



11360 Highway 212 STE 6
Cologne, MN 55322

(952) 466-5230 | carverswcd.org

Carver SWCD Board Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2026

Held in conference room 1 at the Carver County Public Works facility in Cologne, MN

Board Members Present:

Mark Zabel, Chair
Karli Wittner, Vice Chair
Jeffrey Sons, Secretary/Treasurer
Marcus Zbinden, Member

Board Members Absent:

Michael Lynch, Member

Others Present:

Cindy Hoffmann, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Andrea Kerber, FSA Program Analyst

SWCD Staff Present:

Mike Wanous, District Manager
Felicia Brockoff, Administrative & Finance Specialist

1. Call to order.

District Manager, Mike Wanous, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. Nominations and election for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer for 2026.

Manager Wanous opened the nominations for Chair at this time. Zbinden nominated Zabel as the Chair. With no other nominations or objections, Zabel is the 2026 Carver SWCD Chair by acclamation.

Zabel took over the meeting and opened the nominations for Vice Chair. Sons nominated Wittner as the Vice Chair. With no other nominations or objections, Wittner is the 2026 Carver SWCD Vice Chair by acclamation.

Zabel opened the nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. Zbinden nominated Sons as the Secretary/Treasurer. With no other nominations or objections, Sons is the 2026 Carver SWCD Secretary/Treasurer by acclamation.

3. Public comments – None.

4. Agenda review and adoption.

Resolution 001-2026: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded, to approve the January 15, 2026, Board Meeting Agenda with the two minor additions. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

5. Agency Reports.

- a. FSA report – Andrea reported on the various FSA programs and sign-up deadlines. The County Committee election ballots are due February 2 and will be counted at the February 10th Committee meeting. The CRP annual payments were processed on December 1. Counties are

also able to authorize routine modifications to CRP-1s and cost-share agreements through the 1-year extension to the Farm Bill that passed on November 12, 2025.

- b. NRCS report – Cindy reported today is the deadline for CRP, ACEP, and CSP. Carver County has 8 CRP applications, and 21 EQIP/CSP applications. A lot of producers have signed up for both EQIP and CSP since there hasn't been much guidance for the CSP program. Staff has finished up payments for prior CSP and EQIP contracts and have started working on eligibility and planning for the new applications. She reported there is a new regenerative Ag initiative that just came out, but there aren't a lot of details to what the initiative will entail. NRCS is having two teams in each area pilot the new program, and Carver has been selected as one of those teams.
- c. Carver County report – Paul was unable to attend today's meeting.

6. Organizational meeting items.

- a. The Board discussed the Operating Rules for 2026. Staff recommended a couple of minor changes, which were discussed at this time. On page 2, paragraph 2 talking about a vacancy on the SWCD Board, will add the wording 'background and experience or a resume,' after sending a letter of interest. The suggested wording change on page 5 will remain as it is currently.

Resolution 002-2026: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to approve the 2026 Operating Rules with the wording amendment on page 2. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye.

- b. Resolution 003-2026: Zbinden moved, Wittner seconded to keep the Supervisors compensation policy the same as it was in 2025. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.
- c. Resolution 004-2026: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to set the 2026 mileage rate at \$0.725 per mile. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.
- d. Resolution 005-2026: Sons moved, Wittner seconded to designate Security Bank & Trust, MidCountry Bank, Citizens State Bank of NYA, Old National Bank, and Southpoint Financial Credit Union as the Carver SWCD's 2026 depository designations. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.
- e. Chair Zabel made the following appointments to the standing SWCD committees:
 - 1. Personnel Committee – Mark Zabel, Marcus Zbinden
 - 2. Metro Conservation District's (MCD) Committee – Karli Wittner; Mike Lynch alt.
 - 3. Education Committee – Jeff Sons, Mike Lynch
 - 4. Budget Committee – Jeff Sons, Marcus Zbinden
 - 5. WMO Advisory Committee – Marcus Zbinden; Karli Wittner alt.
 - 6. South Fork Crow River 1W1P – Mark Zabel; Mike Lynch alt.

7. Consent Agenda Items

Resolution 006-2026: Sons moved, Wittner seconded to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of December 18, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes.

- b. Acceptance of the December 2025 Treasurer's Report, with the note of additional interest being added to investments.
- c. Acknowledgement of thank you note sent from Sherburne SWCD for the MN Envirothon donation.
- d. The final 2024 Audit report is complete.

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

8. Regular Agenda Items

- a. Resolution 007-2026: Zbinden moved, Sons seconded to pay the MCIT annual insurance renewal, total cost of \$13,581. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.
- b. Resolution 008-2026: Sons moved, Zbinden seconded to pay annual dues to MASWCD-\$7,654.59, MASWCD Area IV-\$450, MCD-\$50; and submit \$100 to NACD for the 2026 conservation investment, total of \$8,254.59. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.
- c. BWSR has sent the FY2026 Buffer Law implementation grant through DocuSign, that will provide the SWCD with \$20,000 to continue implementing the buffer law.

Resolution 009-2026: Sons moved, Wittner seconded to authorize the District Manager to sign the FY26 Buffer Law grant agreement for \$20,000 through DocuSign. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- d. Peterson Company Ltd. has sent their engagement letter for them to conduct our 2025 audit. The audit fee for 2026 will be \$5,300, which is \$300 more than 2025.

Resolution 010-2026: Zbinden moved, Wittner seconded to approve the engagement letter with Peterson Company Ltd. for the 2025 Audit, fee of \$5,300; and reach out to the other auditors for a bid to conduct the 2026 Audit. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

- e. The Carver SWCD will be celebrating 80 years of conservation efforts in 2026, November 12 officially. Chair Zabel requested this item be discussed at the April meeting with a possible open house or similar event held later in the year.

9. SWCD Board Committee & SWCD Staff Monthly Reports

- a. The committees have not met. The WMO Advisory meeting will be held on January 27.
- b. The SWCD staff monthly progress report was discussed.

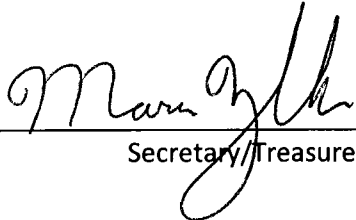
10. Board of Supervisors announcements

- a. Upcoming meetings/events:
 - January 19 – Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observed, SWCD office closed
 - February 16 – Presidents Day, SWCD office closed
 - February 19 – SWCD Board meeting, 8:00 AM
 - March 19 – SWCD Board meeting, 8:00 AM

11. Adjourn

Resolution 011-2026: Sons moved, Zbinden seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 a.m. Roll call vote: Lynch-absent; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 8:00 AM
Location: Public Works Headquarters, Conference Room 2
11360 Highway 212, Cologne, MN 55322

Approved:  _____ Date signed: February 19, 2026
Secretary/Treasurer