



Who we are as an organization – Mille Lacs SWCD is applying a civic governance approach to SWCD actions and activities. The work of the SWCD and the outcomes of its activities will produce a base of active citizens with common interest in sustainable soil & water conservation. All stakeholders are committed to organize, educate, and apply policy according to principles and standards instituted in democracy.

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse
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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 10, 2025
Conference Room D
Public Remote Access Available

Members Present

Jake Janski, District 3 - Chair
Dan Campbell, District 1 - Vice-Chair
Andre LaSalle, District 4 - Treasurer

Staff Present

Susan Shaw - District Administrator
Pam Kuhn - Financial Specialist
Lynne Gallice – Resource Conservationist

Members Absent

Tim Braun, District 2 - Secretary
Robert Hoefert, District 5 – Member

Others Present

Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Janski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Conflict of Interest Declaration

Policy 2025-01: A conflict of interest whether actual or perceived occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to identify any potential conflicts of interest they may have regarding today's business.

The conflict-of-interest declaration form was provided to each for signature.

2. Approval of Agenda – (additions and deletions of new business or committee reports)

Addition of item #7A.1c – Earned sick and safe time (ESST) policy.

Motion by Campbell, to approve the agenda as amended. Second by LaSalle. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

3. Open Public Forum

Policy 2025-02: Board policy limits public forum time for board meeting topics not scheduled within the agenda to 2 minutes per person but allows time extension by board vote.

4. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve November 12, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Administrators leave request Dec 23-Jan 1
- C. Information Only: Partner Reports

Motion by LaSalle, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

5. Organizational Business

A. Consider 2026 Board Meeting Dates – 2nd Wednesday's monthly.

Discussion was held regarding changing Board Meeting Dates to the 3rd Wednesday of the month versus the 2nd Wednesday and changing time to 5:00 pm instead of 6:00 pm. Tabled until January Board Meeting.

B. Strategic Plan Guiding Documents

1. Civic Governance Policy Agenda and Framework (how we do our work)
2. Organizational Strategic Framework (evaluate economic, env and social impacts on the community)
 - a. Decision to continue the Civic Policy or sunset.

Janski reported attending the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative meeting in November with Molly Clyne and Administrator Shaw. He reported it was interesting and helpful to hear other entities' experiences testing the civic governance model. The next step for the Board is to decide if MLSWCD will pursue a 3-year pilot, but a full board discussion would be appropriate. Janski asked if the Board members present felt it would be appropriate to extend the current policy which sunsets Dec 31st into January allowing time for full board discussion. Discussion was held. **Motion by LaSalle** to extend policy 2023-04 Civic Governance Policy Agenda as presented until 1-31-26 Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

6. Strategic Implementation)

A. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP)

1. Partnership (RRWP) Board - Janski (Braun)/staff
 - a. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC)
 - Janski provided update.
 - No projects to report on.
 - RRWP FY23 grant wrapping up.
 - RRWP FY25 grant starting up and staff are gearing up to apply for FY25 funding projects.
 - Well Sealing money available to seal wells until December 2026.
3. Watershed-wide Community Conversations (Molly Clyne – lead)
 - a. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership (SOW EI-4)
5. Mille Lacs Lake protection efforts (Lynn Gallice – lead)
 - b. **BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects.**

Gallice provided a presentation on the Districts WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership for shoreline projects for FY23 funding.

6. Groundwater/drinking water safety (Lynn Gallice – lead)
 - d. **MDH Well water testing grant FY25**
 1. Authorize expenditure of \$5,750.00, Invoice #10726 for 50 water test kits paid to Water Laboratories Inc.

Motion by Campbell, second by LaSalle to approve payment on invoice #10726 to Water Laboratories, Inc., in the amount of \$5,750.00 for the MDH Well water testing grant FY25. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

7. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)
 - b. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership projects – See staff report

5. Soil Health Cost Share Practices (SOW Soil Health)

- i. Tim Braun Cover Crop payment - Flat rate payment in the amount of \$20,000.00 for completed yr 1 of 3 yrs, for implementing cover crop practice 340 on 133.33 acres at a rate of \$50.00 per acre. Primary source of funding is Rum WBIF FY24 Soil Health Cost Share Practices funds, additional funds from FY23 Soil Health C/S, and FY25 Soil Health Delivery fund.

