

elm creek

Watershed Management Commission

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Regular Meeting Minutes July 9, 2025 revised (see item V.B.5.)

I. CALL TO ORDER. A meeting of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, July 9, 2025, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Chairman Doug Baines.

Present: Bill Walraven, Champlin; Tom Anderson, Corcoran; Doug Baines, Dayton; Joe Trainor, Maple Grove; and Catherine Cesnik, Plymouth.

Not represented: Medina and Rogers.

Also present: Steven Touney, Champlin; Lauren Letsche, Corcoran; Derek Asche, Maple Grove; Dusty Finke, Medina; Ben Scharenbroich and Fintan Lenahan, Plymouth; Mike Albers, Rogers; Erik Megow and Diane Spector, Stantec; Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District; and Judie Anderson, JASS.

II. AGENDA. Motion by T. Anderson, second by Cesnik to approve the agenda* as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Motion by Walraven second by Cesnik to approve the **Minutes of the June 11, 2025, meeting.*** *Motion carried unanimously.*

Motion by Cesnik, second by T. Anderson to approve the **July Treasurer's Report* and claims** totaling \$70,583.44. *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. OPEN FORUM.

IV. PROJECT REVIEWS.

A. 2025-023 Wood Lane Villas, Rogers.* This project proposes the construction of a 5.0-acre residential subdivision along with associated utility improvements. The project is on a 6.07-acre site located south of Wood Lane and abuts the existing Skye Meadows development. It triggers Rules D and E. A findings-of-fact memo dated July 1, 2025, is included in the Commission's meeting packet wherein Staff recommends approval with two conditions: (1) escrow reconciliation and (2) an O & M Plan approved by the City of Rogers. Motion by T. Anderson, second by Cesnik to approve this project with those conditions. *Motion carried unanimously.*

[Trainor arrived 11:38 a.m.]

B. 2025-024 Ridge at Elm Creek, Maple Grove.* This project proposes the construction of 22 single-family lots along with associated utility improvements, landscaping, and street paving on a 13.4-acre site located west of Archer Lane and north of Elm Road. This second phase will disturb 4.1 acres and result in 2.2 acres of proposed impervious surface. The project triggers Rules

RULE D - STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
RULE E - EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL
RULE F - FLOODPLAIN ALTERATION

RULE G - WETLAND ALTERATION
RULE H - BRIDGE AND CULVERT CROSSINGS
RULE I - BUFFERS

*indicates enclosure

CHAMPLIN - CORCORAN - DAYTON - MAPLE GROVE - MEDINA - PLYMOUTH - ROGERS

D, E, G, and I. A findings-of-fact memo dated July 1, 2025, is included in the Commission’s meeting packet wherein Staff recommends approval with three conditions: (1) escrow reconciliation; (2) an O & M Plan approved by the City of Maple Grove; and (3) an approved wetland buffer plan showing buffer monumentation. Motion by Walraven, second by Trainor to approve this project with those conditions. *Motion carried unanimously.*

C. 2025-028 Cartway Road, Champlin.* The site is located between Trussel Avenue North and Elm Creek Road at the passing of Elm Creek on Cartway Road. The project consists of 1.03 acres of disturbance along Cartway Road and its crossing of Elm Creek. The project proposes street reconstruction, culvert replacement, sidewalk and utility improvements for Cartway Road. The project triggers Rules D, E, F, G, H, and I. A findings-of-fact memo dated July 1, 2025, is included in the Commission’s meeting packet wherein Staff recommends approval with three conditions: (1) escrow reconciliation; (2) an approved WCA No Loss application; and (3) an approved wetland buffer plan showing buffer monumentation. Motion by Trainor, second by Walraven to approve this project with those conditions. *Motion carried unanimously.*

V. OLD BUSINESS.

A. 2024 AUDIT.* The 2024 Audit was not available for review at the June meeting and was required to be submitted to the State Auditor by June 30, 2025. At the June meeting the members accepted the report pending review by Staff prior to submittal, which occurred. The 2024 Audit is included in this month’s meeting packet for information. Motion by Cesnik, second by Walraven to accept the 2024 audit as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

B. 2024 YEAR-END FUND BALANCES. Staff’s July 2, 2025, memo* presents the various 2024 year-end balances and 2025 estimated available funds for non-operating accounts based on the 2024 Audit.

