

MINUTES

Apple River Protection and Rehabilitation District (ARPRD)

Board of Commissioners' Meeting

Saturday, April 18, 2026, 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, Polk County Representative Fran Duncanson, City of Amery Representative Sharon Marks, Aquatic Invasive Species Expert Derrick Carlson, ARPRD Resident Andy Orvald and Secretary Kitty Miller were present.
3. The Meeting Notice and Agenda was posted on the arprd.org website and at three public locations in the city of Amery.
4. The Minutes of the July 19, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting were moved, seconded and approved.
5. The Treasurer's Report for January 1, 2026, to April 18, 2026, was moved, seconded and approved. Checking Account Balance as of April 17, 2026: \$34,302.92, Income to Date: \$46,686.32, Expenses to Date: \$15,383.40. The harvester payment has been made, the harvester insurance has been paid, and the truck insurance which has increased to \$1,600 has not yet been paid. Now that Bremer Bank has changed to Old National Bank, the statements go by account number. Billy Jo did not receive the statement for the preceding month until the 24th. The printout she had requested at the bank had very small text and was difficult to read. Andy brought up the possibility of online banking; he had not been able to have a statement printed at the bank.
6. Derrick Carlson confirmed that he and Allie completed the final audit report, which went through the end of December 2025. Everything balanced to the penny, and the report was moved, seconded and approved.
7. Reports:
 - a. The Clean Boats Clean Waters grant was approved.
 - b. The harvesting permit was approved. It is being sent electronically, and Dave will need to print out copies to keep on the harvesters.
 - c. Dave confirmed the harvester operators were approved for \$17 an hour and had been paid \$16 an hour. He has a new person that he thinks will be very helpful, Steve Elliot, who along with his crew of six currently does the mowing for the solar plant. His hours are flexible, and he

has agreed to do harvesting. Steve will hopefully be able to take over some of Dave's responsibilities, allowing Dave to take some days off.

The budget is tight, with fuel very high right now. Last year harvesting was done for ten days in May. Dave has already put in about eighty hours at the shed working on equipment, but he does not take any pay until he starts harvesting. Diesel fuel is about five dollars a gallon right now, and he has to use the expensive fuel in the new harvester. He uses off road fuel for the other equipment when possible. It is still high though. The \$7,000 spent on diesel and gas would be double this year. Andy thinks that fuel was just as expensive in 2022 and we should be able to look at the costs for that year for an estimate.

The hydraulic oil has been purchased, along with tires and new cutting blades. The brake repair has not been done yet, and a truck tailgate needs reconstruction. Once Dave quits, the ARPRD would no longer have the benefit of all the work he currently does free of charge. The next guy may not do that. Dave has been working on the harvesters since the sheds got warm.

Dave needs to get expensive filters. He has tried others, but they do not work and could lead to expensive repairs being needed. We need four a year. Dave is currently working on a pump and a trailer. A taillight still needs to be fixed, and a throttle cable needs repair and that is a difficult job. A harvester will be ready to go into the water soon and will be parked at Dave's.

Aiden will no longer be harvesting since he has a new job. Steve and Isaac will be working the north end, Dean Swanson is a maybe, and Rick Gregorson is back up. Harvesting is usually done for about ten days in May. It depends on the weather and when the curly leaf comes out. Sunlight really creates growth. Dave can get seven to eight loads per day just between his house and Andy's. Dave worked 640 hours. Last year wages were about \$32,000 for six harvester operators. Workers Comp went up another \$450 to \$900 total, which is still really reasonable. It covers harvesters, CBCW workers, everyone.

Actual carryover was \$5,779.51. Tires were bought in January though.

The river level was very low about a week ago, with many feet of shoreline that would normally be under water exposed, as much as ten to twenty-five feet. Dave received multiple phone calls and tried to find out more from the city but did not hear back. The dam was wide open when he looked. Fran advised that work will be done on the dam, and the water level will likely need to be lowered at times. The low water level last week may have been related. The DNR is requiring the work after an inspection. Fran will talk to Jeff and ask that everyone, especially Dave, be given a heads up for any drawdowns. Andy pointed out that docks may need to be extended for pontoons and other boats. Dave can put it on his Facebook so people can be made aware. Kitty mentioned NextDoor may also be used. The lowered water level could make curly leaf worse with the tops of the weeds closer to direct sunlight.

Dave has not seen any zebra mussels. They are awful on Balsam Lake and Deer Lake; you have to wear gloves when working with dock poles etc. because the shells are sharp. The moving

water in the river probably helps us. Derrick said the silty, mucky bottom also makes the river less conducive to zebra mussels.

