UPPER RUM RIVER
Watershed Management Organization

Regular Meeting for **Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 6:30 pm**

Meeting location: Oak Grove City Hall. 19900 Nightingale St NW, Oak Grove, MN

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

   Mr. West called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

   Present: John West, Paul Tradewell, Dan Breyen, Ken Glaser, Andrew Wood, Sarah Udvig (remote), Ryan Seguin, Patrick Sullivan, Tim Miller, Radja Lohse.

   Absent: Brian Kirkham.

   Audience: Jamie Schurbon (ACD), Jim Lindahl (ACD), Paul Hudella (MSA), Josh Norman (BWSR), Taylor Morris (resident, city council candidate).

2. Adopt Agenda

   Mr. Breyen made a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Lohse seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes for May 7, 2026

   Mr. Breyen made a motion to approve the minutes for May 7, 2026. Mr. Sullivan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report

   Mr. Tradewell stated the balance is $72,237.30 as of July 31, 2026.

   Mr. Lohse made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Mr. Breyen seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Unfinished Business

   None

6. New Business

   a. Rum River Watershed Partnership Membership Invitation

      Mr. Schurbon stated that five or six years ago the URRWMO decided not to become a member of the Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) which was forming at that time. He stated that another invitation has been extended to the WMO. He provided background information on the organization and time spent developing a comprehensive plan for the entire Rum River Watershed and related JPA. He stated that the group meets to allocate Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant funding for member projects. He stated that the URRWMO has exclusively used the metro pot of WBIF funding and would probably not dip into the other WBIF funding pot that goes through the RRWP.

Mr. West commented that nothing has changed, in his opinion, and did not believe membership in the organization is necessary.

Mr. Schurbon was asked if the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) could still request funding for a project in the URRWMO area and whether there would be any RRWP decisions that could impact the URRWMO. He replied that ACD is a RRWP partner, and can request funding for projects in the URRWMO area. He noted that the RRWP is working on projects upstream of the URRWMO, so the primary impact is positive upstream projects.

Mr. Schurbon was asked if the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) is participating. He stated that the LRRWMO has chosen not to participate, but for a different reason, as a member of that Board had concerns about language included in that plan related to the Anoka dam.

Mr. West confirmed the consensus of the Board to continue not to participate.

b. Watershed Plan Update Proposals

Mr. Schurbon stated per direction at the meeting in May, he solicited quotes for the Watershed Plan update. He stated that the solicitation for quotes was sent to five firms and two responses were received, one from ACD ($54,399) and one from MSA ($79,556).

Mr. West asked that each proposer provide comments.

Paul Hudella, MSA, stated that if cost alone is the deciding factor, he cannot compete with ACD. He stated that the benefit that MSA would provide is that they would provide an independent view with many team members. He also noted their experience dealing with state agencies and the wide variety of skills possessed by their staff team. He believed that if they could develop a better plan, that could result in cost savings down the road. He commented that they have a strong representation for their community interests and are aware of the financial limitations. He recognized that this is a difficult choice and that cost is a factor.

Mr. West noted that MSA did the last Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Schurbon stated that working with ACD tends to be a simplification. He recognized that water management in Minnesota is complex because of the number of agencies involved. He stated that ACD is successful in bringing local partners together, and he has completed a few other Watershed Management Plans with no issues that arose. He believed that ACD being involved in the creation of the plan also assists in the implementation of the plan, since ACD serves as the watershed coordinator.

Mr. West asked what was budgeted for the development of the plan.

Mr. Schurbon replied $55,000 was the planned amount. $21,971 was set aside in the 2025 and 2026 budgets and $21,3300 was budgeted within the 2027 budget. He stated that they had planned another $11,699 to get them to the $55,000 mark.

Mr. West commented that it would be nice to have three proposals to review, but recognized that only two responses were received. He noted that they could extend the deadline and try to get more proposals but was unsure they would be successful.

Mr. Tradewell commented that he believed ACD is great and should do the plan. He asked if MSA could lower their cost.

Mr. Hudella commented that he did read the meeting minutes and saw the budget discussion of $55,000, but his proposal was the lowest he could get to.