1. Restricted for Capital Projects. These are funds levied for specific capital projects. The Commission holds these funds until such time as the member cities have completed the work. Rogers has informed Staff they intend to complete the Fox Creek projects in the next

Table 1. Elm Creek funds restricted for capital improvements.

Project	Amount Held
Rogers Fox Creek Creekview Phase 2 (2016)	\$80,207
Rogers Fox Creek Hyacinth Phase 3 (2017)	112,501
Corcoran Downtown Regional Stormwater Pond (2019)	28,013
Livestock Exclusions, Buffers, Stabilizations (2020)	24,883
Agricultural BMPs Cost Share (2020)	46,606
S Fork Rush Creek (2023)	46,399
Rogers Downtown Pond Expansion (2023)	107,444
2024 admin costs for 2025 levy	-138
Account Balance YE 2024	\$445,915

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1-2 years. The final payment to Corcoran will be made in 2025. The two 2020 levies for ag BMPs supplement the WBIF funding Hennepin County is using for BMPs identified in the South Fork Rush and Diamond Creek SWAs. Maple Grove has received its final reimbursement for the South Fork Rush Creek restoration project, and in 2025 those excess levy funds will be transferred to the Closed Projects account.

2. Cost Share Projects. The Commission operates two cost share projects, one for city projects, the other for partnership projects on private property. In 2024 the Commission awarded \$11,856 in partnership funding to the Fish Lake Area Residents Association (FLARA) for carp management. The Dayton city cost share project was paid in November 2024 and will be shown as a 2025 expense in the 2025 Audit.

The estimated 2025 available balances in the City Cost Share and the Partnership Cost Share accounts in Tables 2 and 3 of the memo are about \$264,000 and \$143,000, respectively.

3. Closed Projects Account. This account houses levy funds that exceed final project costs. In addition, on occasion a project is cancelled, and the levy funds are then transferred to this fund. These funds are intended to be used for other capital improvement projects, including the cost of undertaking feasibility studies to preliminarily scope a future project. These funds may also be used to limit future capital levies for new projects.

The estimated 2025 fund balance as shown in Table 4 of the memo is \$278,000.

4. Other Funds Balances. In the past, the Commission has also segregated or assigned some of its unrestricted reserves to be held for a specific purpose, for example to fund the 4th Generation Plan. These unassigned funds may continue to be set aside to be used for these purposes or the Commission may elect to unassign the funds and transfer them to Unrestricted Reserves. From time to time the Commission has also budgeted funding for projects or special studies and set that aside in an Assigned For Projects and Studies Account.

As shown in Table 5 of the memo, funds assigned for the Fourth Generation Plan are fully encumbered, while the fund assigned for projects or studies has an estimated 2025 available fund balance of \$105,000.

5. Unrestricted Reserve. The last category of funds is the Commission's Unrestricted Reserves, which is cash on hand that has not been designated for a particular use. This helps with monthly cash flow and is a "rainy day reserve" in the event something unusual occurs. In 2023, the Commission created a policy *to maintain a cash reserve equal to the greater of 50% of annual operating revenues or five months of operating expenses.*

Table 6 shows this calculation using the 2024 year-end figures. Line 3 shows the amount of actual expenses and revenues net of project reviews. Due to the unusual amount of interest earnings in the past few years which artificially raises the total amount of operating revenues received, Staff adjusted the assumed interest earnings in 2024 from the

Table 6. Unrestricted reserve desirable balance calculation using 2024 year-end amounts.

