



North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792

Regular Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2026

The meeting was held in person at the District office. A virtual link was available.

Supervisors Present at Roll Call: Chuck Bainter, Jerry Hovi, Frank Modich, Peggy Pearson, and Mark Peterson were present in person.

Staff Present In Person: Anita Provinzino, District Administrator; and Miranda Frenning, Accounting & Human Resources Specialist.

Staff Present Online: Jake Bendel, Watershed Conservationist; Corey Denning; Resource Conservationist; Tristan Nelson, Supervisory Regional Farm Bill Forester Phil Norvitch, Conservation Manager; Rachel Poppe, District Forester; and Jon Utecht, AIS Program Coordinator

Others Present: Melanie Bomier, BWSR was present in person. Allison Praet, NRCS; and a person using the name Micheal were present online.

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Chair, Peggy Pearson.

1. **Agenda** - Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.
2. **Minutes of Last Meeting** – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Frank Modich to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.
3. **Financial Reports & Program Summary** – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to accept the financial reports and program summary. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Accounts Receivable and Payable** – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Chuck Bainter to approve the accounts payable and accounts receivable as updated 4/8/26. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Guest Introductions and Comments** – Melanie Bomier indicated she presented at the Clean Water Council regarding Lake Superior Capacity funding. There has been significant progress with this funding, which underscores the need.

Michael was asked to comment and remained silent.

NEW BUSINESS:

6. **Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention**
 - a. Agreement for Koochiching County to Provide Watercraft Inspections – Moved by Frank Modich/Mark Peterson to approve the agreement with Koochiching County to provide watercraft inspections in St. Louis County in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Agreement with Vermilion Lake Association for Watercraft Inspections – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Chuck Bainter to approve an agreement to provide watercraft inspections for the Vermilion Lake Association in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Agreement with White Iron Chain of Lakes Association for Bait Bin Services – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to approve an agreement to provide bait bin services in Lake County to White Iron Chain of Lakes Association in an amount not to exceed \$3,900. Motion carried unanimously.
7. **BWSR**

- a. Cost Share Contract 26-04-01 with Landowner for Critical Area Planting using 26 Conservation Contracts funds – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Mark Peterson to approve Cost Share Contract 26-04-01 for critical area planting in an amount not to exceed 75% of the total cost or \$2126.25 using 26 BWSR Conservation Contracts funding. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Cost Share Contract 26-04-02 with Landowner for Forestry Practices using 24 WBIF RHV funds – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to approve Cost Share Contract 26-04-02 for forest stand improvement/woody residue treatment in an amount not to exceed 75% from state sources or 100% from non-state sources of the total cost of the practice, or an authorized amount of \$21,526.29 from 24 WBIF RHV funds. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Cost Share Contract 26-04-03 with Landowner for Woodland Stewardship Plan Renewal using 24 WBIF RHV funds – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Mark Peterson to approve Cost Share Contract 26-04-03 for a woodland stewardship plan renewal covering 117 acres not to exceed \$735 using 24 WBIF RHV funds. Motion carried unanimously.
 - d. Drinking Water Grant Application with Hibbing Public Utilities & Board Resolution 2026-07 – Moved by Frank Modich/Mark Peterson to approve Board Resolution 2026-07 authorizing acceptance of funding, if Hibbing Public Utilities is awarded the competitive BWSR Drinking Water Protection Grant they applied for recently. Motion carried unanimously.
8. **DNR**
- a. CPL Snow Funds: Contractor Concern – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to terminate the contract dated 7/15/24 with cause effective immediately due to inaction and unresponsiveness of the contractor. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Request for Letter of Support for DNR Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – Moved by Frank Modich/Chuck Bainter to not send a letter of support at this time as it is stepping outside of our role. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. CPL Trezona Trail Funds: Award Contract for Invasive Species Removal – Moved by Frank Modich/Mark Peterson to award a contract for invasive species removal to the low quoter: Prairie Restorations, Inc. at \$18,017.44 using 26 DNR CPL Trezona Trail grant funds. Motion carried unanimously.
9. **Financial**
- a. **Purchase Pickup to Replace 2016 F-250** – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Frank Modich to approve purchasing through St. Louis County a 2026 GMC Sierra 2500 4x4 double cab pickup with a 6'9" box for \$48,471.20 plus tax, license, title and registration. Motion carried unanimously.
10. **MPCA 2nd Round of 319 Funding for Pelican Lake Watershed & Board Resolution 2026-08** – Moved by Jerry Hovi/Chuck Bainter to approve Board Resolution 2026-08 accepting second cycle funding for the Pelican Lake Watershed in the amount of \$279,583.30 and contributing \$186,389.00 in non-federal sources over 4 years. Motion carried unanimously.
11. **Strategic Planning**
- a. Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan 2026-2028 – The draft strategic plan was reviewed with the board. The board requested that Anita survey the staff regarding what qualities and criteria they would like in the next district administrator and offer any feedback to the board as the board continues the outlining the process for the transition. Responses are requested for the May meeting.
 - b. Update on Staff Working Session & Next Steps – Staff will meet on Tuesday, April 21 to refine the goals, tasks, timelines and lead staff people for each of the strategic goals. That document will be brought to the board for action at the May meeting.
12. **Upcoming Supervisor Meetings and/or Trainings**

- a. Board Roles & Responsibilities by Melanie Bomier, BWSR, - today – Melanie gave a presentation on SWCD Board Supervisor roles and responsibilities.
- b. Tree Sale pickup – May 7 & 8
- c. Other

13. **Other** – None

REPORTS:

14. **Monthly Progress Report** – See report on file

15. **Natural Resources Conservation Service Report** – Allison indicated NRCS has an ASUS forester starting on April 20. They are working on pre-approvals. There may be more EQIP funding available and it is highly competitive. She does not know how much will be allocated to this area. Allison indicated the Local Work Group meetings need to be held before July. The meeting was set for May 13 at 1:00.

