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**Title:** Awarding Contract for District Engineering Services

**Resolution Number:** 26-021

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**Reviewed by:** Michael Hayman, Director of Project Planning; Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

**Recommended action:** Board of managers authorizes contract execution for engineering services for MCWD District Engineer

**Budget Considerations:** Fund name: Engineering services retainer 1-1002-4340  
2026 Fund budget: \$80,640

**Past Board actions:** Res #: 25-062: Authorization to Release Request for Proposals for Engineering Services  
Res # 25-078: Authorization to Extend Engineering Services Contract

**Background:**

Under Minnesota Statutes §103B.227, MCWD is required to solicit proposals for professional or technical consultant services at least every two years. The MCWD's current engineering services contract with Stantec, under which Stantec serves as the MCWD engineer, expired on December 31, 2025.

To ensure continuity in MCWD engineering services in the period between the expiration of the engineering services contract with Stantec and a new contract, the contract with Stantec was amended by the District Administrator on January 5, 2026; the extension provides for general engineering services under retainer until February 28, 2026, and permitting services that fall outside the retainer on an hourly basis through June 30, 2026.

**Request for Proposals:**

Process:

In accordance with statute, the Board of Managers approved the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for engineering services at the October 23, 2025 Board meeting via Resolution 25-062. On November 5, 2025, the RFP was posted on the MCWD website as well as the League of Minnesota Cities website. An optional informational meeting for interested firms was held at the MCWD office on November 19, 2025 to answer any questions and provide guidance on the submittal process. Proposals were due on December 19, 2025. In accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act, §13.591, subd. 3(b), all submitted proposals are non-public, and are being provided to the managers under separate cover.

Scope:

The RFP sought a District Engineer to guide, lead, and implement MCWD's engineering functions through a designated Chief Engineer supported by a multidisciplinary team, providing both day-to-day engineering leadership and strategic guidance in support of MCWD's water quality, flood management, ecological, and community goals. Core services include general engineering services on retainer, regulatory permitting support, and operation and maintenance support for the Gray's Bay Dam, with additional services provided as needed.

**Proposal Review:**

The MCWD selection team, consisting of six MCWD staff and Board President Sherry White, received and evaluated four proposals. Stantec, MCWD's current District Engineer, opted to not submit a proposal. The team evaluated the firms' proposals based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of MCWD mission
- Firm experience
- Technical capacity
- Onboarding approach
- Area knowledge
- Innovation
- Cost of services

Following the initial proposal review, the team selected three firms for interviews – AE2S, HDR, and Moore Engineering. The in-person interviews consisted of a short presentation by the selected firms, followed by an in-depth question-and-answer session conducted by the MCWD selection team. Each firm had the opportunity to follow up with a subset of the selection team, offering additional insight into their interview responses.

**Selection Team Recommendation:**

The selection team is recommending that HDR be selected as the MCWD Engineer and awarded the contract for services detailed in the request for proposals (attached).

HDR's proposal stands out for its strong alignment with MCWD's culture and values, as well as its emphasis on collaboration, transparency, and high professional standards. The proposal and interview demonstrated a clear understanding of MCWD's mission and operating context, and an ability to balance technical rigor with creativity, relationship-building, and responsiveness. HDR showed that they had spent meaningful time engaging with the RFP, offering thoughtful insights into MCWD's needs and articulating how they would tailor their approach to support MCWD's evolving priorities.

A key strength of HDR's proposal is the designation of Ryan Fucci as Chief Engineer. Ryan brings strong project management skills, attention to detail, and a collaborative leadership style that aligns well with MCWD's expectations for the MCWD Engineer role. His prior work with MCWD staff, including on the ongoing Downtown Long Lake feasibility effort, reflects a positive and productive working relationship grounded in clear communication and mutual trust. Ryan demonstrated a strong commitment to a long-term watershed career and a "lead-from-within" approach to leadership, supported by a seasoned advisory team and mentors within HDR.

HDR also distinguished itself through its approach to quality, communication, and systems-based problem solving. While HDR would be new to serving as a watershed district engineer, the firm demonstrated imagination and an ability to think big in ways that align with where MCWD is headed as an organization. HDR's articulated QA/QC framework and systematic engagement approach are well suited to complement MCWD's experienced permitting team, which is well positioned to support a smooth transition while maintaining consistent, high-quality regulatory and engineering outcomes.