Component		Operating Exp	Operating Rev
1	2024 Operating Budget YE	\$481,225	\$474,300*
2	Less project reviews	188,153	207,573
3	Net Amount	293,072	266,727
4	5/12ths of yearly expenses	\$122,113	
5	50% of yearly revenues		\$133,363
6	YE 2024 Unrestricted Balance	\$114,365	\$114,365
7	+study exp incorrectly debited against Unrestricted Balance	37,798	37,798
8	Corrected YE Unrestricted Balance	\$152,163	\$152,163

*Adjusted to assume a reduced amount of interest received.

actual amount - \$96,042 – to the budgeted \$10,000. Lines 4 and 5 show the two different ways of calculating the minimum cash reserve, with the greater of the two being \$133,363. That is the target amount to have on hand at the end of 2024. Line 6 shows the actual unrestricted reserve from the 2024 audit, which is less than the target.

It was discovered during the 2024 audit that some expenses for the Fourth Generation Plan and the TMDL 10-Year Review were charged against the Unrestricted Balance rather than the Assigned Funds. This will be corrected by a 2025 journal entry. With that correction, the Commission is maintaining an adequate Fund Balance.

Now that the Audit has been completed and the various fund balances determined, Cesnik requested that a sub-committee meeting be convened so that she, as incoming Treasurer, can become more familiarized with the financial transactions of the Commission.

C. 2024 Project Review Overview.* Staff’s July 2, 2025, memo presents an overview of 2024 project review fees and costs. In the memo, Staff looked at the 30 2024-numbered reviews that were completed in 2024. The purpose of this review is to determine if the fee schedule meets the Commission’s objectives.

The Commission revised its review fee structure in 2021 to move from flat fees to requiring applicants to pay the actual cost of completing the review. The fee schedule had a non-refundable base fee plus an escrow to cover the actual cost. Unused escrow was refunded to the applicant, while escrow shortfalls were invoiced. In 2021 and 2022 more than half of the project reviews incurred shortfalls totaling over \$83,000 and required additional escrow to be collected.

In 2023 the fee schedule was adjusted to better reflect actual costs, and to minimize the number of reviews that incurred shortfalls and thus required invoicing to collect additional fees. The non-refundable admin and tech fees were also adjusted to better reflect the costs of the program.

Table 1 shows the costs incurred and fees collected as of December 31, 2024. In 2021-2022 over half the reviews incurred an escrow shortfall averaging about \$2,000. That number and average shortfall were much lower in 2024. Staff recommend no changes at this

time, but suggest reviewing the 2025 data at the end of the year when another 40-50 reviews should have been completed.

Table 1. Project review costs and fees for the 30 2024-numbered reviews completed in 2024.

Action	Total	Average
Escrow collected	\$151,000	\$5,033
Expense incurred	131,889	4,396
Additional escrow required (10)	14,284	1,428
To be refunded (20)	49,956	2,172

VI. FOURTH GENERATION WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN. The Plan is undergoing its 60-day formal review. Comments are due by August 16, 2025. Following any revisions in response to those comments, the Commission must then send the revised Plan, a compilation of all the comments received, the responses, and a summary of how the Plan was revised in response to the comments to BWSR. BWSR staff will review the Plan and make a recommendation to BWSR’s Central Region Planning Committee, who will review the Plan and make a recommendation to the full BWSR Board to either approve the Plan or require revisions. After approval by the BWSR Board, the Plan will come back to the Commission for final adoption. The law provides BWSR 90 days to complete their review. The following is the tentative schedule for this process:

Complete 60-Day Review	~August 16, 2025
Responses to Comments By	~August 26, 2025
Hold Public Hearing	September 10, 2025
BWSR Approval	October 22 or December 18, 2025 (likely)
Commission Adoption	November 12, 2025, or January 14, 2026

VII. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH.

A. West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA).

1. Chloride Reduction Campaign. Grace Barcelow, Hennepin County Conservation Specialist, has been working on analyzing and redesigning the campaign for the upcoming winter season. While this season's efforts successfully engaged faith-based facilities, the campaign was found to be highly time-intensive with limited impact on reducing chloride pollution. A proposal for the 2025–2026 WMWA chloride reduction campaign will be presented to WMWA partners in the coming months.

2. Youth Stormwater Education Work. Mary Karius, Hennepin County, will present at the August WMWA meeting to discuss the RiverWatch program’s evolution. Following her presentation, feedback will be gathered from the partners and opportunities for collaboration between WMWA and Hennepin County on this initiative will be explored.

