



11360 Highway 212 STE 6
Cologne, MN 55322

(952) 466-5230 | carverswcd.org

Carver SWCD Board Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2025

Held in conference room 3 at the Carver County Public Works facility in Cologne, MN

Board Members Present:

Chair, Mark Zabel
Vice Chair, Marcus Zbinden
Secretary/Treasurer, Jeffrey Sons
Member, Michael Lynch

Others Present:

Farm Service Agency Director, Jennifer King
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Cindy Hoffmann
Carver County Public Services Deputy Director, Paul Moline

SWCD Staff Present:

District Manager, Mike Wanous
Administrative & Finance Specialist, Felicia Brockoff
Landscape Restoration Specialist, Seth Ristow

1. Call to Order.

Chair Zabel called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. Public Comments – None.

3. Agenda Review and Adoption.

Resolution 032-2025: Lynch moved, Sons seconded, to approve the July 17, 2025, Board Meeting Agenda as presented. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

4. Agency Reports

- a. FSA report – Jennifer reported that all the Carver County CRP offers in batch one have been accepted. The second batching period deadline is tomorrow, July 18. The nomination deadline for the COC committee is August 1. FSA staff are still working on the supplemental disaster assistance programs. They haven't received direction for the flooding disasters for the livestock emergency program. The supplemental disaster relief program has a September 15 start date.
- b. NRCS report – Cindy reported all the 2025 EQIP preapprovals have been processed. They are currently accepting 2026 EQIP applications, with a deadline of August 1. The ranking deadline will mostly likely be in mid-December. The new NRCS team boundaries went into effect on July 14. Jake Stitch is the new NRCS team lead for McLeod, Meeker, Sibley, Carver and Scott counties. Mike Hemmen, the engineering technician from Glencoe, will now be working on Carver County's. Cindy also reported she will be attending a Renewing the Countryside event on August 6 at Ridges at Sand Creek in Jordan.
- c. Carver County Report – Paul reported the preliminary budget increase for the SWCD is 4.3%. However, he is anticipating a decrease in that amount, which won't be known until after the County Board's work session at the end of August. The WMO's preliminary increase is a 6.6% increase, which he also feels may decrease.

The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District has a new watershed administrator. They are planning on giving a presentation to the County Board soon. Paul also reported some County lakes have had blue-green algae outbreaks in the past couple weeks. Carver County will be receiving a Green Corps member in October, who's job duties will be working on native plants. He also reported the Carver County fair will be held August 6-10, Madeline is focusing on native plantings for this year's booth. The Carver WMO committee will meet on July 29.

5. Consent Agenda Items

Resolution 033-2025: Zbinden moved, Lynch seconded to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of June 26, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
- b. Acceptance of the June 2025 Treasurer's Report

Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

6. Regular Agenda Items

- a. The Carver Supervisor District 1 Vacancy was advertised on the Carver County Local News online edition. Mike reported that three interested candidates have submitted letters of interest to be considered for the position. The Board discussed the candidates, and if any further interviews should be conducted.

Resolution 034-2025: Zbinden moved, Lynch seconded to appoint Karli Wittner to the vacant District 1 Supervisor position. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- b. MASWCD is hosting a governance workshop September 10-11 in St. Cloud. August 22 is the deadline for registration. If anyone is interested in attending, they should let the staff know by the August Board meeting for registration purposes.
- c. MASWCD is accepting nominations for their annual awards program. Applications are being accepted through September 5.
- d. One new pollinator application has been received, and three landowners have requested reimbursements for their cost-share project installations. Seth explained Jim Walker's application, that is in a new development in Carver. He plans to remove 625 square feet of sod in his backyard and replace it with a native habitat that will include plugs.

Resolution 035-2025 – Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to approve Jim Walker pollinator application for 625 square feet, with a maximum payment of \$902 that is approximately 75% of the project cost. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

Seth presented the three payment approval requests at this time. Jonna and Eric Bartusch contracted with the Mustard Seed Landscaping to create their 280 square foot pollinator habitat in their backyard. They have requested the maxim cost-share amount of \$560, or \$2 per square foot.

Lucas Radde increased a pollinator habitat around an existing beehive and solar panel. He installed a total of 18,033 square feet of native habitat and is requesting a cost-share reimbursement of \$991.79, which is 75% of his total cost, \$1,332.39.

The City of Chaska completed a Savanna restoration with a pollinator habitat on 9 acres. Seth explained before the restoration, this was an old growth oak forest with a thick invasive understory. Goats were used to clean up the buckthorn, and the City will continue to monitor and spray the invasives as needed. The total cost of the project was \$10,087, and they are requesting \$5,000 in cost-share assistance, in accordance with their contract, and the SWCD program maximum.

Resolution 036-2025: Lynch moved, Sons seconded to approve a total of \$6,551.79 in pollinator cost-share reimbursement payments for the following projects:

- 1) Jonna and Eric Bartusch, 280 square feet, cost-share payment of \$560
- 2) Lucas Radde, 18,033 square feet, cost-share payment of \$991.79
- 3) City of Chaska Savanna Oaks Restoration, 9 acres, cost share payment of \$5,000.

Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- e. The Board reviewed the strategic planning session, that was held after last month's Board meeting. Zabel asked if there was a schedule to conduct sub watershed assessments (SWA's) in Carver County. Mike reported we have only done them when BWSR had grants available for funding projects. It would be a good winter project for staff, not during the busy construction season. Soil health was also discussed, and how that program could be worked in with the SWA's.

Cross training of various staff members was also discussed in the planning session, as well as terrestrial (insects) invasive species, and how to protect gravel pits as a resource within the County. The consensus of the Board was that these strategic planning sessions should be more frequent. Zabel suggested adding the topic to the May 2026 SWCD Board Agenda.

7. SWCD Board Committee & SWCD Staff Monthly Reports

- a. Personnel Committee (Zabel, Zbinden) – informal mid-reviews have been conducted.
- b. Metro Conservation District's (MCD) Committee (Zbinden; Lynch alt.) – the next Board meeting will be in August.
- c. Education & Outreach Committee (Sons, Lynch) – has not met.
- d. Budget Committee (Sons, Zbinden) – starting to put together the draft 2026 budget.
- e. WMO Advisory Committee (Zbinden; Sons alt.) – the next meeting is July 29.
- f. South Fork Crow River 1W1P (Zabel; Lynch alt.) – no meeting until 2026.
- g. The SWCD staff monthly progress report was presented and discussed.

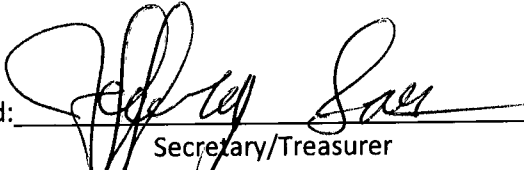
8. Board of Supervisors Announcements

- a. Upcoming meetings/events:
 - August 21 – SWCD Board meeting 8:00 a.m.
 - September 1 – Labor Day, SWCD office closed
 - September 18 – SWCD Board meeting 8:00 a.m.

9. Adjourn

Resolution 037-2025: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 a.m. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, August 21, 2025, at 8:00 AM
Location: Public Works Headquarters, Conference Room 1
11360 Highway 212, Cologne, MN 55322

Approved: 
Secretary/Treasurer

Date signed: August 21, 2025