16. **Supervisor & Committee Reports**

- a. **Laurentian Resource Conservation & Development – March 23** – Peggy indicated all dues are paid, they are budgeting a loss, and no changes to the Executive Director's contract. Other information was emailed earlier.
- b. **Little Fork River Policy Committee – March 26** – Chuck indicated the committee is going to pursue a joint powers collaborative model, they have approved plan goals. The next meeting is June 25. A public hearing is set from 10-2 on September 24. Other information was emailed earlier.
- c. **MASWCD Legislative Days – March 17-18** – Mark and Jon reported that they were able to meet with all legislators. Mark indicated that he like the group meeting format. Overall, it was a good experience.
- d. **Rainy Headwaters/Vermilion Policy Committee – March 30** – Chuck indicated that the grant is about 25% spent and the committee heard updates from several members. Other information was emailed earlier.
- e. **SWCD Forestry Association – March 19** – Mark indicated presentations were given by Alex Hoffman the DNR's new nursery expert; goats for buckthorn control, and injecting decorative trees for emerald ash borer protection. Draft minutes were emailed earlier.
- f. **Technical Service Area 3 – March 25** – Chuck reported the TSA Board authorized purchasing a drone and that Matias presented on various projects the TSA has been working on. Other information was emailed earlier.

CLOSING:

17. Confirm Next Meeting – May 13, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

18. Adjourn – Moved by Chuck Bainter/Frank Modich to adjourn the meeting at 12:28 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the meeting minutes approved by the North St Louis SWCD Board and that I am duly authorized to make this certification.



Mark Peterson, Secretary

May 13, 2026



Resolution 2026-07

North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

505 3rd St N, Ste A
Virginia MN 55792
(218) 288-6144
www.nslswcd.org

RESOLUTION TO PARTNER WITH HIBBING PUBLIC UTILITIES ON A BWSR DRINKING WATER PROTECTION GRANT

WHEREAS, the District Administrator was contacted on March 17, 2026, by the MN Department of Health asking if the District would be willing to partner on a competitive Drinking Water Projects and Practices grant application to the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to be submitted by Hibbing Public Utilities on March 25, 2026; and

WHEREAS, this \$85,000 grant, if funded, would provide funding to provide outreach and education regarding drinking water protection, private well water testing clinics, well sealing, and establishment of a regional drinking water protection committee; and

WHEREAS, the Hibbing's Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) includes at least 40 known unsealed wells that risk contaminating the water source; and

WHEREAS, the St. Louis River Watershed Plan has a 10-year goal of sealing 20 unused well in the St. Louis River North planning area which includes Hibbing. The targeted area for well sealing is within a 1-mile buffer area around DWSMAs; and

WHEREAS, the watershed plan also identifies a 10-year goal to protect & manage 2,000 acres (specifically in the Swan River Watershed) of private owned forests in areas that protect surface water, drinking/ground water quality, and riparian habitat.

WHEREAS, staff determined this to be an opportunity to partner with Hibbing Public Utilities on a project that fits the goals of the St. Louis River Watershed Plan and meets the mission of the District.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the District Administrator authorized partnering on Hibbing Public Utilities' application and expects the District will be able to bill \$16,000 in staff time plus outreach expenses, if awarded.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors is willing to accept this funding, if awarded and authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to sign all documents related to such funding.

Motion Made by:

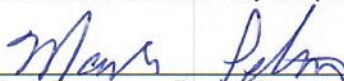
Seconded by:

Affirmative:

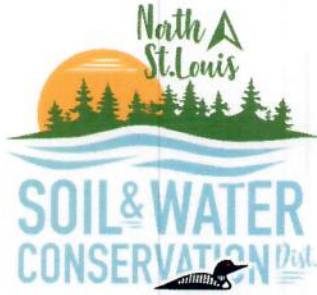
Opposed:

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 8th day of April 2026 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.



Mark Peterson, Board Secretary



Resolution 2026-08

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Soil and Water Conservation District**
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**RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A 319 SMALL WATERSHEDS GRANT FOR THE
PELICAN LAKE WATERSHED FROM THE MPCA**

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency offers a federal Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Programs grant used to implement a series of projects outlined in a nine-element plan, provide a steady source of funding, focus implementation efforts, and achieve measurable water quality improvements on a specific waterbody, and

WHEREAS, the Pelican Lake watershed is nearly impaired for some water quality impairments and is barely meeting other standards; and

WHEREAS, Section 319 generally provides four rounds of federal funding that is to be matched with 40% state, county or local funding to do work aimed at preventing the lake from becoming impaired; and

WHEREAS, the first cycle of funding is set to expire on 12/31/26 unless extended through 8/31/27; and

WHEREAS, the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board desires to accept the second round of funding in the amount of \$279,583.30 and will contribute \$186,389.00 of non-federal match.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors authorizes the District Administrator or Board Chair to secure and sign all documents related to such funding.

Motion Made by:
Seconded by:
Affirmative:
Opposed:

Certification of Recording Officer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the North St Louis SWCD Board on the 8th day of April 2026 and that I am duly authorized to execute this certificate.

Mark Peterson, Board Secretary