Dave got an email from Isaac. CBCW monitoring will start on Memorial Day, and the team will work two to three days a week until they have 200 hours in. They will probably need someone new to do it next year. It is hard to submit information to SWIMS (Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System.)

Dave goes to the decontamination sites every morning to replace the cleaning supplies. He has to get new sprayers once in a while and will pick them up at garage sales when possible. We should consider adding a sign requesting that boaters use the decontamination station on the way in, not the way out. Dave carries water, bleach and brushes on the trucks. No one uses the goggles. You only need about 2.5 tablespoons of bleach per sprayer, which holds about 2.5 gallons. People are starting to use the landing in the park, and there is no CBCW sign at that location. We may be able to get one there.

Fran said the Lakes District spent \$60,000 for a fishing pier. It has to be handicapped accessible. It will be at the end of Maple Street this year. Next year maybe the one at the north end can be done. The old sign says no fishing, no wheelchairs on dock, and is not ADA compliant. Dave will dump another load of gravel one landing; the Town of Lincoln takes care of the other one. They are learning to get grants. Jamie, a new guy there, is hoping for a new boat landing within three years.

Dave has seen 20 or 25 boats pass by on the weekend, and it was not even a tournament day. Dave takes care of the garbage cans, bringing the garbage back to his dumpster, just putting it in the back of his truck. Steve said he will be willing to take care of that.

Dave was stopped by the warden last year since the harvester did not have registration. He learned that the harvesters are considered barges; there is no hull number and no need for license/registration. Last year on Balsam Lake a harvester operator did not pay attention to a problem which led to an oil slick when about a gallon of the vegetable oil they use leaked. Many, many people called 911. It was not environmentally harmful but looked really bad. You have to pay close attention to any mechanical problems. Dave warns harvesters do not drive if the oil light comes on, get a tow with a pontoon.

d. Micah Darling will continue to be the website administrator.

e. Roland and Kitty will create the summer newsletter with input from others.

f. Dave discussed the material removal report. It should be added to the website. Kitty will send it to Micah. The DNR wants cubic feet, not pounds. We get more weeds than any other lake district except for Rice Lake. White Ash only had sixty loads. There were times when they did not have anyone available to run their harvester. The ARPRD harvesters can get ten to fifteen loads on an average day. Jamie at the gate will load residents up with unscreened black

dirt from the weeds if they want. There is a huge pile, four times the size of this meeting room. If ARPRD were to start a business screening and selling the dirt it could take care of half of our costs.

8. Action Items:

a. It was moved and seconded to nominate Kitty for the position of Secretary for 2027, 2028 and 2029.

b. It was moved and seconded to have Carlson SV continue to manage the payroll, which would be too much work for Billie Jo to do.

c. The budget will need a cutback in labor to try to make up for fuel costs. There are four remaining payments to be made for the newer harvester. Dave will have to try to keep the older one going. A capital fund of \$35,000 for the initial payment had been established previously to purchase the newer harvester. Dave and Dale did not take any pay for a year. One lake got a 50% grant for a harvester. If a major problem were to come up, Dave would call a special meeting. For now, he will weld, patch and repair. Fran said that some city and county projects are on hold right now. They can't get bids, the costs of materials are too high.

d. There are shoreline rule changes, some city, some county. Litigation was threatened. The county was not in compliance with what the DNR wanted. What should the shoreline look like? Contractors are unhappy; they are used to being able to do more of what they want in general. The current staff is strict and will only allow exactly what is on the permit. There are people who do not want this.

Corporations are buying places for vacation rentals for people in cities. Someone out of Chicago just bought a place on Vijobi to make into an Airbnb. He is also trying to buy the house next door. Dale's house is now a rental that takes ten people. They had to put in a new sewer. There was supposed to be a maximum of eight people originally. There is also a big new house in the city by the park set up for rentals. With six or seven Airbnb's so far, there is a concern that sooner or later someone is going to try using a wake boat, and the Apple River is not deep enough to allow for this. There are currently no applicable ordinances for wake boats. Legislation regarding them just failed. Fran advised that there will be more opportunities for public input.

e. The date of July 18, 2026, was set for the next Board of Commissioners Meeting. The annual meeting date will be August 22, 2026.

9. Positive Point: Thank you to Dave for his depth of knowledge, and all the work he does. He has four emails on his phone from other Lakes Districts asking for mechanical help.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Miller, Secretary