



# PRIOR LAKE SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Annual PLSLWD Board Retreat Minutes

Thursday May 22, 2025

Wagon Bridge Conference Room

6:00 PM

**Members Present:** Bruce Loney, Christian Morkeberg,  
Frank Boyles, Matt Tofanelli, Beverly Burnett (virtual)

**Staff & Consultants Present:** Joni Giese, District Administrator

- **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

- Meeting was called to order by President Loney at 5:01 PM.

- **2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

- **3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- Agenda changes:
  - added 4.9 Succession planning for future Board members.
- Motion to approve amended agenda by Manager Tofanelli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Manager Morkeberg; Passed 5-0.

- **4.0 OTHER OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

- 4.1 Joint Board of Managers and CAC Meeting Debrief**

- Agreement that it was a good joint meeting and appreciated receiving CAC input.
    - While the art aspect was a good demonstration of an alternate engagement approach, the time spent on the art activity may have been too long and taken away from priorities discussion. Continue to experiment with alternate approaches and refine to the correct balance of engagement activity and desired objective.

- 4.2 Board Goals and Priorities – Implications for 2026 Budget**

- Administrator Giese shared top priorities identified at the joint Board/CAC meeting:
      - Improve Water Quality
      - Community Engagement and Outreach
      - Monitoring Environmental Health
    - Discussed goldfish in Cates Lake. Potential options to address the issue were

- brainstormed, including “do nothing” given competing priorities.
- There was a community engagement discussion regarding appropriate level of messaging that highlights what PLSLWD is doing for them and messaging that educates residents about what they can do and how their actions affect the water quality and lakes.
    - It was mentioned that PLSLWD needs to share what the District is doing to build credibility to ask residents to take individual actions.
    - Board did not want to substantially increase the 2026 budget for education and outreach activities.
  - Discussion of desired 2026 budget priorities:
    - Flood prevention is very expensive for minimal benefit. Current regulations make it difficult to implement flood mitigation projects. Of current flood mitigation project options available, relining the PLOC was the best action PLSLWD could take to mitigate flooding. Additional flood mitigation projects should not be a priority. It is important to communicate to residents on Spring and Prior Lakes that there are no easy solutions and to be aware that flooding may occur in wet years.
  - Finish current projects.
  - Priority should focus on improving water quality.
    - There are impaired waters in PLSLWD with associated TMDLs that must be addressed.
    - The District is making progress, but there is more to do.
  - PLOC Cooperators have included the stabilization of a segment of the PLOC as a project for 2026. A substantial portion of the project cost will be the responsibility of PLSLWD.

#### **4.3 Staff Compensation Philosophy**

- Administrator Giese stated that the personnel handbook needs to be updated in 2025. The managers’ position on staff compensation will ripple through many aspects of the handbook update. An example of this is the new Minnesota Paid Family Leave law and method to pay for this benefit.
- Managers agreed that good staff is a key to District success. Managers suggested a goal of: “slightly better than competitive” for staff satisfaction and retention.

#### **4.4 Land Management Approach**

- Administrator Giese stated the District owns three parcels near Spring Lake. Maintenance on these parcels varies greatly.
- Currently the Ducks Unlimited parcel is experiencing non-authorized yard waste and construction waste dumping, along with non-authorized recreation vehicle activity on the parcel. No trespassing signs have been installed.
- Administrator Giese stated the District needs to decide on ownership goals for these parcels, such as:
  - Should the District continue to own or sell the parcels?
  - To what level should the parcels be maintained (as demonstration sites of healthy habitat; to enhance habitat/water quality; base minimum to address potential hazards)
- 2026 draft budget will include a line item to start addressing parcel maintenance.

#### **4.5 Project Funding**

- It is staff's understanding that by statute the County must bond or provide funds (with District repayment) for capital projects if the District needs/wants it.
- The District should maintain communication with the County to share information on upcoming projects and discuss potential approach for funding via the County.
- District has had good success in obtaining grant funds. District staff will continue to apply for grants, but it is expected that the level of grant funding available will be reduced in the future.

#### **4.6 County Ditch 13 Drainage Authority**

- Managers inquired about potential benefits and constraints associated with taking on the role of drainage authority.
- Managers wanted to better understand implications of ditch abandonment.
- Staff will continue to research questions and bring back additional information at the June workshop.

#### **4.7 CAC Subcommittee Topics**

- Current CAC Subcommittee Topics
  - Watershed Stewardship
  - Invasive Plants
  - Groundwater
  - Education and Outreach
- Managers are fine with the subcommittee topics and it was determined there was no need to discuss further.
- There was a short discussion about the need for Groundwater as a topic.
  - There is some interaction between surface water and groundwater. It is Administrator Giese's understanding that the county plans to prepare a county-wide groundwater plan.

#### **4.8 Community Comprehensive Plan Updates: Implications for PLSLWD Rules and Water Resources Management Plan Updates**

- Every 10 years cities are required to update their comprehensive plans. Next update is due in 2030. The stormwater management section of these plans must be consistent with the District's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP).
- The District's current WRMP update schedule results in the cities referencing our current plan only to have the District update the plan within a year of the cities completing their plans. It might make sense for the District to accelerate the update of the PLSLWD WRMP in order to have the cities' comprehensive plans reference a current WRMP.
- Staff will inquire with BWSR about the feasibility of accelerating the update of the District's WRMP.

#### **4.9 Succession Planning**

- Manager discussed the need to recruit potential candidates for Manager positions to ensure there is a good pool of candidates when Managers' terms expire.

#### **4.10 Other**

- Staff will be focusing on resolving old permit sureties and fees on the District's books within the next 6 – 9 months.

#### **• 7.0 UPCOMING MEETING/EVENT SCHEDULE:**

- Annual Board of Managers and CAC Tour, Thursday, May 29, 2025, 4:00 pm (Depart from Prior Lake City Hall)
- Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting, Thursday, May 29, 2025, 6:00 pm (Prior Lake City Hall – Wagon Bridge Conference Room)
- Board of Managers Workshop, Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 4:00 pm (Prior Lake City Hall – Parkview Conference Room)
- Board of Managers Meeting, Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 6:00 pm (Prior Lake City Hall – Council Chambers)

#### **• 8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion to adjourn by Manager Morkeberg; 2nd by Manager Tofanelli; Passed 5-0
- Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Beverly(Ben) Burnett, PLSLWD Secretary, 6/6/25**