Taken together, HDR's cultural alignment, leadership approach, imaginative problem solving, and demonstrated understanding of MCWD's work led the selection team to recommend HDR as MCWD's next District Engineer. The team concluded that HDR is well positioned to provide both reliable day-to-day engineering support and a strong strategic partnership as MCWD advances its water quality, flood management, and community objectives.

**Next Steps:**

The selection team hereby recommends the Board of Managers authorize the MCWD Administrator, on advice of counsel, to execute a contract with HDR for engineering services ending on December 31, 2027. Following authorization to contract, staff will work with HDR to finalize the scope of work and contract. Staff do not anticipate the scope requiring any substantive changes. The final contract will not exceed the amount set forth in the proposal. The Chief Engineer and his

team are expected to initiate work in February 2026, and will work alongside MCWD staff and Stantec to onboard efficiently.

**Supporting Documents:**

- Request for Proposals – Engineering Services



## RESOLUTION

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**Resolution number:** 26-021

**Title:** Awarding Contract for District Engineering Services

- WHEREAS Minnesota Statutes §103B.227 requires watershed districts to solicit proposals for professional services, including engineering services, every two years;
- WHEREAS MCWD's professional services contract with Stantec for services as the MCWD engineer expired on December 31, 2025;
- WHEREAS on December 18, 2025, the Board of Managers authorized an extension of the professional services contract with Stantec for general engineering services under retainer until February 28, 2026, and permitting services that fall outside the retainer on an hourly basis through June 30, 2026, to ensure continuity until a new contract is awarded and executed;
- WHEREAS on October 23, 2025, the Board approved the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for engineering services;
- WHEREAS in response to the RFP, the MCWD selection team received proposals from four engineering firms. The selection team evaluated the written proposals and conducted in-person interviews based on the firm's understanding of MCWD's mission, land use history, guiding strategies; the firm's technical capacity and expertise; the proposed Chief Engineer's ability to perform day-to-day engineering functions while also contributing strategic insight and creative problem solving; the firm's onboarding approach; and the proposed cost of services;
- WHEREAS on the basis of its evaluation of written proposals and interviews, the selection team recommends the selection of HDR as MCWD Engineer, with Ryan Fucci serving as Chief Engineer;
- WHEREAS the selection team finds that HDR demonstrates strong alignment with MCWD's mission and values, a collaborative and transparent approach, and a clear understanding of MCWD's technical, regulatory, and strategic needs;
- WHEREAS the selection team finds that HDR's proposed Chief Engineer, Ryan Fucci, brings demonstrated project management expertise, effective communication skills, and a proven working relationship with MCWD staff;
- WHEREAS the selection team finds that HDR's imaginative strategic insight and systems-based approach position HDR to provide both reliable day-to-day engineering services and strategic partnership as MCWD advances its water quality, flood management, and community objectives;
- WHEREAS the Board of Managers finds that the evaluation has been thorough and properly structured, and that the terms of HDR compensation are competitive, and concurs in the selection team's conclusions and recommendation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the MCWD Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute a contract with HDR for engineering services ending December 31, 2027, in accordance with the developed scope of work as the Administrator may refine it, and in an amount not to exceed the amount set forth in the proposal.

Resolution Number 26-021 was moved by Manager \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.

Motion to adopt the resolution \_\_\_ ayes, \_\_\_ nays, \_\_\_\_\_ abstentions. Date: February 12, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - ENGINEERING SERVICES

Proposals Due: December 19, 2025

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or the District) believes that water is a central organizing element in the development of sustainable cities. We know that our lakes, streams, and wetlands have the power to underpin community identity, and grow social, environmental, and economic value. This is why we are dedicated to building a landscape of vibrant communities where nature and the built environment exist in balance and create value and enjoyment. We are pursuing a vision of [A Balanced Urban Ecology](#) through public-private partnerships that protect and improve water, while creating a sense of place within the watershed.

### Overview

MCWD is seeking proposals from qualified firms to serve as the District Engineer. The firm, in consultation with MCWD, will designate a Chief Engineer who will fulfill the duties of [Minn. Stat 103D.325, subdivision 3](#), serve as the principal point of contact for the firm, and coordinate the firm's work for MCWD in planning, design, construction, regulation, policy implementation and relationship management. The Chief Engineer will be supported by a multidisciplinary team of professionals with expertise relevant to the District's unique mission and needs.