Mr. Schurbon stated that the ACD proposal is based on certain expectations of both ACD and the WMO board. Expectations of ACD are in the proposal as detailed timelines and deliverables. Expectations for the WMO board are in the contract. These include that the board members have email and respond to messages, that meetings will have a quorum, and that Board members come to meetings having read the materials and being ready to discuss.

Mr. West agreed that those expectations would exist for either proposal. He stated that the URRWMO is very conservative in financial matters and the gap between the proposals is large.

Mr. Breyen commented that using ACD would seem to streamline things as well.

Mr. West commented that Chuck Schwartz of MSA has done a great job for the City, as has Mr. Schurbon, which makes it a difficult decision for him.

Mr. Tradewell made a motion to select the Anoka Conservation District Watershed Plan Update Proposal and award a contract in the amount of $55,339. Mr. Sullivan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

c. Watershed Planning Initiation

Mr. Schurbon stated that BWSR would like to see a formal resolution stating that an organization is starting its planning process. Josh Norman, BWSR, explained that a formal resolution is not required by statute, but it shows that there is real initiation in the planning efforts and creates a starting point.

Mr. Breyen made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-01 to Begin the Watershed Management Plan Update. Mr. Wood seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

d. Audit Requirements

Mr. Schurbon stated that the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has a new interpretation of old law that would require annual audits instead of every five years (provided a revenue threshold is not exceeded) for WMOs. He stated that BWSR wrote and implements MN Rules 8410 which OSA points to in their legal interpretation, but BWSR disagrees with the OSA interpretation. He stated that this creates conflict between two state agencies. He stated that he developed a few options for the Board to consider. He stated that an audit of 2025 finances was not completed, and noted that an audit was completed of 2024 finances.

Mr. West stated that he would suggest they not complete another audit because it is not clearly required and there are differing interpretations of the law from the two state agencies. He noted that the every-five-year audit requirement had until recently been the legal interpretation of both the OSA and BWSR.

Mr. Schurbon provided a review of communications with OSA on this topic. He noted that he had provided a detailed reasoning of why he felt the URRWMO did not require a

Mr. Schurbon stated that he received a written communication from OSA in November requiring annual audits. He stated that in his review of the information, if an agency receives special district aid from the State, that would trigger an annual audit under new 2025, and the URRWMO does not receive

state dollars. He stated that several months later he received another communication from OSA stating that WMOs require annual audits, to which he responded explaining why he believed that this requirement does not apply to the URRWMO. He stated that he continued to receive the same response that WMOs require annual audits, however the reasoning switched from referring to new 2025 law to referring to Minnesota Rule 8410. That email directed him to contact BWSR if there were concerns, which he did. He stated that he has had additional conversations with BWSR, who conducted a legal review and found that they disagreed with OSA and wrote a letter to OSA in July on this topic to request that the pause button be pushed on audits for 2025 so the two state agencies can further discuss. He understands that OSA has replied to BWSR, but was not provided information beyond this. He heard two other WMOs have done independent legal reviews, both finding that the OSA position is in error.

Mr. West commented that this is a big loop and his position has not changed that they should continue to complete an audit every five years.

Mr. Breyen asked the cost for an audit. Mr. Schurbon replied that the cost is between $4,000 and $6,000.

Mr. Norman provided additional information on OSA and the conversations they have had with that agency. He stated that BWSR will continue to explore avenues to resolve this issue with OSA and did not believe the WMO should be worried about completing an audit this year.

7. Mail

   There was no mail.

8. Other

   a. Upcoming Meeting Dates: November 17, 2026, January 5, 2027, March 11, 2027, and May 6, 2027.

9. Invoice(s)

   a. TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc. $ 178
   b. Anoka Conservation District invoice payments 2 & 3 of 3 $27,728

   Mr. Tradewell moved to approve the invoice for the recording secretary for $178 and Anoka Conservation District for $27,728. Mr. Breyen seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

10. Adjourn

    Mr. Breyen made a motion for adjournment at 7:04 p.m. Mr. Sullivan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.