

July 8, 2025

Pursuant to notice and due call, a regular meeting of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers was held Tuesday July 8, 2025, at the district office located at 211 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE Ortonville, MN. Board members present were Bork, Holker, Sandberg and Giese. Executive Director of the UMRWD, Amber Doschadis assisted with the meeting in coordination with Board Chair Wanda Holker. Members of the public present were Lisa Odens (via phone) from Houston Engineering; and Big Stone County Commissioner Wade Athey.

Holker called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Holker recessed the regular meeting at 9:03 and reopened the public hearing from June 26, 2025 on the adoption of a project benefits roll for the Little Minnesota River Floodway (Diversion).

Holker called for any public comments, none were brought to the board at this time.

Manager Bork introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2025- 01, ADOPTING PROJECT BENEFITS ROLL FOR THE LITTLE MINNESOTA RIVER FLOODWAY COMPONENT OF THE BROWNS VALLEY FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District (the District) established the Browns Valley Flood Mitigation Project (the Project) by order dated March 11, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Project included multiple components including, but not limited to the West Floodway (Little Minnesota River Floodway) and Toelle Coulee, to be constructed in sequence as Federal and State grant funds, if any, became available for construction; and

WHEREAS, to date, the West Floodway component of the project and Phase 1 of the Toelle Coulee have been constructed. The Toelle Coulee Phase 2 component may be constructed if funds are secured to pay the cost of construction; and

WHEREAS, in the original proceedings to establish the Project, the Project engineers evaluated and reported the history of flood damage within the project area and the flood damage reduction benefits to be achieved by the project; and

WHEREAS, in part, the engineers' evaluation of flood damage reduction benefits, justified the award of Federal and State grant funds for the construction of the project; and

WHEREAS, because Federal and State grant funds were sufficient to pay the costs of construction of the West Floodway component of the Project and Phase 1 of the Toelle Coulee, the District did not proceed with a determination of parcel-based project benefits to properties affected by the Project for the purpose of allocating a portion of costs to assess to properties benefitted by the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Managers finds that the Project, and specifically the current and future maintenance of the Project, is necessary to minimize public capital expenditures needed to remedy flood damages; to protect land values and economic opportunities in the Project area; to protect and improve surface water quality; to prevent erosion of soil into surface water systems; and to secure other benefits associated with the proper management of surface water; and

WHEREAS, statutes section 103D.631 requires the District to maintain its projects in a condition so that they will accomplish the purposes for which they were constructed; and

WHEREAS, the cost of normal or routine maintenance of the projects of the District are to be paid from the maintenance fund for a project; and

WHEREAS, for most projects contemplated under statutes chapter 103D, funding of original construction derives from project assessments to benefitted properties; and

WHEREAS, statutes chapter 103D is silent on the establishment of a maintenance fund in situations where original project construction was paid for with grant or external funds other than project assessments; and

WHEREAS, statutes section 103E.631 contemplates the maintenance funds to be derived from special assessments to all the parcels of property and municipal corporations previously assessed for benefits in proceedings for the construction or implementation of a project; and

WHEREAS, by resolution 2021-01, the Board initiated proceedings to modify the previously established

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Browns Valley Flood Mitigation Project by establishing project benefits and adopting a benefits roll for future assessment of project expenses for the West Floodway; and

WHEREAS, by action at its April 9, 2024, meeting, the Board directed the engineer to expand the scope of its benefits analysis in order to facilitate a Board determination of project benefits as provided in statutes section 103D.721; and

WHEREAS, the engineer filed its analysis and recommendation of project benefits dated May 12, 2025; and WHEREAS, the Board noticed and held a hearing on the engineer's analysis and recommendation on June 26, 2025, continued to July 8, 2025; and

WHEREAS, at the public hearing the engineer reviewed its analysis of project benefits, its benefits recommendation and the basis of the benefits recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Board took public comment at the public; and

WHEREAS, questions raised during the public hearing were addressed to the satisfaction of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds the engineer's benefits recommendation well supported and reasonable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Managers of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District as follows:

The Board adopts the engineer's recommended benefits and benefits roll contained in the engineer's analysis and recommendation dated May 12, 2025, for the Little Minnesota River Floodway, also known as the West Floodway.

The Board directs its Administrator to work with the appropriate county auditor to create the benefits roll in the county tax system.

The Secretary and Administrator are authorized to coordinate with staff and consultants and to take all actions necessary to implement this resolution, except those actions reserved by statute to the Board of Managers.

The motion was seconded by Manager Sandberg.

After discussion and upon a vote, the motion passed 4:0, and the President declared the resolution adopted.

Holker closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting at 9:10 am.

### **Minutes and Expenses**

A motion to approve the previous month's meeting minutes and current expenses was made by Sandberg, seconded by Bork. Motion carried: 4-0.

Rinke Noonan	#395140 Browns Valley	\$914.50
Gazette Publishing	BV Public Notice	\$574.20
Big Stone Co	Dry Lake- clean inlet	\$24.72
Big Stone Co	mowing at dam	\$420.00
Houston Engineering	#76644 Whetstone River Restoration	\$8,337.00
Houston Engineering	#76738 Whetstone Waste	\$8,595.88
Rinke Noonan	#394408 Whetstone	\$190.00
Discover	MWs Summer Tour Hotels	\$292.11

### **Toelle Coulee Phase 1**

Maintenance – Doschadis reported that she received no responses to the Mowing and Spraying Bid Advertisement. Doschadis will contact local contractors and consider posting the job on Quest for a large number of contractors.

### **Toelle Coulee Phase 2**

Alternative Analysis discussion took place, the board directed Doschadis to continue coordination with HEI on alternatives and discuss DNR needs to review if the proposed project would require a dam safety permit.

### **Upper Big Stone Lake**

The grant has been successfully closed, and we are waiting for final reimbursement.

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**Whetstone**

Waste Remediation Project, Burning Permit. Doschadis attended to Ortonville City council meeting and received city approval to burn trees on UMRWD property (just inside the city limits).

USACE Permit Update. HEI has submitted the Downstream Impact Analysis, we are coordinating an in-person August meeting to discuss the results and next steps.

**Administrator's Report**

A motion to approve the report as submitted was made by Bork, seconded by Holker. Motion carried: 4-0.

**Budget Review**

Doschadis gave a brief overview of the 2025 and 2026 numbers. The board agreed to advertise the proposed budget for an August 12, 2025 Budget Hearing during the next regular meeting.

**Minnesota Watersheds**

2025 Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions

August 25, 2025; Holker, Bork and Sandberg agreed to attend and act as delegates for the membership meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.

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Amber Doschadis, Administrator

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Travis Sandberg, Secretary