



TITLE: REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: JULY 1, 2025

1. ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Stuart Christian called the July 1, 2025, meeting to order at 8 AM at the District Office. Other managers attending were Clayton Bartz, Don Andringa, Shawn Brekke and Craig Engelstad. Staff members present included April Swenby – Administrator and Donna Bjerk, Administrative Assistant. Others attendance included Zach Herrmann - Houston Engineering.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the agenda, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve the minutes from the June 5, 2025 with minor changes, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz. **The Motion was carried.**

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

The draft treasurer's report for June was presented. Swenby suggested no action until August. There are levy allocations to ditch funds that are not entered, along with payroll and bank reconciliation. The managers did not act on the draft and will act in August when a final report is ready.

The managers reviewed their expense reports and reported on activities for the month. The following bills were reviewed.

Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson	1,130.00
April J. Swenby	285.00
Brady Bjerk	100.00
City of Fertile	56.71
EcoLab	57.98
First Community Credit Union	1,689.91
Garden Valley Telephone Company	184.35
Gladen Construction, Inc.	334,590.00
H2Over Viewers	34,330.77
Houston Engineering	16,835.60
Jason Benbo	425.00
Liberty Township	745.00
Noah Swenby	100.00
Office Supplies Plus	51.50
Otter Tail Power Company	144.18
Rinke-Noonan	2,686.50
Schmitz Builders, Inc.	132,537.35
Wild Rice Electric	122.28
TOTAL	<u><u>526,072.13</u></u>

Swenby noted two bills that were paid with a June 30, 2025, date to reimbursements that are date sensitive. Both expenses are reflected in the draft June Treasurer's report on the check register and are as follows: Houston Engineering for \$28,624.25 and Mill Street Catering for \$267.47. Swenby stated that the checks are being held until board approval.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve and pay the bills with a total of \$554,963.85, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa **The Motion was carried.**

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Project #27: Swenby suggested a special meeting in July to meet with Ringquist if the district wanted to stay on track for the August meeting with landowners. There was a delay due to specific information that was needed from the county and there wasn't enough time to get the information and get it to Ringquist to prepare for today's July 1 meeting. The managers suggested a special meeting July 24. Swenby was told that the deadline to apply for FHM grants for this project is July 31. Swenby stated that the district will be applying for this.

Ditch Inspections: A summary report was provided to the managers. Swenby asked for direction for trees in the side slopes. The Board suggested spot spraying first and then cut down larger trees if needed. The managers highlighted areas of the Sand Hill Ditch that may benefit along with the areas that are noted in Swenby's summary report. Manager Engelstad inquired about trees along the Kittleson Diversion. Herrmann will review the records to ensure that there is legal authority in the area along this stretch in Liberty Section 16. HEI will coordinate with L & M spraying and Larsen Helicopters to provide maps of areas of concern and obtain quotes.

Change orders: Change orders to the contract for Gladen Construction will be added for the Ulseth culvert north of PC # 41, Ditch 119 cleaning, and the overflows on Project # 17.

Boundary 102: MnDOT is responsible for the installation of a 24" culvert and a trap through an existing ditch plug NW of the warming house and in the south road ditch of MN 102. Manager Engelstad suggested that Herrmann review this again, to determine if culvert installation is necessary. Herrmann will review the plans.

The watershed is responsible for the following:

- Install a ditch plug just west of Co 44, south of the railroad grade.
- Ensure flap gate is in working order through Co 44 south of the railroad grade.
- Install a ditch plug south of the railroad grade, northwest of the warming house.
- Remove 36" RCP through the railroad grade north of Co 41. Raise railroad grade in vicinity of Co 41.

Swenby asked if there was a contractor preference or recommendation from the board to perform the work. Swenby stated that the board has not adopted a policy designating a designated contractor for smaller work items that the district needs. Several contractors have asked her to notify them for work that the district does. The board recommended bidding specs to obtain quotes from contractors. Before construction the district will coordinate with landowners.

Building Project: The project is painted and ready for internal finishing such as trim work flooring, and tile. Dry-vit siding contractors are expected to start. Appliances and cabinetry are expected to be placed in July. Swenby expects siding to start this week. Swenby is working on ensuring with MCIT that there is adequate insurance on the addition.

Existing Building Repairs: A brick contractor made a site visit to the existing building and the brick. It was noted that the limestone also needs repair in addition to acid washing. The garbage was cleaned and disposed of in the district basement. Swenby noted that the musty odor was better, but will still need to troubleshoot ways to seal the odor in the basement. Manager Englestad asked about historical maps that were in the basement. Swenby stated those were not disposed of but were not needed for the district as everything is digitized. Managers were invited to remove the maps.

Additional Items: The managers were given information on the status of approved purchases last month, meetings Swenby attended in June, status on a proposed ditch buffer policy, reimbursement for repair items completed on Project #17, and meeting the statutory requirements for annual report/audit submission to various agencies.

Project Team: There was a project team meeting on June 11 with a tour of the site a meeting and a presentation from Zach Herrmann. Herrmann is going to go through the presentation with the board and give an update on where the project team is at and some possible new developments. Swenby stated that during Herrman's report she will be asking for board direction for activities moving forward.

6. ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Project #17: Final pay request, less retainage was listed in the bills to be paid. A change order for a damaged culvert along Project # 12, cleaning Ditch #119 and the overflows on Project # 17 will be presented at the August board meeting.

