



### Minutes from November 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Call to Order Chair John Tollgaard called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Members Present:**

John Tollgaard

Al Moline

Paul Fish

Jim Kruse

**Others Present:**

R.C. Boheim, SWCD Staff

Agenda The Board reviewed the agenda. Motion by Fish, seconded by Kruse to approve the agenda.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

Approval of Minutes The Board reviewed Minutes from the September Meeting. Motion by Kruse, seconded by Moline to approve the Minutes.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

#### Financial and Administrative Reports

**Financial Reports** The Board reviewed the financial reports. The total fund balance as of October 31, 2025 was \$789,850.83. Motion by Kruse, seconded by Fish to approve the Financial Report.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

**Treasurer's Report** Moline reported he went through material prior to the meeting covering two months and everything checked out. Motion by Fish, seconded by Kruse to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

**Monthly Report** Boheim gave a verbal report highlighting activity from the last month. He reported Deb Taylor has resigned from the Board. Minnesota Paid leave decisions will need to be made in December.

**Resolutions Declaring Environmental Assessment Worksheet for East Branch Amity Creek Restoration Project and Keene Creek Restoration Project are Not Required** Motion by Fish, seconded by Kruse to approve the following two Resolutions:

1) WHEREAS, the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (the "District") is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for the East Branch Amity Creek Restoration Project, located in the City of Duluth, Minnesota, and WHEREAS, East Branch Amity Creek is a designated trout stream in the State of Minnesota, and therefore any proposed diversion, realignment, or channelization activity involving the stream may fall under Minnesota Administrative Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26, which requires a mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for such actions, and WHEREAS, the proposed project involves restoring channel morphology and floodplain connectivity to an incised and degraded reach of East Branch Amity Creek to restore its natural function and stability using Natural Channel Design methods based on an identified reference reach with similar geomorphic conditions, and WHEREAS, the objective of the East Branch Amity Creek project is to restore the stream to its assumed pre-disturbance alignment, profile, and dimension using sound ecological and hydrological data, and does not seek to divert or channelize the stream in a new or artificial direction, and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board rules provide that an EAW is required only when a proposed activity meets or exceeds the thresholds for mandatory review, and a reasonable interpretation of Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26 is that it pertains to stream diversion or channelization activities that do not include ecological restoration projects that reestablish the natural geomorphology and hydrology of the stream, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is to evaluate the potential for significant environmental effects and determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed, and

WHEREAS, an EIS has never been, and is not reasonably expected to ever be, required for a stream or floodplain restoration project where the primary intent and demonstrable outcome is to improve ecological function, reduce erosion and sedimentation, and restore natural aquatic habitat, and

WHEREAS, the District has thoroughly reviewed the scope and intent of the East Branch Amity Creek project and finds it consistent with ecological restoration practices and not constituting a diversion, realignment, or channelization in the regulatory sense intended under Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, acting as the RGU, hereby determines that the East Branch Amity Creek Restoration Project does not meet the threshold for a mandatory EAW under Minnesota Rules, Part 4410.4300, Subpart 26, and that an EAW shall not be required for this project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

2) WHEREAS, the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (the "District") is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for the Keene Creek Restoration Project, located in the City of Hermantown, Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, Keene Creek is a designated trout stream in the State of Minnesota, and therefore any proposed diversion, realignment, or channelization activity involving the stream may fall under Minnesota Administrative Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26, which requires a mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for such actions, and

WHEREAS, the proposed project involves re-meandering a previously ditched and straightened reach of Keene Creek to restore its natural function and stability using Natural Channel Design methods based on an identified reference reach with similar geomorphic conditions, and

WHEREAS, the objective of the Keene Creek project is to restore the stream to its assumed pre-disturbance alignment, profile, and dimension using sound ecological and hydrological data, and does not seek to divert or channelize the stream in a new or artificial direction, and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board rules provide that an EAW is required only when a proposed activity meets or exceeds the thresholds for mandatory review, and a reasonable interpretation of Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26 is that it pertains to stream diversion or channelization activities that do not include ecological restoration projects that reestablish the natural geomorphology and hydrology of the stream, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is to evaluate the potential for significant environmental effects and determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed, and

WHEREAS, an EIS has never been, and is not reasonably expected to ever be, required for a stream or floodplain restoration project where the primary intent and demonstrable outcome is to improve ecological function, reduce erosion and sedimentation, and restore natural aquatic habitat, and

WHEREAS, the District has thoroughly reviewed the scope and intent of the Keene Creek project and finds it consistent with ecological restoration practices and not constituting a diversion, realignment, or channelization in the regulatory sense intended under Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 26;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, acting as the RGU, hereby determines that the Keene Creek Restoration Project does not meet the threshold for a mandatory EAW under Minnesota Rules, Part 4410.4300, Subpart 26, and that an EAW shall not be required for this project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

District Conservationist's Report Praet provided a written report.

Cost-share & Project Approvals

**McCabe Payment Woodland Stewardship \$6,970; Les Kapaun Payment Woodland Stewardship \$1,470; Hamilton Payment Woodland Stewardship \$600; Fechner Well Sealing Contract \$2,285; Farm Sol Bioretention Basin/Raingarden Contract for \$4,703.42** Motion by Fish, seconded by Moline to approve all five projects and payments.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

Grant Agreements

**BWSR 2026/2027 Conservation Contracts & Delivery \$57,578** Motion by Kruse, seconded by Fish to approve the grant agreement and authorize staff to sign the agreement.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

Committee and Board Membership Reports

**Area III SWCD Technical Service Area** Tollgaard reported it was a routine meeting with a new laptop authorized for purchase.

**SWCD Forestry Association** Moline reported the meeting is tomorrow.

**Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development** Moline reported next meeting is on Monday. There was a MARCD last month to discuss the MARCD Winter Meeting.

**MASWCD Northeast Area 3** No report.

Supervisor Reports None

Supervisor Expenses Tollgaard reviewed expense reports with the Board. Motion by Fish, seconded by Moline to approve the reports.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

Adjourn Motion by Moline to adjourn the meeting.

Affirmative: Fish, Kruse, Moline, Tollgaard

Opposed: None ***Motion Carried***

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.