3. The Pet Waste media kit was recently edited and sent to communications

partners. This media kit focuses on educating residents on pet waste pollution and management. There is one newsletter and set of social media posts that have a summer focus, and one newsletter and set of social media posts that have a focus on early spring. In addition to the media kit, there is a pet waste mailer. There are versions of the document as a utility insert (meant to be sent with something else or used at outreach events) or a postcard that can be sent alone. Additionally, Barcelow is working to publish an article in local papers this month.

4. Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Project. Bolton and Menk staff presented a report detailing the findings and recommendations from a spring site visit at a property where WMWA aims to reduce chloride use. The project partners have reviewed these recommendations to determine the next steps and are working on implementing suggested actions with that property.

A preliminary meeting was also held with another property to gather initial information. An official site visit will be held in the fall or winter.

5. Eagle Lake and Fish Lake Shoreline/Yard Restoration Projects. Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb staff have completed and distributed most of the restoration designs to participating residents. Barcelow has shared the letter of intent with homeowners and is actively working to encourage participation in implementing these practices on their properties. As of now, all but two designs have been finalized and sent out; the remaining two are expected to be delivered to participants by July 11.

On June 5, project partners convened to plan the upcoming fall workshops, which will continue to emphasize strategies for improving water quality in both Fish Lake and Eagle Lake. Outreach efforts to promote these workshops, along with engagement through local Lake Associations, will begin this month.

6. Southgate Apartment Project (stormwater improvements, pollinator enhancements, and community engagement). The construction documents have been completed. Barcelow is waiting for property management to sign the maintenance agreement to be able to move forward with the project. She will be collaborating with residents and contractors to install stormwater BMPs, rain gardens, pollinator plantings, and a nature play area this summer.

7. A small group will convene to discuss the **future of WMWA** with a goal to more formalize the organization.

B. West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) will meet via Zoom at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, August 12, 2025. Follow this link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/922390839?pwd=TKlBQW1ZNXVXdzdtTDBTSDZkZmZuQT09>

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS.

A. Staff Report. The July 1, 2025, Staff Report* provides updates on the development projects currently under review by Staff.

B. Hennepin County Staff Report.*

1. **City of Corcoran.** Due to wet conditions in the field, planting the native seed mix has been postponed until later in the year. City public works staff met with Hennepin County staff to develop a new site preparation and seeding plan utilizing available equipment and labor resources. A plan was agreed to and the original contract and plan will be amended to reflect these changes. Target for seeding with a nurse crop is set for late summer or early fall 2025.

2. **Christian Sediment Basin, Dayton.** The contractor has purchased a replacement culvert and is awaiting ideal conditions to install. County staff will help provide some survey guidance and then will close out and reimburse the project when it is installed.

3. **Welcome Ranch, Dayton.** Barn gutters have been installed on the main and accessory buildings. County staff will inspect the progress made and then circulate the contracts to close out this phase of the project. Staff are currently working with engineering to develop plans for a manure bunker which could be installed as early as late summer or early fall 2025.

4. **Cain Wetland Fencing, Corcoran.** The exclusionary fencing project was approved. Hennepin County staff are working with the landowner to find quotes for the fence and sign appropriate contracts before work can begin.

5. **Bottema Wetland Restoration, Corcoran.** The county has amended the cost share application and is amending the contract with the landowner to reflect increases in project costs to \$144,000. Construction can begin once the site has dried out from recent rains and the contractor is able to mobilize.

6. **Trousdale Wetland Restoration, Corcoran.** Engineering designs have been completed, and county staff are working with the three landowners in the project area to come to agreement on the project contract.

7. **Lake Henry Hollow Horse Ranch, Rogers.** County staff approved exclusionary fencing, a manure bunker, and barn gutters for a horse ranch in the Rush Creek Subwatershed adjacent to Lake Henry. Staff are now working through the contracting process and the BMPs are in the design phase.

8. The **Project Funding Table** and other **County programming** complete the report.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS.

X. ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judie A. Anderson

Recording Secretary

JAA:tim

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