

COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT BOARD OF MANAGERS' MEETING

The Board of Managers of the Coon Creek Watershed District held their regular meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025, at the Coon Creek Watershed District Office.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM

Board Members Present: Mary Campbell, Jim Hafner, Erin Lind, Jason Lund, and Dwight McCullough.

Staff Present: Tim Kelly, Corinne Elfelt, Jon Janke, Erin Margl, Jessica Lindemyer, Tyler Thompson, and Michelle Ulrich

Via Zoom: Justine Dauphinais, Erik Bye and Jennifer Lattin

2. Approval of the Agenda

Board Member Hafner moved that the Board for timing purposes address Discussion Item #18 Recognition of District Administrator before Policy Items. Seconded by Board Member Campbell. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund and McCullough) and no nays.

Board Member Lind moved to approve the amended agenda. Seconded by Board Member Campbell. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

3. Announcements

No announcements

4. Open Mic/Public Comment

No one was present for comment.

CONSENT ITEMS

5. Approval of Minutes of November 11, 2025

6. Administrator's Report

7. Advisory Committee Report

8. Approval of Bills for Payment

Claims totaling \$103,425.00 for November 24, 2025, and \$100,936.47 for December 8, 2025 on the following disbursement(s) list will be issued and released upon Board approval.

18. Recognition of District Administrator

The purpose of this item is to formally acknowledge and celebrate the upcoming retirement of District Administrator Tim Kelly, who has served the District with exceptional dedication since 1990.

District Administrator Tim Kelly has provided more than 35 years of distinguished service to the District.

Tim has guided the District through economic hardship, substantial growth, evolving regulatory responsibilities, and increasingly complex water resource management challenges. Tim's leadership has been instrumental in shaping the District's reputation for professionalism, collaboration, and technical excellence.

When Tim joined the District in 1990, the District was facing significant financial challenges, public scrutiny, and legal disputes related to the management of the public ditches. As the first full-time employee, Tim successfully addressed these issues, establishing a foundation for a stable, well-managed organization.

Early in his tenure, the District navigated the complexities of the Wetland Conservation Act, rapid urban growth, and expanding responsibilities for public drainage and floodplain management. Tim implemented management strategies that balanced agricultural, developmental, wetland, drainage, and floodplain needs, applying principles of growth management and sensitive lands protection. Under his leadership, the District managed the evaluation of wetlands, resolved disputes, and ensured equitable outcomes for upstream drainage and downstream flood control.

Over time, the District's responsibilities expanded to include water quality, aquatic habitat, and recreation. Tim led the District through the challenges of meeting growing regulatory requirements while maintaining cost control and transparency in a tight fiscal environment. He championed the adoption of natural infrastructure and asset-based management approaches, emphasizing the long-term ecological and economic benefits of proactive planning and investment.

Throughout his career, Tim has transformed the District from a reactive organization addressing legacy drainage and flood issues into a forward-looking agency capable of proactive management and strategic planning. His vision, dedication, and institutional knowledge have left a lasting impact on the District, the watershed, and the citizens it serves.

3. Appointing ____ Interim Administrator effective ____
4. Decline to appoint an Interim Administrator, leaving the position vacant until a permanent Administrator is hired. In this scenario, the Board or Board Chair would assume the Administrator responsibilities temporarily.

Board member Lind inquired if Mr. Janke felt ready for the transition. Mr. Janke answered yes, he's been shadowing Mr. Kelly closely for the last 2 years, and the September transition to lead the Board meetings proved to be helpful.

Mr. Kelly said there are a few items remaining after the ramp down of duties. There are currently two (2) people reporting to the administrator position which are Financial Management Coordinator Julie Peterson and Director of Operations Jon Janke.

Member Campbell asked why Mrs. Peterson continues to report to the Administrator whereas Mr. Kelly replied to the reasons for bank signing, bills and budget control. Member McCullough also asked for clarification between option one (1) and option two (2). Mr. Janke commented on the effective date of December 9, 2025, or January 1, 2026.

Based on the findings and exhibits as presented in the staff report, the staff recommendation is to Appoint Jon Janke Interim Administrator Effective (date based on Board decision).

Board Member McCullough moved to Appoint Jon Janke Interim Administrator Effective December 9, 2025. Seconded by Board Member Lind. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

Board Member Hafner moved to cancel the scheduled December 22, 2025, Board Meeting and have a Special Meeting on December 15, 2025, to discuss the recommendation for the open Administrator position. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

11. Minor Plan Amendment Adoption

The background for this item is item is the proposed minor amendments to the Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD) 2024-2033 Watershed Management Plan (Plan). Amendments were released for a 30-day public review period on October 21st, 2025, and received no substantive comments or concerns during this review period.