Project # 27: Herrmann is working through the preliminary design and cost estimates to assist in funding pursuits. They are currently exploring filter options that reduce additional pump demand. Herrmann and Swenby have been working with the county assessor's office to gather required parcel valuations. HEI has determined pre-settlement vs. current drainage changes. Information was provided to Ringquist on June 27, 2025.

SH River Ecosystem Project Team: The current status of alternatives under review through the Project Team effort were presented to the Managers. Alternative components include temporary storage, a two-stage channel east of highway 9, and a widened channel west of highway 9. The temporary storage sites presented to the Project Team in January 2025 were analyzed using the hydraulic model for the project extents and further refined based on Project Team comments in March of 2025. Herrmann stressed that the results are conceptual in nature and only identified based on storage potential derived from LiDAR data. No analysis of inlet/outlet feasibility, landowner acceptance, or environmental impacts was completed as part of the identification.

Herrmann presented the finding from the June 2025 Project Team meeting, that evaluated flow and stage reduction benefits further downstream along the Sand Hill Ditch. In general, the results showed promising reductions in both stage and flow. Two potential locations where flood water could be impounded were then presented to the Managers and discussed the opportunity for storage vs the adverse impact to the agricultural land that would be inundated. Several options could exist that may allow for compatible agricultural use within the impoundment area and would be dependent on the future desires of the Board and landowners. The preliminary draft cost for each storage site would be \$13-15 million but is largely dependent on costs for land rights.

The direction of the Project Team during the June 2025 Project Team meeting was to inform landowners of the concepts prior to continuing forward with any additional technical analysis. As a result from meeting Swenby and Herrmann held with a couple of landowners in the easterly portion of the district, Herrmann discussed an additional concept that may negate or reduce the need for the identified impoundment locations by using culvert sizing at the County Road 213 crossing, and operational changes to Bear Park Dam. Staff recommends to hold off on landowner outreach until HEI can verify that the additional concept is technically sound using the hydraulic model. The Board agreed that ensuring no other reasonable alternative exists is the best next step before engaging landowners on the identified impoundment locations.

Swenby stated that she had preliminary conversations with the district attorney about various landownership of district board managers and how they may pertain to the alternatives suggested from the Project Team. The district attorney recommends a conflict of interest policy. Swenby stated that regardless of the projects that are upcoming, it is best practice to adopt a conflict of interest policy. The board agreed that it is necessary to ask the district attorney to draft such a policy.

7. ACTION ITEMS:

103D.905 Subd 3 Petition Levies: Swenby will be meeting with the Polk County Commissioners in July to present the annual report for 2024 and present the proposed petition levies using MSA 103D.095 Subd3. Last year the amount levied for each category of our petitions was \$135,866.75 for petitions "Water Quality and Erosion" and "Water Management and Retention" and \$100,000 for the petition for "Studies and Agency Support". The new capacity is \$154,629.71 for 2025. Swenby provided actual expenses in the district categories, and presented projected expenses for each category. The managers reviewed each petition and category budget item.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve two presented petitions at the new tax capacity of \$154,629.71 for petitions “Water Quality and Erosion” and “Water Management and Retention” and \$100,000 for the petition for “Studies and Agency Support”, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

H2Over Viewers Contract: A contract for viewing services for the Redetermination of Benefits and Grass Strip Acquisition for Project Ditches 3, 11, 12, 13, 17, & 20 and Ditches 9, & 119 was presented to the board; and Swenby highlight attorney recommendation addendums and changes.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve the viewing services contract with an effective date of June 5, 2025 pending attorney changes implemented for this contract and an addendum to the contract signed for the redetermination of the Sand Hill Ditch, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

Scandia Repairs: The following bids were received during the bid opening on June 25, 2025:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Total Base Bid</u>
Davidson Construction, Inc.	\$424,940.00
Gladden Construction inc	\$423,898.00
Knife River Materials - Northern MN Division	\$523,450.00
Lyle Wilkens Inc.	\$415,894.00
R.J. Zavoral and Sons, Inc.	\$421,489.00
Rigid Excavating LLC	\$445,400.00
Spruce Valley Corporation	\$529,050.00
Taggart Contracting Inc	\$459,500.00
Tunheim Construction, LLC	\$407,679.22
M & M Contractors	\$493,630.00

A **Motion** was made by Manager Brekke to approve award to Tunheim Construction for \$407,679.22 pending contractor requirements. **Seconded** by Manager Bartz. **The Motion was carried.**

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

The managers received information from Mn Watersheds, Polk County Discovery Meetings that Herrmann and Swenby both attend, the Drainage Work Group, and the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group.

9. PERMITS:

Two permits were presented to the board:

25-015: Gary Erichson, Heier Twp. Section 16/20, Erosion Control Structure Installation

25-016: PC Highway Department, Vineland Twp. Section 34, Replace culvert

It is recommended to included attorney recommended contingencies to permit 25-016 which clarifies that permit approval is contingent on the assumption that that the County Attorney has confirmed that proposed work is consistent, as nearly as practicable, with the same hydraulic capacity of the system, capacity as originally constructed and subsequently improved and that the proposed work is a repair as defined by Minn. Stat. 103E.701, subd. 1. Any proposed work that is not so consistent is not approved within the permit.

Motion made by Manager Bartz to approve permit #25-015 and #25-016 (with attorney recommendations for county legal ditch culvert changes), **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.** Herrmann will recommend a size.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

The next regular meeting will be held August 7, 2025, at 8 AM. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to adjourn the meeting at 11:09 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

