

## **MINUTES**

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

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

**Saturday, July 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.**

**Amery Public Library Vault 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, Polk County Representative Fran Duncanson and Secretary Kitty Miller were present.
3. The Minutes of the April 26, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting were approved with a correction to Roland's age, which is 92, not 94. The Minutes of the June 11, 2025 Special Board Meeting were approved.
4. The Treasurer's Report was approved. The checking account balance as of July 18, 2025 is \$25,835.33. Income for the year to date is \$46,738.21. Expenses for the year to date are \$25,900.97.

#### 5. Reports:

a. Dave reported the load count for the larger harvester is 360 already, up 30% over last year. Curly-leaf started early but dropped around the 5th of June. With the low water level, the volume of coontail has been tremendous. With the 4<sup>th</sup> of July the worst weeds in the river were from the 46 Bridge to the Cameron Bridge. Just that week, Dave harvested 60 hours, and Aiden worked 40 hours.

The shaft on trailer for the harvester broke and the cost for the replacement shaft was \$2,000. Dave put it in himself. Trailers for harvesters have been upgraded now to have motors on each side. Dave would like to update the ARPRD trailer this winter, having a new shaft made locally instead of buying one to save money.

They have spent a lot of time harvesting and have used a lot of fuel. Hot and humid weather leads to heavy coontail growth. Some residents reach out to Dave and Billie Jo asking for harvesting near their properties. Dave works to keep the river around the city really clear for Music on the River dates. A lot of people come by boat.

A couple of motors are leaking, and Dave has been holding off buying new parts due to budget concerns. He has been rebuilding motors, but we should get one new one. The older harvester has had nearly 6,000 hours of use, which is like 250,000 miles on a car. The newer harvester is at 1,600 hours, which is like 150,000 miles.

We are on a very tight budget. Rice Lake has a payroll budget of \$120,000 with everyone in town paying it, unlike our far more limited tax district. We need new tires for one truck. One breakdown could really blow our budget. Everything is out of warranty. Dave is changing the oil more frequently than normal to try to keep things from breaking down.

Dave does have enough people on his team, with Isaac, Aiden, John, Rich and Allie. Curly-leaf started early and heavy but also dropped early. If we could get a cold and snowy winter, weed conditions would improve.

b. Isaac was unable to attend to give a report on Clean Boats Clean Waters, but Allie told Dave she is at almost the required 200 hours. The hours needed for the CBCW grant will be in prior to August 16<sup>th</sup>.

c. Dave watches the boats and the decontamination stations and could fill the sprayers three times a day. They are definitely being used. Every now and then a sprayer disappears, or the ends get broken, and Dave must replace it. He gets cheap sprayers, which are around \$16. The goggles are gone but no one seems to use them anyhow. Dave has not seen any zebra mussels.

d. Derrick was not able to attend the meeting to provide an aquatic invasive species report. Tom Sheffel takes water quality samples when a satellite is overhead. Information will be provided at the annual meeting.

e. Roland handed out an email summarizing Jeremy's proposed action plan to reduce nutrient load, and create a more detailed possible lake management plan for 2026. See the attached documents. There has been discussion with Polk County Land and Water and Alex Smith at the DNR. A grant would need to be requested by September. Polk County Land and Water would be supportive, but not able to provide any financial help. The question before the board is whether we can afford about \$10,000 to carry out our part of the project.

The first concern is that we will need to pay for a new Aquatic Plant Management Plan to be completed in three years, or four years if we are able to stretch it out.

The agriculture conservation planning form can tell you how the land is being used. Land use is changing. Farmers have sold land. Many acres are now covered by solar panels, and they don't have good ground cover underneath. Some farmers are now planting cover crops, and some are doing no till farming.

We cannot ask for approval of another \$10,000 in taxes. Jeremy could make a grant application and is aware we don't have a lot of money. Dave questioned exactly what Jeremy's plan would do. They could analyze exactly how the land is being used, divert water and create more buffer zones. Roland pointed out one correction to Jeremy's

buffer zone information. Minnesota's buffer zone is not mandated to be 50 feet, but one rod or 16.5 feet. Farmers fought the 50-foot buffer, and the state government did pay them something for the buffer zone mandated in the end.

Kitty asked about the current phosphorus and nitrate levels now as compared to when ARPRD started harvesting. Tom Sheffel presents lab information at the annual meeting.

Dave thinks it is the county's responsibility, not our responsibility to reduce the runoff. He has already had three calls from residents who have heard about the possibility of this project and are adamantly opposed to any tax increase to fund it. Why do we have to pay to clean up other people's mess? This project could be \$200,000, and grants would in all probability not cover all of it.