The Chief Engineer is expected to maintain a current understanding of, and advise on, District vision, strategy, priorities, policies, projects, and programs, and issues relevant thereto; demonstrate awareness of federal, state, regional, and local water resource policies and funding; and uphold a high professional regard among peers and partners, directly contributing to MCWD's efforts to build and maintain relationships.

The selected firm and identified Chief Engineer will possess extensive experience in:

- Water and ecological planning and engineering;
- Hydrologic, hydraulic, and pollutant modeling;
- Groundwater and hydrogeology;
- Limnology and aquatic systems science;
- Land-use and municipal infrastructure planning and private development;
- Implementation of watershed and land-use permitting programs;
- Developing public-private partnerships that improve water quality, reduce flooding, and benefit community;
- Federal, state, and local policies and priorities related to water resources, land use and funding;
- Design, procurement, construction observation and contract management for capital projects;
- Public engagement and facilitation among policy maker, technical, and non-technical audiences;
- Strategic planning and organizational development; and
- Communication and relationship management.

MCWD seeks a Chief Engineer to work at the direction of, and in close collaboration with, District staff to deliver day-to-day engineering functions while also contributing strategic insight and creative problem solving to help

the District serve the public responsively and achieve lasting, high-impact outcomes for water quality, flood management, ecology and community.

## Scope of Services

### General Engineering Services on Retainer

The Chief Engineer will support MCWD by maintaining a strategic vantage over issues, drivers and strategies to improve water quality, reduce flooding and support thriving communities. This will be achieved, in part, by:

1. Maintaining knowledge of MCWD’s hydrology, water quality, historic actions and foundational data;
2. Identifying and understanding emerging issues and their causal factors;
3. Assessing alternative strategies and outlining the technical consequences of choices; and
4. Supporting strategic decision making to meet the evolving needs of the watershed and its communities.

In this role, the Chief Engineer, in coordination with District staff or at Board direction, will routinely review and assess District water management plans, studies, program alignment, capital programs and procedures to consider, among other things, whether they are consistent with acceptable engineering practices, achieve District goals, and are likely to produce positive, cost-effective outcomes.

The proposal will identify a monthly retainer payment to provide for the following services from the Chief Engineer:

1. Preparation for and attendance at any MCWD Board or Board committee meeting including review of relevant correspondence and agenda materials in connection with said meetings, any advice and opinions rendered therein, and coordination with MCWD staff and Administrator.
2. In-office at MCWD at least one day per week to serve as a staff resource, proactively provide project and initiative status reports, discuss project trade-offs and choices, and provide technical guidance on activities of the District.
3. Advice or response to routine questions from Board members and staff to assure that watershed activities are carried out in accordance with sound engineering and natural resource management standards and practices.

### Permit Support

The MCWD permitting program is a primary way in which the MCWD engages with private developers, member cities, other agencies and the broader public. Each year, the program processes approximately 600 permits, maintaining thousands of touchpoints with stakeholders. Permitting, therefore, is a key outreach channel for MCWD. The Chief Engineer will support staff in the efficient implementation of its regulatory program, providing a positive and responsive experience for applicants, to continue building MCWD’s brand as a creative problem solver and preferred partner.

Under this scope, the Chief Engineer and team will:

1. Support the efficient and clear implementation of MCWD’s permitting program, through weekly batch review of new permit applications and technical resubmittals, ensuring clear identification and communication of project issues and recommended solutions to MCWD staff, and, where appropriate, directly to applicants and their representatives.

2. Provide expert technical review and consultation for permit applications and compliance issues for all of MCWD's regulations, with an understanding of their interface with local municipal and state regulations. This will include but not be limited to experience with:
  - a. Stormwater management, floodplain, wetland, hydraulics, groundwater, municipal planning and zoning, infrastructure, brownfield development, threatened and endangered species, and modeling (e.g. HydroCAD, SWMM, MIDs, HEC-RAS, P8, Stormwise, Bathtub, etc.)
3. Actively support policy development and refinement, aligning MCWD regulation with the emerging needs of the watershed, in coordination with other public partners such as member communities.
4. Provide exceptional communication and relationship management with MCWD staff applicants, public and private agencies, municipalities, and consultants, promoting collaboration and a shared understanding of regulatory expectations.

