Meeting Minutes: Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (JPB)

Date

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 1 p.m., in-person at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, Farmington, MN, and virtual via Microsoft Teams

JPB Members in Attendance

- Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik
- Dakota County Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland
- Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Staff in Attendance

- Travis Thiel, VRWJPO Administrator, Dakota County
- Melissa Bokman Ermer, VRWJPO Co-Administrator, Scott County
- Brita Moore-Kutz, VRWJPO Communications and Outreach Specialist, Dakota County
- Kelly Perrine, VRWJPO Senior Watershed Specialist, Dakota County

Others in Attendance

- Nikki Stewart, Environmental Resources Department Director, Dakota County (virtual)
- Brian Wisdorf, Assistant County Attorney and VRWJPO Legal Counsel, Dakota County
- Willie Peters, Senior Resource Conservationist, Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) (virtual)
- Katie Schirmer, Contract Specialist, Dakota County (virtual)

Agenda

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Slavik at 1 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Slavik, Hamann-Roland, and Wolf were present in-person.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Approval of Agenda

Res. No. VRW 26-15: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

5. Approval of Minutes from the March 26, 2026, Meeting

Res. No. VRW 26-16: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports
b. Authorization to Submit the 2025 VRWJPO Annual Activity Report to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
c. Approval of a Joint Powers Agreement with Scott Soil and Water Conservation District for Annual Services

Res. No. VRW 26-17: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

7. Approval of Expenses

Travis Thiel presented the expenses from March 1-31, 2026, totaling $103,826.10.

Res. No. VRW 26-18: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to approve the expenses, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 roll call vote.

8. Business Items

a. Authorization to Award a Contract to McNamara Contracting, Inc., for North Creek Culvert Improvements

The bid process for the North Creek channel and culvert improvement projects yielded four bids. McNamara Contracting had the lowest bid at $514,355, below the engineer's estimate at $791,959.55.

Res. No. VRW 26-19: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

b. Authorization to Execute a Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the Changing Climate and Stormwater Resiliency Study

Kelly Perrine explained the background of the Minnesota Climate Resiliency and Water Infrastructure grant program and its importance to achieving the VRWJPO's Climate Resiliency Goals in the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan. One of the priority Actions in the Climate Resiliency Issue Category is to create a Vermillion River Watershed Changing Climate and Stormwater Resiliency Study. The VRWJPO has been allocated up to $200,549 from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) FY26 Planning Grants for Stormwater, Wastewater, and Community Resilience, with up to $100,000 in local match.

Commissioner Slavik clarified that the grant is solely from state funds and not any federal funds.

Res. No. VRW 26-20: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to authorize execution of the grant agreement, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

c. Authorization to Execute an Agreement with Emmons and Olivier Resources, Inc., for the Changing Climate and Stormwater Resiliency Study

Kelly presented the proposed agreement with the consultant Emmons and Olivier Resources, Inc. (EOR) to complete the Vermillion River Watershed Changing Climate and Stormwater Resiliency Study.

The study will incorporate recommendations both for flood protection and water quality improvement as Minnesota's climatic patterns become more severe.

Res. No. VRW 26-21: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to authorize execution of the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

9. Staff Reports

Melissa Bokman Ermer/Willie Peters

- Melissa noted that Scott County has updated its financial processing systems, which has caused a delay in her providing invoices for her VRWJPO time.
- Melissa introduced Willie Peters, a Senior Resource Conservationist at Scott SWCD. He shared an update about a wetland project within the Scott County portion of the VRWJPO called Pettit Pond, formerly called the Bemis Wetland. The wetland was restored in 1970 at the behest of a local farmer. In 2015, a neighboring landowner reached out to the SWCD, rightly concerned that the outlet structure was beginning to fail. It is currently blocked by cattails and is eroded almost to the back side of the berm. SWCD staff contacted the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to obtain an ordinary high-water mark (OHW) for the wetland, which took about a year and a half. The DNR's proposed OHW mark was half a foot lower than what Scott SWCD had determined the original one was, so the SWCD needed approval from at least ¾ of the landowners surrounding the pond to approve the original OHW, which they got. The SWCD obtained a permit from the DNR to repair the outlet structure in February 2026 and selected a contractor to complete the project. The work will consist of replacing the berm with a new one with an inlet-outlet pipe and rip-rap and adding an emergency spillway. Commissioner Slavik asked where the funding was coming from. Melissa responded that it is from the VRWJPO general fund.

Kelly Perrine

- The 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) the previous day, putting it into effect officially. The task ahead is for local government units to incorporate it into their local water management plans.

Brita Moore-Kutz

- Brita staffed a table at the City of Lakeville Earth Day Celebration on April 18 and promoted the VRWJPO Stewardship Grant. She also organized a staff Earth Day cleanup at the Avonlea development near the Lakeville Central Maintenance Facility. This location includes a restored wetland along Middle Creek from a 2015 VRWJPO project, when the housing development was first being built.
- Brita will accompany School of Environmental Studies students on April 24 to clean and stencil storm drains in a neighborhood near Farquar Lake in Apple Valley for their Earth Day service-learning event.

Travis Thiel

- The mid-month update to the JPB and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) had noted that the VRWJPO's wetland banking policy dictates that credits sold from the bank should be sold at a median value of BWSR Bank Service Areas (BSA) 6, 7, and 9. The VRWJPO is in BSA 8. Following the current median value would result in a $30,798 increase in wetland credit prices compared to

last year's price, a 50% jump. A developer had inquired about purchasing credits in November 2025 but decided to wait until after the 2026 pricing review. If the VRWJPO were to follow the median BSA value as previously instructed by the JPB, the cost would be approximately $90,000 per acre. Travis asked the Board for direction on which pricing scheme should be offered. Commissioner Slavik asked when the BWSR publishes the BSA land values each year. Travis said it was not consistent, but usually in the spring. The Board did not want to make an exception for the inquiring developer and suggested updating the wetland banking policy to include an interim number for times when staff are waiting on updated values from the BWSR, but to not change the pricing policy.

- CAC member Alex Franzen has been awarded a fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution and will have to resign from the CAC after the November 2026 meeting, as he is moving to the Washington, D.C., area.
- Travis handed out the final expenses and treasurer's reports from the end of 2025. There were some expenses that came in after Dec. 31, 2025, that were accrued back to 2025. He hoped to receive audit results from Dakota County Finance around June so staff could assess whether the 2026 budget needed amendments.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Wolf to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, May 28, 2026, 1 p.m., at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, Conference Room A, and via teleconference on Microsoft Teams.

Certification

Respectfully submitted by

Brita Moore-Kutz

Communications and Outreach Specialist, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Attest

Commissioner Tom Wolf, VRWJPB Secretary/Treasurer

6/25/2025

Date