

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT  
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

**April 9, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers was called to order by President Sherry White at 7:01 p.m. on April 9, 2026, at the MCWD offices, 15320 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

**ROLL CALL FOR ATTENDANCE**

President White called the roll to note attendance:

William Olson:	Present
Eugene Maxwell:	Present
Ricardo Bonner:	Present
Arun Hejmadi:	Present, participating remotely
Stephen Sando:	Absent
Sherry White:	Present

**DISTRICT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS PRESENT**

James Wisker, Administrator; Michael Hayman, Director of Project Planning; Samantha Hoppe, Outreach Manager; Justin Templin, Litigation Counsel; and Louis Smith, District Counsel.

**MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

Hopkins Mayor Patrick Hanlon appeared before the Board of Managers to urge the Board of Managers to continue to work with Alatus and Hopkins for the 325 Blake Road project. He said that the project is at a crucial point and urged the Board to be open to the offer from Alatus. Mayor Hanlon said that Alatus is committed to closing on the acquisition and burdening its property with special assessments, and the City is committed to issuing bonds to fund the road and infrastructure. He stated that the City is seeking an extension of the tax increment financing for the site at the Legislature. He said that this is a well-developed proposal and that many other partners, including the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and the Legislature are watching this project.

Mr. Brian Hunke of the Hopkins City Council appeared before the Board of Managers. He noted that the City of Hopkins and MCWD have been great partners from the start of this process in 2021, and that there has been a lot of work to design for the best outcomes. He said that he feels we still need to push this project to the finish and visualize the immense impact it will have. Mr. Hunke said that MCWD's approval of the Alatus offer

is the last step needed. He noted that the MCWD website refers to the District's collaboration to create and support thriving communities and that he hopes this project can be added to that list.

Mr. Rick Browson appeared before the Board of Managers. He noted that he is a former Hopkins City Council member and that he returned to the Council in 2019 to try to bring this project to the finish line. He said that it breaks his heart to see the project stalled after the past fifteen years of effort. He stated that it would be a tough sell to go back and start over with a new developer, and he is confident in the current players to get the project done now.

Mr. Jim Harmond of Stevens Construction appeared before the Board of Managers. He stated that his company is under contract and ready to work with Alatus, the City and NHP to construct the project.

President White asked Mr. Wisker to respond to these comments. Mr. Wisker said that he appreciated the comments and efforts of these partners and acknowledged that it has been a long journey with a shared vision. He noted the multiple extensions requested by Alatus and granted by MCWD, and the many deadlines over the past four years that have passed without Alatus delivering on its promised commitments. The primary challenge has been that Alatus has not obtained financing to construct its project, while the MCWD has its project at the site fully designed and financed. He noted the most recent terms proposed by Alatus' litigation counsel would be reviewed by the Board in closed session, and that the Board's consideration will be based on advice from a deep bench of advisors.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Olson, to approve the agenda as distributed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:*

*Hejmadi: Aye  
Olson: Aye  
Bonner: Aye  
Maxwell: Aye  
Sando: Absent  
White: Aye*

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*It was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Bonner, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda consisting of approval of the March 26, 2026, Board meeting minutes, and the following resolutions:*

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District  
Board of Managers  
4/9/26

***Resolution 26-036: Authorization to Submit Annual Activity Report to the Board of Water and Soil Resources and Department of Natural Resources***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers accepts the 2025 Annual Activity Report and authorizes its release to BWSR and DNR;***

***Resolution 26-037: Approval of Programmatic Maintenance Agreement with Carver County***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the Board President, on advice of counsel, to execute a programmatic maintenance agreement with Carver County;***

***Resolution 26-038: Approval of Programmatic Maintenance Agreement with Hennepin County***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the Board President, on advice of counsel, to execute a programmatic maintenance agreement with Hennepin County; and***

***Resolution 26-039: Authorization to Execute Agreement for MPCA Planning Stormwater, Wastewater and Community Grant***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MCWD Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator to execute the grant agreement with MPCA upon finalization and receipt to support the 2027 Plan engagement and development.***

***Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***

***Hejmadi: Aye***  
***Olson: Aye***  
***Bonner: Aye***  
***Maxwell: Aye***  
***Sando: Absent***  
***White: Aye***

## **BOARD, COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS**

President's Report: President White noted that she has participated in the onboarding process for Manager Bonner.

President White noted the schedule of upcoming meetings presented in the agenda.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **PERMITS REQUIRING A VARIANCE OR DISCUSSION**

None.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Resolution 26-040: Minnehaha Creek Greenway Resident Engagement Contracting  
Resolution 26-041: Land Use Community Engagement

Ms. Samantha Hoppe appeared before the Board of Managers to review the requests for board action. She reviewed the goals for the 2027 Plan process and the framework for stakeholder engagement. She noted that the process is anchored around engagement with public partners through Policy Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and subwatershed planning processes, and that staff recommends supplementing this engagement through resident engagement in focal geographies and focused engagement with the land use community.

Ms. Hoppe invited Mr. Smith to introduce his colleague Kowsar Mohamed who will be leading in this work. Following this introduction, Ms. Mohamed appeared before the Board of Managers, reviewed her background and experience, and expressed her enthusiasm for this project.

