an update regarding his recent attendance at the Minnesota Lake Management Society Symposium. He also asked the Board to consider an outdoor activity mailer or QR code. Finally, he requested a semi-annual meeting with other local partners to discuss how we can work together. Andy reminded the Board of Managers of the upcoming Legislative Event on February 19, 2025. Manager Bakken thanked Leah Stadheim for social media coverage of recent ice fishing pictures. Manager Lee commented on his recent attendance at the County board meeting as they proceed with hiring an administrator.

The next board meeting has been scheduled for March 11, 2025.

Manager Pacovsky offered the following motion:

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Manager Kramer seconded the motion.

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