

**Chippewa River Watershed Association
Joint Powers Board (JPB)
Meeting**

Date: May 15th, 2026
Time: 9:00 – 11:00 am
Location: Pope County Courthouse
Note Taker: Katie Disrud

Attendance:

Katie Disrud (Coordinator), Holly Kovarik (Fiscal Agent), Ron Staples (Stevens County), Larry Mahoney (Swift County), Paul Gerde (Pope County), Robert Lahman (West Ottertail County), Ken Johnson (Grant County), Jeff Way (Douglas County), Mark Weimerskirch (Swift SWCD), Randy Mitteness (Pope SWCD), Rod Wenstrom (West Ottertail SWCD), Steve Friedlein (Kandiyohi SWCD), John Ledermann (Douglas SWCD), Dennis Feuchtenberger (Stevens SWCD), Paul Wymar (MPCA)

Agenda Item

Meeting was called to order by chair at 9:00 AM

Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jeff Way, seconded by Paul Gerde. Motion passed.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

a) February 20th, 2026

A motion to approve Decembers Meeting Minutes, with correction to Ken Johnson being from Grant County not Douglas, was made by Larry Mahoney, seconded by Robert Lahman. Motion passed.

New Business

a) Annual Report

Katie Disrud shared the annual report draft. Mentioning minor changes recommended by the TAC, such as maps. The board mentioned how pictures of 'before' projects are always nice for the public to see, and sharing how each project will benefit the land.

b) Education Outreach Survey Results & Discussion

Before starting the education outreach survey results and discussion the group participated in a quick activity. Each board member had a few examples of activities, they must be placed into one of the buckets the best fit : WBI Eligible, Other Watershed Funds, Not eligible for Watershed dollars. A presentation of our E&O survey results was shared with the partners; we reviewed the responses to each question. A consistent theme found across the survey results: everyone has different ideas about how E&O funds and priorities should be used, the activity we completed earlier was a good reminder that we are all working from the same plan, the same funding sources, and should be building our watershed outreach in alignment with that shared direction .Coordinator shared visual of ship (being us as a group), the map (being our plan) and a captain (Coordinator trying to steer the ship along the map/trail). She expressed how she is trying to help steer the ship and make sure that everyone on it is rowing in the same direction. The group had short discussion about the limited dollars and the more important focus should be in the work/projects. And completing the E&O goals that are stated in the plan. Following this discussion the board members then took their second copy of activities and placed them in the best fitting bucket. Results will be analyzed at a later date.

c) Allowing AI for virtual meetings

All counties have different policy around using virtual AI, and acceptable platforms. It's important to note that AI technology isn't going anywhere so we don't want to set limits that we may regret. However, when a party is using it during virtual meetings those AI generated notes get sent to all parties invited to the meeting. These notes may not be acceptable in all partners' local policies.

A motion that AI is not allowed to be used in virtual meetings nor for creating minutes was made by Robert Lahman. The second was made by Jeff Way. Motion passed.

WRAPS Report – Cycle 2 Update – MPCA

Paul Wymar from MPCA share the WRAPS update. Cycle 2 of the Chippewa River Watershed WRAPS report is now complete and should be included in the 5-year update of our comprehensive watershed plan update.

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Key takeaways from his presentation are Conservation is working – overall sediment and phosphorus levels are decreasing. Lakes are mostly stable/improving, and the watershed appears hydraulically resilient. We still face some challenges such as increasing nitrogen, hydrology is intensifying, E. coli not improving and localized impairment hotspots are still issues.

Coordinators Report

Katie shared the coordinators report. There has been a postcard delivered to high priority areas for well sealing. The example of the postcard, and the map of the areas was included in the meeting packet. Disrud shared details about the comprehensive water clinic that will be July 16th at the pope county fairgrounds. This event will be moving through different areas of the watershed targeting the high and medium priorities from our CWMP.

Financial Report

- a) Treasurers Report
- b) 2026 Q1 complete
- c) Fiscal Agent Report

Holly Kovarik shared the financial report. We received the first 50% of our FY-26 WBIF grant. Checks are being signed to transfer the money to Glenwood State Bank today. Quarter 1 is wrapping up and Kovarik discussed all outgoing payments from partners. We are nearing 50% spent on our FY-24 grant. This will require reporting from the Fiscal Agent and Coordinator; to be able to request the next 40%. Kovarik mentioned that June 30th is the reporting deadline, she will work with Katie on getting all expenses reported on for both FY-24, and FY-26 grants. Lastly, Kovarik discussed that partners earmark technical engineering amounts at the beginning of each grant period. When a partner has used up the total amount earmarked for them, it's a discussion among the TAC members to shift funds within that category. This is currently happening, but because it's within the same category the board did not need to approve the shift from Stevens SWCD to West Ottertail SWCD.

Kovarik talked about the audit for calendar year 2025. This is currently occurring and will need to be submitted by end of June. **A motion to approve the treasurers report items as presented and authorized fiscal agent to work with the chair/officers to submit the audit was made by Randy Mitteness. It was seconded by Robert Lahman. Motion Passed.**

Reminder that there is NO June meeting scheduled.

Open Discussion/Agency Updates

- Drainage workshops start in June
- DNR Public Waters Inventory is complete in Douglas County. Grant is in the upcoming schedule for completion.
- Stevens County hosted a visit with the MPCA commissioner and MDA commissioner to review the West Dairy Expansion happening near Morris. Good discussion, more decisions being made June 22

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07



Signature of approval



Signature of approval