## Gray's Bay Dam Operation and Maintenance

The MCWD operates and maintains Gray's Bay Headwaters Control Structure; an adjustable dam located at the outlet of Lake Minnetonka to Minnehaha Creek. The dam sits at the threshold between the MCWD's two distinct hydrologic basins: the upper watershed, including the streams, wetlands and lakes draining to Lake Minnetonka; and the lower urbanized watershed, including Minnehaha Creek and the Chain of Lakes.

The Chief Engineer will:

1. Maintain weekly situational awareness of current water levels, the predicted impact of weather forecasts at key stations across the watershed, and participate in weekly meetings as a member of the Flood Response Team to support operational recommendations for the Dam and vet outbound public communications.
2. Support annual inspections of the Gray's Bay Dam structure, formulate recommendations for maintenance, and oversee their implementation in coordination with Project Maintenance staff.
3. Fulfill a role as a member of the Flood Response Team, during high water and flood events.

## Additional Services

On written request of the District Administrator or their designee, the District Engineer will provide the following supporting services:

1. Research and Monitoring:
  - a. Advise on, and implement, field data collection efforts to support subwatershed diagnostic work, basis of capital project design, or post construction capital project efficacy
2. Capital Project Planning:
  - a. Review and advise on third party studies, plans, or designs
  - b. Provide auxiliary construction observation support
3. Policy Planning:
  - a. Support the development of MCWD's Watershed Management Plan
  - b. Advise on policies and programs developed to implement the Watershed Management Plan
  - c. Provide technical review of projects proposed through the Land and Water Partnership Program
4. Capital Project Maintenance:
  - a. Support the planning and implementation of maintenance for MCWD capital projects
5. Outreach and Intergovernmental Relations:

- a. Review, comment and advise on the development of communication work products
  - b. Attend District partner opportunity meetings as needed/requested
6. All other engineering services the firm is qualified to provide and as authorized by the District Administrator.

The District retains its prerogative to engage in competitive procurement for a capital project design and implementation, and all other discrete engineering service. The District Engineer may compete in any such procurement.

## Instructions to proposers

### Informational meeting

An informational meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 19th, at 10:00 AM** (15320 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345) to answer any questions about the process or scope of services. At this time, MCWD staff will present a short summary of our mission and expectations of the District Engineer and will answer any questions. Proposers are encouraged but not obligated to attend. **Please RSVP** to [officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org) by Monday, November 17th at 4:00 PM.

Written questions can be directed to [officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org) no later than Tuesday, November 25 at 4:00 PM. MCWD responses will be posted on the MCWD website and emailed to firms that attended the informational meeting.

### Submittal Deadline

Proposals must be submitted electronically to [officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:officeadministrator@minnehahacreek.org) no later than **4:00 PM on Friday, December 19, 2025**.

MCWD, at its discretion, may conduct interviews with one or more proposing firms. MCWD expects to contact selected proposers for interview within three weeks of the proposal submittal deadline.

### Proposal contents

The proposal should be no longer than 20 pages and should include the following:

1. **Firm summary and experience:** A summary of your firm's experience and expertise to meet the requirements outlined in the scope of services.
2. **Understanding and approach:** A narrative of the firm's understanding of the scope of services and how the firm will fit within and execute [MCWD's principles and mission](#). Describe how the Chief Engineer will oversee and guide team members and MCWD staff, and how they plan to build relational capital with our Board of Managers and outside partners. Include the firm's approach to onboarding and getting up to speed on the District's history, watershed features, rules, and policies. Include any additional information the firm wishes to share that showcases its organization.
3. **District Engineer and engineering team:** A resume of the person proposed to be the Chief Engineer; this is the individual who will be responsible for the management and administration of

engineering services with the District and has a demonstrated ability to carefully evaluate and make professional engineering recommendations for District programs and projects.