***It was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Bonner, to adopt Resolution 26-040: Minnehaha Creek Greenway Resident Engagement Contracting as follows:***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to execute a contract with Smith Partners for resident engagement in the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, in an amount not to exceed \$27,500.***

Manager Maxwell expressed his appreciation for resident engagement and asked whether the land use outreach would focus on developers in certain areas. Ms. Hoppe stated the plan is to seek a broad cross section of developers who work in the watershed. In response to a question

from Manager Bonner, Mr. Wisker clarified that the Board and the Citizens Advisory Committee will be kept apprised of this work and that there are defined deliverables to report on findings. Ms Hoppe also affirmed that this outreach work would be utilized in the 2027 Plan development.

Manager Olson noted MCWD’s commitment to a science-based approach and commitment to excellence. He said that he felt this project was the next step in MCWD’s pursuit of excellence and that he was thrilled to see someone of Ms. Mohamed’s experience involved in this project. Manager Hejmadi said that he admired the careful and considered engagement process and looked forward to the learning from this project. President White stated that she found this project energizing and exciting. ***There being no further discussion, upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***

***Hejmadi: Aye***  
***Olson: Aye***  
***Bonner: Aye***  
***Maxwell: Aye***  
***Sando: Absent***  
***White: Aye***

***It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Bonner, to adopt Resolution 26-041: Land Use Community Engagement as follows:***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to execute a contract with Smith Partners for land use community engagement, in an amount not to exceed \$37,200.***

***Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***

***Hejmadi: Aye***  
***Olson: Aye***  
***Bonner: Aye***  
***Maxwell: Aye***  
***Sando: Absent***  
***White: Aye***

Resolution 26-042: Establishing a MCWD Governance Advisory Council for a two-year Pilot Period

Mr. Wisker appeared before the Board of Managers to review the request for board action. He noted that as the MCWD enters a period of transition – including Board turnover, development of the 2027 Plan, and other continued organizational evolution – the Board of Managers has discussed the opportunity to intentionally invest in sustaining the Board’s effectiveness over

time. He stated that recent Board discussion and feedback highlight that MCWD's effectiveness in policy and project outcomes is underpinned by its governance culture – defined by long-range stewardship, diverse background and experience, disciplined consensus building, and strong partnership between the Board, staff and Citizen Advisory Committee. He noted that to sustain future governance excellence, four areas of investment have been identified:

- 1) Succession awareness and planning;
- 2) Onboarding of new board members;
- 3) Reinforcing and institutionalizing Board governance; and
- 4) Establishing a governance advisory council.

Mr. Wisker stated that the focus of this proposed resolution is to establish a governance advisory council with about three to five members as a two-year pilot.

***It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Olson, to adopt Resolution 26-042: Establishing a MCWD Governance Advisory Council for a two-year Pilot Period as follows:***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby establishes a Governance Advisory Council for a two-year pilot period to support Board effectiveness, continuity and governance culture, through emphasis on onboarding and mentorship, early-stage advice on strategic initiatives, and broadening the Board's situational awareness through external perspectives and cross-sector insights;***

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administrator is directed to work in coordination with the Board President to develop and present a list of recommended candidates for Board consideration, consistent with the desired composition and purpose of the Governance Advisory Council; and***

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board shall periodically evaluate the function and utility of the Governance Advisory Council and determine whether to continue, modify, or sunset the Council at the conclusion of the two-year pilot period.***

Manager Hejmadi said that he felt this is an excellent idea, providing the Board with perspective from the outside. He said that this can be part of the MCWD's continuous evaluation and improvement process, and that it is a healthy idea to treat this two-year pilot as an experiment.

Manager Bonner asked whether the proposed advisory council would be a duplication of roles with the Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Wisker stated that the intention is to avoid duplication of work with either the Board or the CAC, and to maintain a higher-level focus.

***There being no further discussion, upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District  
Board of Managers  
4/9/26

*Hejmadi: Aye*  
*Olson: Aye*  
*Bonner: Aye*  
*Maxwell: Aye*  
*Sando: Absent*  
*White: Aye*

**BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS**

None.

**BOARD INQUIRIES, ISSUES, AND IDEAS**

None.

**STAFF UPDATES**

Administrator's Report

Mr. Wisker reported on the following items:

1. Ice out on Lake Minnetonka was reported on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lake Minnetonka is currently at elevation 929.0 and MCWD expects to de-winterize the outlet structure soon;
2. MCWD staff will undergo training in strategic communications at the University of St. Thomas and will share learnings from this training in a future board meeting.

The managers thanked Mr. Wisker for this report.

**CLOSED SESSION**

325 Blake Road, Hopkins  
Alatus Development v. MCWD  
JTS Construction v. MCWD

*Upon recommendation of counsel, it was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Bonner to move into closed session for the purpose of discussing the terms of potential sale of 325 Blake Road in Hopkins, receiving confidential legal advice concerning litigation strategy in the case of Alatus Development v. MCWD, and for the purpose of receiving confidential legal advice concerning litigation strategy in the case*

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District  
Board of Managers  
4/9/26

*of JTS Construction v. Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:*

*Hejmadi: Aye*  
*Olson: Aye*  
*Bonner: Aye*  
*Maxwell: Aye*  
*Sando: Absent*  
*White: Aye*

The Board of Managers went into closed session.

The Board of Managers returned to open session.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, President White declared the meeting of the Board of Managers adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Arun Hejmadi, Secretary