With the lake management plan we are really focusing on weeds and aquatic invasive species. The proposed project focusses solely on water quality. Restocking was one goal, but that is very expensive. Dave said one time the DNR did have extra muskies which they put in the river at no cost to us.

Kitty thinks it not something ARPRD can afford. When looking at the budget, and the funds carried over, we used up close to the full amount of income. We don't have any funds in reserve for repairs and other needs.

Fran suggested we should table this project. We are not shooting Jeremy down, it is just that we don't have the finances to do it. We could introduce the idea at the annual meeting, and Jeremy could present if he would like to do so. Even if we pay for an analysis/report diverting water is very expensive.

The budget is our number one concern and harvesting number two. Sooner or later, we would like to do something more to help improve water quality but cannot at this time. Roland will communicate this decision to Jeremy, who can speak at the annual meeting if he wishes to do so.

#### 4. Action Items:

a. Roland was nominated for position of Board Chair for 2026 through 2028.

b. Audit Committee of Derrick, Tim Graff, and Aaron moved and seconded with no opposition.

c. Financially we are okay for right now. We have additional paychecks every two weeks. The second half of the taxes will come in later. Around August 20<sup>th</sup> there will be a harvester payment due. It is around \$2,600 for CBCW, with 200 hours at \$13 per hour. The DNR has said they will pay 75% of it.

For Payroll, Fran is recommending we consider using QuickBooks instead of Carlson SV. She is not allowed to do it for ARPRD but can assist Billie Jo or whoever may be able to do the payroll with the conversion. Billie Jo already uses ADP for payroll at her work, that would be another option. It appears there is a stand-alone package for \$500 or you can sign up online for a per employee price. You can also buy a package with accounting that will do tax reports etc. The online package can have up to three users and seven employees. \$10 per employee, \$20 per month. State of Wisconsin sent a letter we have the right to withhold tax. QuickBooks also calculates tax and you can sign up online to remit taxes. It also helps figure out workers comp. We do have the annual audit.

Dave's daughter in law uses QuickBooks. For small jobs, accounting firms like Carlson may hike the price since they primarily do larger jobs. Also, Carlson never separates out the CBCW payroll which is needed for the grant. Allie is now the only employee doing the job it would be easy to separate those hours with QuickBooks or ADP.

For the spring and summer board meetings, Kitty is recommending that we post the notice online and one place in town which meets state notification requirements and will save money. For the annual meeting, we would still need to post in the newspaper per the ARPRD bylaws. Motion to approve made, seconded and carried with no objections.

For the annual meeting mailer, Kitty suggested that we start sending out postcards with the newspaper version of the agenda and referral to the website for the complete agenda and newsletter. This will save on postage and printing costs. Fran advised that the Leader in Frederic will print and mail postcards. We would just have to send them the spreadsheet with the addresses and the newspaper agenda. Kitty will get costs and information to present at the spring meeting.

d. Proposed budget was reviewed for presentation at the annual meeting. One number was off due to one payment out not being reflected yet. Dave will update the spreadsheet. Proposed budget moved and seconded, carried with no objections.

e. Request to apply for a harvesting permit for 2026 was moved, seconded and carried, all yes votes.

f. Seeking a grant for 2026 CBCW moved, seconded and carried with no opposition.

g. Approval was not given to seek a grant to enhance the Lake Management Plan to begin ways to reduce nutrient input from the Beaver Brook and Fox Creek tributaries. Decision to table it with Jeremy given option to present at the annual meeting.

h. The Agenda for the August 23, 2025 Annual Meeting was reviewed. Dave would like to add an additional item. The site where we currently store ARPRD equipment is for

sale. We currently rent for \$1,250 which will not be the case once the property is sold. Andy Orvald his property on the edge of town for sale for \$400,000.

We should have twenty acres nearby where we can dump weeds from the harvester where they eventually turn into black dirt which we could sell. It should be buildable land where we can build a shed as well as store weeds. Does anyone know of land that might be suitable. Andy's garage is not tall enough to store the harvesters. Dave was looking at one spot on 46. We could try for a grant. There would be a startup cost, but in ten years we could become self-supporting. Rice Lake sells its weeds to farmers, but for very little money. In two years, we should also apply for a grant for a new harvester. We have two more payments in 2026 and 2027, 2028 will be the last payments. For the agenda, list Jeremy's proposal and Dave's possible land purchase recommendation under information, not under Action Items. Meeting Agenda moved, seconded and approved.

6. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kitty Miller, Secretary