

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

4  
5                                   **April 9, 2026**

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7                                   **CALL TO ORDER**

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

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13                                   **ROLL CALL FOR ATTENDANCE**

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15                                   President White called the roll to note attendance:

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17                                   William Olson:           Present  
18                                   Eugene Maxwell:       Present  
19                                   Ricardo Bonner:        Present  
20                                   Arun Hejmadi:          Present, participating remotely  
21                                   Stephen Sando:         Absent  
22                                   Sherry White:          Present

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24                                   **DISTRICT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS PRESENT**

25  
26                                   James Wisker, Administrator; Michael Hayman, Director of Project Planning; Samantha  
27                                   Hoppe, Outreach Manager; Justin Templin, Litigation Counsel; and Louis Smith, District  
28                                   Counsel.

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30                                   **MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

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

41  
42                                   Mr. Brian Hunke of the Hopkins City Council appeared before the Board of Managers.  
43                                   He noted that the City of Hopkins and MCWD have been great partners from the start of  
44                                   this process in 2021, and that there has been a lot of work to design for the best outcomes.  
45                                   He said that he feels we still need to push this project to the finish and visualize the  
46                                   immense impact it will have. Mr. Hunke said that MCWD's approval of the Alatus offer

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

50  
51 Mr. Rick Browson appeared before the Board of Managers. He noted that he is a former  
52 Hopkins City Council member and that he returned to the Council in 2019 to try to bring  
53 this project to the finish line. He said that it breaks his heart to see the project stalled  
54 after the past fifteen years of effort. He stated that it would be a tough sell to go back and  
55 start over with a new developer, and he is confident in the current players to get the  
56 project done now.

57  
58 Mr. Jim Harmond of Stevens Construction appeared before the Board of Managers. He  
59 stated that his company is under contract and ready to work with Alatus, the City and  
60 NHP to construct the project.

61  
62 President White asked Mr. Wisker to respond to these comments. Mr. Wisker said that  
63 he appreciated the comments and efforts of these partners and acknowledged that it has  
64 been a long journey with a shared vision. He noted the multiple extensions requested by  
65 Alatus and granted by MCWD, and the many deadlines over the past four years that have  
66 passed without Alatus delivering on its promised commitments. The primary challenge  
67 has been that Alatus has not obtained financing to construct its project, while the MCWD  
68 has its project at the site fully designed and financed. He noted the most recent terms  
69 proposed by Alatus' litigation counsel would be reviewed by the Board in closed session,  
70 and that the Board's consideration will be based on advice from a deep bench of advisors.

71  
72 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

73  
74 *It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Olson, to approve the*  
75 *agenda as distributed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:*

76  
77 *Hejmadi: Aye*  
78 *Olson: Aye*  
79 *Bonner: Aye*  
80 *Maxwell: Aye*  
81 *Sando: Absent*  
82 *White: Aye*

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85 **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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***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***

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

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

137  
138 President White noted the schedule of upcoming meetings presented in the agenda.

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140 **PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PRESENTATIONS**

141  
142 None.

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144 **PERMITS REQUIRING A VARIANCE OR DISCUSSION**

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146 None.

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148 **ACTION ITEMS**

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

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

159  
160 Ms. Hoppe invited Mr. Smith to introduce his colleague Kowsar Mohamed who will be leading  
161 in this work. Following this introduction, Ms. Mohamed appeared before the Board of  
162 Managers, reviewed her background and experience, and expressed her enthusiasm for this  
163 project.

164  
165 ***It was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Bonner, to adopt Resolution 26-040:***  
166 ***Minnehaha Creek Greenway Resident Engagement Contracting as follows:***

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

172  
173 Manager Maxwell expressed his appreciation for resident engagement and asked whether the  
174 land use outreach would focus on developers in certain areas. Ms. Hoppe stated the plan is to  
175 seek a broad cross section of developers who work in the watershed. In response to a question

176 from Manager Bonner, Mr. Wisker clarified that the Board and the Citizens Advisory Committee  
177 will be kept apprised of this work and that there are defined deliverables to report on findings.  
178 Ms Hoppe also affirmed that this outreach work would be utilized in the 2027 Plan development.  
179

180 Manager Olson noted MCWD’s commitment to a science-based approach and  
181 commitment to excellence. He said that he felt this project was the next step in MCWD’s  
182 pursuit of excellence and that he was thrilled to see someone of Ms. Mohamed’s  
183 experience involved in this project. Manager Hejmadi said that he admired the careful  
184 and considered engagement process and looked forward to the learning from this project.  
185 President White stated that she found this project energizing and exciting. ***There being***  
186 ***no further discussion, upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***  
187