In accordance with MR 8410.0140 subp. 2, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) determined that the proposed amendment is minor. The Coon

13. Award Work on Sand Creek Geotechnical Services

This item is requesting geotechnical services to perform soil borings and to facilitate, finalize and design the project on Sand Creek. Originally the project was to manipulate the creek for fish to pass and evolved into work with the City of Coon Rapids to replace the culverts. The project has grown in ways that benefit the creek much better by manipulating the passage and the stream crossing simultaneously and it's proven to resolve the problem. This request is a step in refining that design and making progress on construction in 2026.

Operations and Maintenance Coordinator Tyler Thompson has received bids for the project and concluded Kilo Engineering, LLC is the best option and least expensive. This firm is smaller, but the owner has previously worked with a larger firm and is very versed. Both Stantec and the City Engineer are comfortable with the quote and have signed off on the project.

Based on the findings and exhibits as presented in the staff report, the recommendation is to Award Sand Creek Geotechnical Services contract to Kilo Engineering, LLC.

Board Member Campbell moved to Award Sand Creek Geotechnical Services contract to Kilo Engineering LLC. Seconded by Board Member Lind. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

14. Sand and Coon Creeks Nine Key Elements Phase 2 Grant Agreement

The purpose of this item is to authorize execution of a grant agreement with the MN Pollution Control Agency for a \$310,191.44 federal Clean Water Act Section 319 grant for implementation of the Coon and Sand Creeks Nine Key Elements (NKE) Plan Phase 2 project.

There has been a delay in receiving the grant agreement language from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Staff do not anticipate major changes in contract terms but will ensure the agreement is reviewed by the District Attorney prior to execution.

Authorizing execution of this grant agreement will require the District to provide a minimum of \$206,795 in local match funds; these funds are already included in the approved 2026 budget.

The prior decision was on September 8, 2026, for the approval of the 2026 budget including the Aquatic Organism Passage Enhancement Phase 2 Project.

the costs associated with hosting an educational workshop for the staff at Mary T Inc. on the topics of native plants, water quality, and smart salting.

Board Member Lund moved to Approve the Water Education Grant application of \$125. Seconded by Board Member Lind. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

16. Water Education Grant – Shared Currents

On November 22nd, Emily Robinson, Director of the newly opened Creative Flow Art Center in Fridley, applied for a \$1,000 Water Education Grant to assist with the costs of hosting a water-themed art exhibit.

Ms. Robinson states in her application that this water-themed art exhibit will increase public awareness and engagement with local watersheds, water resources, and water quality. Participating artists will be required to celebrate, question, and reimagine our relationship with water, creating work that prompts reflection on its ecological, cultural, and personal significance. Local artists will gain a meaningful platform to explore and share water-focused themes, while students, families, and lifelong learners will benefit from accessible, arts-based environmental education. By connecting environmental issues with creative expression, the exhibition will inspire community curiosity, foster a deeper understanding of water stewardship, and encourage thoughtful engagement with sustainable water practices. This event would be held for a length of one month.

This is the first grant application the District has received from Creative Flow Art Center and no other known parties are planning to seek water education grant funding in 2025.

Based on the findings and exhibits as presented in the staff report, the recommendation is to approve Water Education Grant application of \$1,000 for the costs associated with hosting a water-focused art exhibit at Creative Flow Art Center.

Board Member Lund moved to Approve Water Education Grant application of \$1,000 for the costs associated with hosting a water-focused art exhibit at Creative Flow Art Center. Seconded by Board Member Campbell. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, and Lund) one (1) abstain (Board Member McCullough) and no nays.

Board Member Hafner moved to approve the Consent Agenda Items. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

19. MN Watersheds Conference Update (At Board Meeting)

Mr. Janke stated that the conference went well and was attended by several staff and other agencies. Mr. Janke also commented on a great presentation given by Coon Creek Watershed District Water Quality Coordinator Justine Dauphinais

The main item was the legislative language that proposed was approved, however did get a lot of mixed feelings from other board members from other watersheds. Lobbyists are comfortable with the subject matter and how they will approach this.

Next steps are it's packaging with the legislative priorities for next year and working with the MN Watersheds to keep momentum.

Workshops were also a part of the conference, and the videos are on the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) website. Member Hafner stated this was very helpful and could be used for training sessions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

20. Environmental Protection Agency Waters of the United States

The definition of what the waters of the United States has been changing in the last few years. Potentially the definition will be changed restricting to waters that are only attached to navigable waters. Some wetlands are potentially not covered under the federal umbrella. There is currently a proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency to change that to offer protection.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Campbell moved to adjourn at 6:44 pm. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with five (5) yeas (Board Members Campbell, Hafner, Lind, Lund, and McCullough) and no nays.



President