



# PRIOR LAKE SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

## WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

*Tuesday, May 20, 2025*

*Prior Lake City Hall*

*4:00 PM*

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

Staff & Consultants Present: Joni Giese, District Administrator  
Emily Dick, Water Resources Project Manager  
Patty Dronen, Administrative Assistant  
Teresa Gostonczik, Administrative Assistant  
Jeff Anderson, Water Resources Coordinator  
Carl Almer, EOR, District Engineer

Others Present: Troy Kuphal, Scott SWCD  
Kim Churchill, City of Prior Lake  
Lisa Quinn, Spring Lake Township  
Jody Brennan, Scott County

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

### **Acknowledge Patty Dronen Service to PLSLWD**

The Board managers expressed their appreciation to Patty Dronen for her contributions to the Watershed for over four years. District Administrator Giese shared that Patty has gone above and beyond not only in her typical administrative duties, but in many more areas of the District. She has been essential in numerous efforts, notably, the website relaunch and vastly improved document management at the District.

### **Desilt Pond Findings DRAFT**

Jeff Anderson presented an overview of the existing issues being seen at the “desilt pond”, the name referring to the settling basin for the Ferric Chloride system. Staff has been interested in assessing improvements for many years. In 2024, EOR was contracted to look at current performance, assess the potential improvements to increase efficiency at the desilt pond (Task 1), and provide cost effectiveness of scenarios and a preliminary design the preferred alternative (Task 2). District Engineer Carl Almer presented the findings of Task 1. Current performance of the desilt pond appears to be very good in years with low lake elevation. In years when the lake

elevation is high enough to back into the desilt pond, 11-16% (64% in 2014 flood year) of the water is bypassing and going untreated. This indicates that improved bypass design could increase treatment in “normal” high lake level years (e.g., 2019) by 11-16% if all water could be captured. EOR analyzed the benefits of ten potential modifications to the weir, outlet pipes, inlet pipes, and high flow bypass. Increasing inlet pipes and increasing the high flow bypass were the modifications that had most potential for improvement. Scenarios 12 and 16 appear to be the best combination of benefits with limited regulatory concerns. Task 2 will look at costs and constructability of desired scenarios. Broad-crested weirs offer minimal additional benefit for direct phosphorus removal but would also provide carp and monitoring benefits. Board Managers discussed the alternatives and look forward to seeing the results on the cost effectiveness and feasibility of different scenarios.

### **County Ditch 13 Drainage Authority: Initial Analysis and Discussion**

Administrator Giese presented background on County Ditch 13 (CD-13) and the logistics, benefits and drawbacks of the District potentially becoming the drainage authority for CD-13. Management of the ditch would primarily require maintaining the ditch and receiving petitions for repair and abandonment when applicable. The District would assumingly operate the ditch under 103D, in comparison with the normal operating statute for ditch operations, 103E. 103D provides much more flexibility in management. The District would need to establish a “Watershed Management District” (WMD) to collect payments. The creation of a WMD would be complex and laborious. Potential benefits discussed: the District wouldn’t need to petition for ditch project approvals, it may benefit flood storage implementation, provides heightened involvement with other water resources planning processes, and ensures regulatory oversight. Potential constraints discussed: establishing a WMD is a large expense (\$110,000), requires additional training, requires an update to the Water Resources Management Plan and a potential update to Rules, would require additional staffing and additional Board decision making. Unknowns include: implications of several benefitting parcels located outside of PLSLWD, existing conditions of the ditch, stability of steep banks, intersection of 103E/103D, and impacts to agricultural relationships.

The three possible outcomes for ditch management are: 1) the County assigns the management to the District, 2) the County continues to manage, or 3) the ditch is abandoned. Managers had a request for additional information including more information on the charge system, landowner perception, partner perception, understanding of impact on our mission, if Scott County would be able to aid the transition of staffing and the establishment of the WMD, ability for Scott County to repair the ditch prior to switching, clarity on timeline, and competition with the District’s other objectives. Administrator Giese will be reporting back additional information to inform a Board opinion on whether they desire to accept ditch management or not. Regardless of Board opinion, the County can assign ditch management to the District.

### **Administrator Report**

- Postponed until the Board meeting agenda to immediately follow.

### **Liaison Updates**

#### District Partner Reports

- *Spring Lake Township*- None.
- *Scott SWCD*- None.

- *City of Prior Lake*- Moving forward with Park Board Referendum. Awarded for distinguished budget in 2025.
- *Scott County*- None.

Manager Liaison Reports

- *Postponed*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Dick  
5/20/2025