

## **MINUTES**

### **Apple River Protection and Rehabilitation District (ARPRD)**

#### **Board of Commissioners' Meeting**

**Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.**

#### **Amery City Hall Council Room**

1. Chairman Roland Peterson called the meeting to order and set the agenda.

2. Chairman Roland Peterson, Treasurer Billie Jo Schleusner, Harvesting Operations Manager Dave Schleusner, Secretary Kitty Miller and guest speaker Ecologist Jeremy Williamson were present.

3. Jeremy advised that he is not getting many answers on what grants/assistance ARPRD is eligible to receive. Alex Smith, Water Resources Management Specialist at the DNR met with MaryJo Gingras at Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department. There used to be only planning and implementation grants; now there are six categories, and multiple lake associations are requesting grants. We cannot request an implementation grant as the original lake management plan is more than ten years old. We would need to update it only if we want to apply for an implementation grant. We can redo the plan, identifying specific watershed items to work on, such as building levees to reconnect floodplains, creating more buffer zones, etc. It is hard to do without an updated plan. There is currently not a district relationship with farmers/landowners. We could apply for a late planning grant to design projects, or could apply for an education grant for farmers, but the latter would likely be good in theory only. There would not likely be many farmers who would show up at a workshop. We can update the plan to focus on tributaries, with more intense modeling. Due to the number of obstacles, there is no longer a water quality committee at ARPRD. Another option would be to identify the studies we want to do, but there would have to be an additional tax levy to pay for it. Jeremy could also reach out to forested and farm landowner groups, see who might be interested and apply for a grant to pay part as well as ARPRD paying part. Grant money for this year has already been allocated. Funding cuts by the current administration may impact future grants. Wisconsin buffer zone initiative discussed; Minnesota mandates a 50 foot buffer zone for lakes, rivers and streams. Jeremy sees the best option as identifying practices, for example consider Beaver Brook levees to keep nutrients from going into the river. We don't need to collect new water samples as the quality is probably better than it was with nutrients being taken out of the river. The Apple River is the largest contributor of phosphorus to the St. Croix River. The DNR had Friendshuhs build an additional effluent pond as a buffer. Encourage relationships with farmers; this is what ARPRD has done so far to improve water quality, we need your help now. Grant requests and preapplication are due in November and December. A budget can be worked, a very rough estimate would be \$40,000. For the tributaries there is already some good modeling available, we can figure out where to direct the water. But there is currently no hydraulic model and that is a definite obstacle. We need to know what is going down the river. Maybe do a basic model then more if an implementation grant is received. Consider soil studies, levees, best place to get rid of nitrogen. A zoom meeting with Alex is the next best step, or maybe even an in-person meeting in Spooner. Address how we can work best with the DNR. Alex has ridden on the harvester with Dave. Alex ranks grants in order of importance. We must be specific with areas we want to focus on, ie this particular field... We

could request a lake restoration grant, but it may be difficult without an updated plan. Jeremy will email all with proposed meeting times.

#### 4. Reports:

- a. The Minutes of the November 9, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting were approved.
- b. The Treasurer's Report was approved:
  1. Checking Account Balance as of April 26, 2025, is \$36,211.16.
  2. Carryover funds from 2024 were \$4998.09.
  3. February 1 Account Balance \$15,448.54, March 1 Balance \$40,958.81. Taxes were received on February 2nd. March 31 Balance \$39,964.
  4. Some payments made include \$185 per month to CarlsonSV, \$543 for workers compensation, which is administered by a new company this year, \$3080.02 for the harvester payment. Total for all insurance this year went up \$890 from last year.
- c. The Final Report of the Audit Committee for the second half of 2024 was approved. It was done on December 14, 2024 and showed perfect accounting.
- d. Roland Peterson confirmed that the DNR has approved the Weed Harvesting Permit and Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) grant. The CBCW grant funds have already been received.
- e. Dave confirmed harvester operators are currently being paid \$16 per hour. Pay will be increased to the \$17 per hour approved last year. CBCW staff are paid \$13 per hour. CarlsonSV needs a reminder that CBCW payments need to be kept separate from other payments. Billie Jo will be contact them prior to the start of the season. A signed agreement page needs to be sent out to Carlson. Total payroll administration cost is \$2,220 this year. CBCW staff includes Isaac Wieczorek who will continue to lead and Allie and Aiden. Isaac volunteers rather than being paid. CBCW will start boat inspections next weekend with the fishing opener. CBCW online classes were attended.
- f. Dave has sufficient crew for harvesting, including Sean, Steve, Isaac and Aiden as well as Dave himself. The red truck is ready. The cost of filters has doubled, and oil has more than doubled in cost, now at \$780. Dave will pull out the harvesters next week and get them ready for use. There is a new resident up high past the last dock 250 yards, on the north end peninsula, east side. It may be too shallow to use the harvester there. Dave needs to rebuild the hydraulic pump on each harvester and has ordered a kit. He may try to hold off until the end of May to start harvesting to save money but does need to keep up once the weeds start. There are a lot of new people on the river. SWIMS (Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System) database is changing something. The information needs to be forwarded to Billie Jo, Dave will print hard copy and give it to Isaac. One decontamination site is up and being used already. Dave carries chlorine and water in the trucks to refill the bleach cleaning solution. He is asking people to use on the way in, not the way out. Dave will also get the second site in town up and running. The budget is very tight this year with increased costs and less carryover. Last year there were 24 harvester days more than any preceding year.
- g. The possible land donation was not feasible since the site was not buildable and we could not put in a storage shed. The goal is still to eventually acquire land and build the

shed. Some organizations self-support by selling the harvested weeds. Dave will keep asking to see if someone may be willing to donate or sell land. If we had our own property we could compost and sell the weeds. It must be clean black dirt and would have to be run through a screen to get rid of cans and other detritus.

4. Action Items

a. Officer Election for position of Chair for 2026 through 2028 considered. Roland is 94 years old but is willing to be nominated again at the upcoming annual meeting. Also look for more people who are capable and willing to consider this position.

b. Carlson SV will continue to manage payroll for 2025. See additional notes in 4(e) above.

c. Finances were reviewed. See treasurer's report 4(b) above. Finances will be tight with increased costs and less carryover this year.

d. CBCW inspectors online training was completed.

e. Roland Peterson will continue to write the ARPRD summer newsletter with input from others. Kitty will edit.

f. July 19<sup>th</sup> and August 23<sup>rd</sup> were confirmed for the next board meeting and the annual meeting dates.

5. The Board thanked Dave for his work on possible land acquisition, harvesters, everything. And Billie Jo for her work for ARPRD with accounting accurate to the penny. And thank you to the harvester operators for being so careful with equipment that can do a lot of damage if not handled properly.

6. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kitty Miller, Secretary