188 ***Hejmadi: Aye***  
189 ***Olson: Aye***  
190 ***Bonner: Aye***  
191 ***Maxwell: Aye***  
192 ***Sando: Absent***  
193 ***White: Aye***  
194

195 ***It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Bonner, to adopt Resolution 26-***  
196 ***041: Land Use Community Engagement as follows:***  
197

198 ***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed***  
199 ***District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to execute a***  
200 ***contract with Smith Partners for land use community engagement, in an amount not to***  
201 ***exceed \$37,200.***  
202

203 ***Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as follows:***  
204

205 ***Hejmadi: Aye***  
206 ***Olson: Aye***  
207 ***Bonner: Aye***  
208 ***Maxwell: Aye***  
209 ***Sando: Absent***  
210 ***White: Aye***  
211

212 Resolution 26-042: Establishing a MCWD Governance Advisory Council for a two-year Pilot  
213 Period  
214

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

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

- 224  
225 1) Succession awareness and planning;  
226 2) Onboarding of new board members;  
227 3) Reinforcing and institutionalizing Board governance; and  
228 4) Establishing a governance advisory council.  
229

230 Mr. Wisker stated that the focus of this proposed resolution is to establish a governance advisory  
231 council with about three to five members as a two-year pilot.  
232

233 ***It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Olson, to adopt Resolution 26-042:***  
234 ***Establishing a MCWD Governance Advisory Council for a two-year Pilot Period as follows:***  
235

236 ***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed***  
237 ***District Board of Managers hereby establishes a Governance Advisory Council for a***  
238 ***two-year pilot period to support Board effectiveness, continuity and governance***  
239 ***culture, through emphasis on onboarding and mentorship, early-stage advice on***  
240 ***strategic initiatives, and broadening the Board’s situational awareness through***  
241 ***external perspectives and cross-sector insights;***  
242

243 ***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administrator is directed to work in***  
244 ***coordination with the Board President to develop and present a list of recommended***  
245 ***candidates for Board consideration, consistent with the desired composition and***  
246 ***purpose of the Governance Advisory Council; and***  
247

248 ***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board shall periodically evaluate the function***  
249 ***and utility of the Governance Advisory Council and determine whether to continue,***  
250 ***modify, or sunset the Council at the conclusion of the two-year pilot period.***  
251

252 Manager Hejmadi said that he felt this is an excellent idea, providing the Board with perspective  
253 from the outside. He said that this can be part of the MCWD’s continuous evaluation and  
254 improvement process, and that it is a healthy idea to treat this two-year pilot as an experiment.  
255

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

259 ***There being no further discussion, upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 5-0 as***  
260 ***follows:***  
261

262 **Hejmadi:** *Aye*  
263 **Olson:** *Aye*  
264 **Bonner:** *Aye*  
265 **Maxwell:** *Aye*  
266 **Sando:** *Absent*  
267 **White:** *Aye*

268  
269

270 **BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS**

271  
272 None.

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274 **BOARD INQUIRIES, ISSUES, AND IDEAS**

275  
276 None.

277

278 **STAFF UPDATES**

279 Administrator's Report

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282 Mr. Wisker reported on the following items:

283

284 1. Ice out on Lake Minnetonka was reported on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lake Minnetonka is currently at  
285 elevation 929.0 and MCWD expects to de-winterize the outlet structure soon;

286

287 2. MCWD staff will undergo training in strategic communications at the University of St.  
288 Thomas and will share learnings from this training in a future board meeting.

289

290 The managers thanked Mr. Wisker for this report.

291

292

293 **CLOSED SESSION**

294

295 325 Blake Road, Hopkins

296 Alatus Development v. MCWD

297 JTS Construction v. MCWD

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

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

306  
307 *Hejmadi: Aye*  
308 *Olson: Aye*  
309 *Bonner: Aye*  
310 *Maxwell: Aye*  
311 *Sando: Absent*  
312 *White: Aye*

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314  
315 The Board of Managers went into closed session.

316  
317 The Board of Managers returned to open session.

318  
319  
320 **Adjournment**

321  
322 There being no further business, President White declared the meeting of the Board of Managers  
323 adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

324  
325 Respectfully submitted,

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329 Arun Hejmadi, Secretary