- a. **Staff:** Provide a list of proposed staff, including their qualifications and a concise description of their relevant expertise and experience. For each of the following skills or disciplines, identify one or more team members who possess demonstrated experience in a matrix or table:
    - i. Watershed and water resource management and planning
    - ii. Lake, wetland, and stream restoration and management
    - iii. Hydrologic, hydraulic, pollutant and water quality modeling and analysis
    - iv. Floodplain modeling, analysis, and management
    - v. Wetland delineation, functional assessment, regulatory compliance, and restoration
    - vi. Urban stormwater BMP design and construction management
    - vii. Groundwater-surface water interaction and modeling
    - viii. Water resource permitting, including municipal land use and development review processes, USACE, WCA, NPDES, DNR, etc.
    - ix. Land surveying
    - x. Geographic information systems
    - xi. Geotechnical investigation
    - xii. Environmental assessment
    - xiii. Site remediation and brownfields procedures
  - b. **Subconsultants:** If the firm has a relationship with another firm to provide one or more of the disciplines listed above, and would propose to use that firm as a subconsultant, please name the subconsultant and identify relevant subconsultant staff and expertise.
4. **Rates:** The proposed general engineering services retainer and additional services billing rates, including those charged by proposed sub-consultants, and any related time and mileage charges. Please note that the District does not pay the District Engineer an administrative markup associated with subconsultant use. Additionally, include anticipated inflationary costs to billing rates associated with yearly market demand adjustments.
  5. **References:** A selection of three references from other similar organizations served by the firm, including short descriptions of related work.

## Proposal evaluation and consultant selection

A selection committee composed of the District Administrator, select MCWD staff, and at least one Board Manager will evaluate proposals and, at its discretion, interview select firms to recommend a District Engineer to the MCWD Board of Managers for approval.

The tentative timeline for this request for proposal process is:

Request for Proposals Released	November 5, 2025
Informational Meeting	November 19, 2025 (10:00 am)

Questions Due	November 25, 2025 (4:00 pm)
Proposal Due Date	December 19, 2025 (4:00 pm)
Selection Committee review of proposals	December 22, 2025 - January 5, 2026
Interviews	January 12-15, 2026
District Board Selects Firm	January 22, 2026

The District reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the selected firm’s proposed scope of services and billing rates, prior to awarding a contract.

The MCWD Board of Managers will approve the final negotiated scope of services and billing rates and authorize the execution of a contract (see Appendix, MCWD Professional Service Agreement Template).

## Selection criteria

The selection committee will consider the firm’s demonstration of the following:

- **District mission and understanding:** Does the proposal make it clear that the firm fully understands the MCWD’s mission, approach, and guiding strategies, and can it demonstrate its commitment to practicing and upholding the District’s principles?
- **Firm Experience:** Does the firm possess the necessary technical expertise and requirements as outlined in the scope of services? What similar contracts or clients does the firm have?
- **Technical Capacity:** Does the firm have the staff required to complete all work required by the scope of services and additional services as needed? Can the firm demonstrate their ability to deliver work on time and within budget?
- **Onboarding Approach:** Does the firm clearly outline its onboarding approach? What plans are in place to build institutional knowledge and facilitate transition prior to the firm becoming District Engineer?
- **Area Knowledge:** Does the firm possess specific knowledge about MCWD’s watershed, its land use history, and its features?
- **Innovation:** Can the firm deliver innovative and integrated watershed/natural resource planning and engineering?
- **Cost of Services:** Does the firm clearly outline the proposed billing rates, and do the rates provide value to the District?

## Disclosures

The District will handle proposals and related submittals in accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes §13.591, subdivision 3(b).

The District will not reimburse any expenses incurred by the firm submitting a response including, but not limited to, expenses associated with the preparation and submission of the proposal, any responses, or attendance at any interviews.

The District reserves the right to reject all proposals, to request additional information concerning any proposal for purposes of clarification, to accept or negotiate any modification to any proposal following the deadline for receipt of all proposals, and to waive any irregularities if this would serve the best interests of the District as determined by District Board of Managers.

## Form of Contract

Enclosed with this RFP is the form of contract that Consultant and MCWD will execute. The MCWD may agree to non-substantive document revisions, but Consultant's proposal should be based on the contract form. The proposal should identify any terms of the form of contract that are unacceptable. The MCWD will negotiate a term where it can preserve the substantive intent of the term, but reserves the right to reject a proposal that is conditioned on a material alteration of the contract form. The proposal also should indicate any data or methods of proposer that would be used in performing the work, and that proposer considers to be instruments of service that should be excepted from the intellectual property terms of the contract form.

## Appendix

MCWD Professional Service Agreement Template