Motion by LaSalle to approve a one-time up-front flat rate payment to Tim Braun, in the amount of \$20,000.00 for completed year 1 of 3 years, for cover crop practice 340 on 133.33 acres at a rate of \$50.00 per acre under contracts #BWSR-P23-2708-SoilHealthCS-2 - \$,1,290.00, #BWSR-P25-0526-SoilHealthDelivery-1 - \$710.00 and #RWBIF-P23-3265-SoilHealth-1 - \$18,000.00 and to have Chair Janski sign. Second by Campbell. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

c. MDA MAWQCP – See Staff Report

8. Forestry (Molly Clyne – lead)

a. **MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert)**

MASWCD Liaison (Janski)

1. Membership evaluation (June/Dec) – Shaw update

- Membership is to be evaluated by the MLSWCD Board. Representative Hoefert should be part of the board discussion. As he is not in attendance the discussion will be tabled to January.

b. BWSR WBIF Rum River Watershed Partnership

1. Forestry Stewardship Coordination (SOW EI-4) – See staff report

c. LCCMR Tree Planting Grant (ID 2022-260) - See staff report

1. Contract P23-2942-WSP-15: cancel payment previously authorized to Moscho Family Properties LLC and reauthorize payment to Mary Jo Moscho at flat rate of \$300 for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan.

Motion by Campbell, second by LaSalle to cancel payment previously authorized to Moscho Family Properties, LLC and reauthorize payment to Mary Jo Moscho pending documentation to show the new name in contract at a flat rate of \$300 under contract P23-2942-WSP-15 for a Woodland Stewardship Plan written, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan pending documentation and to have Chair Janski sign. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

2. Contract P23-2942-WSP-20: application by Scott Liestman for cost assistance to have a Woodland Stewardship Plan written that would be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$300, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan

Motion by LaSalle, second by Campbell to approve contract # P23-2942-WSP-20 with Scott Liestman for cost assistance to have a Woodland Stewardship Plan written that would be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$300, based on a not to exceed rate of \$300 for an eligible plan and to have Chair Janski sign. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

e. Conservation Tree Sale Forestry Program - See staff report

9. Stream/shoreland protection (Lynn Gallice – lead)

B. **Snake River Watershed Planning Partnership (SRWPP)**

1. Partnership Board (SRWPP) - Hoefert (Braun)/staff

a. Steering Committee report (Storm/Shaw) - See staff report

C. **Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity (MRSCWE)**

1. Partnership Board (MRSCWE)- Campbell (Braun)/staff

a. Implementation Planning Committee (Siena Storm – lead) - See staff report

5. Agriculture/Soil Health (Siena Storm – lead)

a. BWSR WBIF MRSC FY25 – Nonstructural soil health management - See staff report

E. **Other Programs and Grants**

2. Area 3 Envirothon program

- Shaw provided an update and reminder of the Area 3 Envirothon program and that it is a High School age environmental competition. Lake SWCD coordinates the event for Area 3 and will do outreach in our area to contact schools to find out if they would like to participate. Shaw clarified that MLSWCD has made a financial contribution to the effort but has made the strategic decision not to dedicate staff time to the event. Staff will provide school contacts to Lake SWCD. Discussion held.

4. BWSR Buffer Law Implementation (Siena Storm – lead) - See staff report

5. DNR Observation Well Monitoring (Siena Storm – lead) - See staff report

7. District Capacity & Leadership Development

A. Personnel

1. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle)

LaSalle provided an overview of the 3 policy updates discussed by the Personnel Committee listed below to be added to the policy handbook prior to the revision of the handbook. Discussion held.

- MN Paid Leave policy** – needed to meet the new State law. Policy recommended will mirror the Mille Lacs County policy and importantly clarifies that all leave available to employees will run concurrently. Administrator Shaw recommends mirroring the intent of Mille Lacs Counties policy, while simplifying the language if possible.
- Flex schedule policy** – The existing employee handbook specifies the core working hours as 8-4:30 and is silent regarding any option for flexible working hours. Administrator Shaw suggest a small amendment clarifying that the Administrator has authority to authorize adjustments to work hours for staff if requested but ensuring office coverage during working hours. This would provide a benefit to staff while meeting employer needs.
- Earned sick and safe time (ESST) policy** – The existing policy indicates ESST is tracked separately from regular sick leave and can be accrued up to 96 hrs. This was done originally following MN law and mirroring Mille Lacs County; however, it presents a tracking burden and significant inefficiency. Following a 2024 amendment to the law, Mille Lacs County amended their policy which reduces the accrued ESST time to 80 hrs. and causes those hours to be used first by employees, reducing the administrative burden while meeting MN law. Administrator Shaw recommends mirroring Mille Lacs County in this policy.

Motion by Lasalle, second by Campbell to approve all three policies: MN Paid Leave, Flex Schedule and Earned sick and safe time (ESST) as presented to the Personnel Committee by the Administrator. MN Paid Leave and Earned sick and safe time (ESST) policies will approximately mirror the counties existing policies. Flexible scheduling will be at the discretion of the Administrator ensuring office coverage during business hours. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

2. Employee handbook update

- a. BWSR PRAP grant application awarded in the amount of \$5,000. Authorization requested for Administrator to execute grant.

