



11360 Highway 212 STE 6  
Cologne, MN 55322

(952) 466-5230 | [carverswcd.org](http://carverswcd.org)

## Carver SWCD Board Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2026

Held in Conference Room 2 at the Carver County Public Works facility in Cologne, MN

### Board Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

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

### SWCD Staff Present:

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

#### 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 021-2026: Sons moved, Lynch seconded, to approve the May 21, 2026, Board Meeting Agenda as presented. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

#### 4. Agency Reports.

- a. FSA report – Jennifer King reviewed the written report that was in the Board packets. The signup period for the SDRP signups has been extended to August 12, covering disaster relief from 2023-2024. Emergency loans are now available for Carver County producers, to repair or buy new structures that were affected in 2025, December 1, 2026, is the deadline to apply. All of Carver County's CRP offers were accepted.
- b. NRCS report – Cindy reported that out of the 10 EQIP contracts that were submitted, 3 contracts were obligated. Statewide, only 8% of the EQIP contracts received funding. Additional funding was requested from the national office, and Minnesota received an additional \$40 million statewide. She also reported out of the 5 CSP applications that were received, 3 were funded. Additional funds were also requested, but there has been no word yet on the status of additional CSP funding. NRCS staff have been working on CRP status reviews, there are 39 contracts that expire in 2028, and 16 new contracts. Cindy also thanked the SWCD staff, for their assistance with surveying various projects.

Supervisor Zbinden inquired about staffing shortages in FSA and NRCS. Jennifer reported there are currently 7 temporary FSA employees hired through September. With the early planting season this year, FSA has been able to keep up. Cindy reported that NRCS is down about 25% for staffing.

- c. Carver County report – Paul reported on the construction happening around the Public Works site in Cologne. The parking lots at the facility are all planned to be redone. There is a plan to do more native plantings here, as well. He also reported the plan for the Government Center in Chaska, is to be completely torn down and rebuilt. All the staff at the Government Center will be moving out of the offices in about 1-year from now, and will need to be relocated during the construction process. Supervisor Zbinden asked about the native prairie established at the Government Center, if there was a possibility of transferring it to the facility here in Cologne. Paul explained that moving a native prairie would be a very difficult process.

Paul reported the WMO Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26. One Agenda item will be the 2027 budget discussion. He explained that both union contracts are expiring, and the health care contract is also expiring at the end of the year. Typically, the County takes bids from health insurance companies. There has been some discussion on a self-funded insurance option, and possibly pooling with some other Cities and Scott County for a self-funded insurance program. There have been two capital requests for WMO funding. Cologne requested a rain garden infiltration basin, and Waconia submitted a structure project, totaling about \$45,000 for the two projects. The WMO tour will be held in June and will focus mostly on the east side of Chaska.

The WMO will be starting up meetings for the next round of BWSR WBIF funding with approximately \$700,000 available for the area covered by the Carver County WMO.

Carver County will receive a Green Corps member from September through August of 2027. The main job duties will be turf to native education. BWSR staff contacted Madeline about the native plantings maintenance workshop Carver County recently held. BWSR would like to partner with Carver County to expand the workshops statewide. Paul thanked Tom and Mike for their assistance with some gravel pit issues happening in Watertown Township. Paul also reported the grant that the Lower MN River Watershed District received has been rescinded by BWSR.

## 5. Consent Agenda Items

Resolution 022-2026: Lynch moved, Sons seconded to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of April 16, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes.
- b. Acceptance of the April 2026 Treasurer's Report

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

## 6. Regular Agenda Items

- a. Peterson Company Ltd. has sent the 2025 Audit Planning Letter.
- b. MASWCD has sent out a call for resolutions, no resolutions were brought forward.
- c. The MASWCD Area 4 summer meeting will be held on June 4 at the Cambridge Public Library. Supervisors planning on attending should let staff know by early next week.

- d. After the June 18 Board meeting, a strategic planning session will be held. Chair Zabel asked for data showing how key metrics have changed over time (i.e. WCA violations, construction site erosion control visits, plan reviews, etc.).

**7. SWCD Board Committee & SWCD Staff Monthly Reports**

- a. Personnel Committee (Zabel, Zbinden) – Mike’s 27-year anniversary with the SWCD was on April 26. Tyler’s 4-year anniversary was on May 11.
- b. Metro Conservation Districts Committee (Wittner; Lynch alt.) – did not meet.
- c. Education & Outreach Committee (Sons, Lynch) – did not meet.
- d. Budget Committee (Sons, Zbinden) – did not meet. Paul stated some preliminary numbers should be out over the next few months. The union contracts and health insurance will be the biggest hurdle with the 2027 budget. Union contract negotiations won’t start until fall.
- e. WMO Advisory Committee (Zbinden; Wittner alt.) – Marcus reported on the stream monitoring results that were collected on area lakes, data and chemistry trends are being collected. He also mentioned the capital improvement projects that Waconia and Cologne requested, and reported that the Big Woods Lake ravine project along Highway 41 has been completed.
- f. South Fork Crow River 1W1P (Zabel; Lynch alt.) – Chair Zabel reported the annual meeting will be on July 10.
- g. The SWCD staff monthly progress report was presented and discussed.

**8. Board of Supervisors announcements**

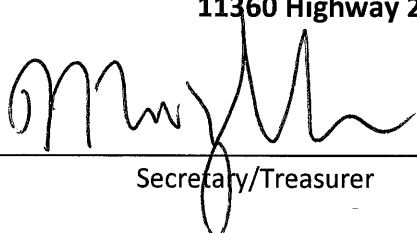
- a. Upcoming meetings/events:
  - May 19–June 2: Filing period for general election (*District’s 1, 3, and 5 in 2026*)
  - May 25 – Memorial Day, SWCD office closed
  - June 4 – MASWCD Area 4 meeting & tour
  - June 18 – SWCD Board meeting, 8:00 AM, followed by the NRCS Local Work Group meeting, and the SWCD Strategic Planning session
  - June 19 – Juneteenth, SWCD office closed

**11. Adjourn**

Resolution 023-2026: Zbinden moved, Wittner seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Roll call vote: Lynch-aye; Sons-aye; Wittner-aye; Zabel-aye; Zbinden-aye. Motion carried.

**Next Board Meeting:** Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 8:00 AM  
**Location:** Public Works Headquarters, Conference Room 2  
11360 Highway 212, Cologne, MN 55322

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Secretary/Treasurer

Date signed: June 18, 2026