Motion by Campbell, second by LaSalle to authorize Shaw, District Administrator, to Docusign the BWSR PRAP grant application awarded in the amount of \$5,000. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

B. SWCD Board

1. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Business (Janski-A3 Director)

a. MASWCD Annual Convention

- Janski provided update:
- Resolution Ballots - 7 of the 12 received support to move in for approval. 5 voted in to discuss. Prevailing wage was removed from the resolutions. – rejected on the floor. Other 4 out of 5 to discuss were approved on the floor.
- Budget proposal – MASWCD dues increase 3%
- Area 3 Conservation Award – Pine County
- State Forestry Award – North St. Louis
- District of the year – North St. Louis
- Trade show Improvement
- Tuesday night network reception

3. One on One meetings with the Administrator – None

4. General Supervisor updates - None

8. Fiscal Capacity

A. Financial update (Pam Kuhn - Financial Specialist)

1. Treasurer’s report and monthly transactions report which include electronic transfer’s #E25-279 through E25-300, credit card fees and checks written #8246-8252, totaling \$50,557.12 and subject to audit.

Kuhn provided an overview of the monthly transaction and treasurer’s report for November 2025. **Motion by LaSalle**, seconded by Campbell to approve the treasurer’s report for November 2025 and monthly transaction report which include electronic transfer’s #E25-279 through E25-300, credit card fees and checks written #8246-8252, totaling \$50,557.12 and subject to audit. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

2. Reconciliation of Bank Statements (Treasurer)

LaSalle noted all looked good and ecstatic about the interest hitting the new business money market account.

4. 2026 Draft Budget (Shaw)

Shaw reviewed the draft 2026 budget with the Board. Mille Lacs County has included the full MLSWCD budget request in their 2026 budget, as a result the draft budget looks positive. Shaw will work with Kuhn to get the anticipated operational expenditures finalized in preparation for the January meeting. Discussion held.

5. Conservation tree sale – sales budget (Pam Kuhn – lead)

Kuhn reviewed the final draft of the tree order form and conservation tree sales budget with the board. Discussion held. The Board was pleased with the final tree order form, pricing and tree sales budget for 2026.

9. Approved SWCD Meetings & Events

Motion by LaSalle, seconded by Campbell, to approve supervisor attendance/reimbursement for the following meetings. Affirmative: Campbell, Janski, LaSalle. Opposed: none. **Motion carried.**

Internal Operational Committees

- A. Finance Committee (Hoefert/LaSalle) TBD
 - 1. Statement reconciliation w/QuickBooks (LaSalle) monthly
- B. Personnel Committee (Janski/LaSalle) Dec 18 @ 2:30
- C. Conservation/Public Outreach (Braun/Campbell)
- D. Equipment liaison (Braun)
- E. Government Relations
- F. One on One Meetings with Administrator please schedule monthly as needed

Partnership Boards

- G. Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) Board (Janski/Braun) Dec 18 @ 4:30
 - 1. Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) liaison (Janski) Jan 12 @ 12:30
- H. Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) Board (Hoefert/Braun)..... Dec 22 @ 9:30
- I. Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity (MRSCWE) Board (Campbell/Braun).....Feb 5 @ 11:00
- J. Technical Service Area 3 (TSA3) Board (LaSalle/Hoefert)..... Jan 28 @ 10:00

Voluntary Membership Boards

- K. Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group (MLLWG) (Janski/LaSalle) Dec 15 @ 10:00
- L. MN SWCD Forestry Association (Hoefert) Jan 15 @ 10:00
- M. Area 3 Envirothon, Cloquet Forestry Ctr May 4, 2026
- N. State Envirothon, Elk River May 18, 2026

State and Regional Association Meetings

- O. MASWCD/NE Area 3 Meetings
 - 1. MASWCD Legislative Briefing Day at the CapitalMar 17 & 18, 2026
 - 2. NE Area 3 Summer Meeting, Cloquet Forestry CtrJune 5, 2026
 - 3. NE Area 3 Fall Meeting, Lake SWCD Hosts Sept TBD, 2026

10. Evaluate the Meeting

- Shaw is looking at changing the agenda format for 2026.
- Kuhn - Timesheets due December 19, 2025.
- LaSalle quoted “nice job” on the meeting.

11. Next Regular Meeting – January 14, 2025, 6PM, Historic Courthouse, Conference Rm D w/public remote option.

12. Adjourn - Chair Janski adjourned the meeting at 7:56 pm.



Tim Braun, Mille Lacs SWCD Board Secretary

1-14-26

Date

Our specific purpose or vision is to organize more sustainable partnership between government and community, by developing and supporting an active role for all citizens in managing soil & water resources, that will ensure soil and water resources can meet the needs and the common good of all citizens.