Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Regular Meeting & Public Hearing
Thursday, September 17, 2026
8:30 a.m.
Council Conference Room - Golden Valley City Hall
7800 Golden Valley Rd., Golden Valley MN

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On September 17, 2026 at 8:32 a.m. Chair Cesnik called the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (Commission) to order.

City	Commissioner	Alternate Commissioner	Technical Advisory Committee Members (City Staff)
Crystal	*Vacant*	Terri Schultz	*Jesse Struve*
Golden Valley	Paula Pentel	*Wendy Weirich*	Emma Rakestraw
Medicine Lake	Clint Carlson	Shaun Kennedy	*Absent*
Minneapolis	Jodi Polzin	Nick Minderman	*Absent*
Minnetonka	*Vacant*	*Vacant*	*Absent*
New Hope	*Absent*	Jen Leonardson	Nick Macklem
Plymouth	Catherine Cesnik	*Absent*	Ben Scharenbroich
Robbinsdale	*Absent*	John Ella	Jenna Wolf
St. Louis Park	RJ Twiford	David Johnston	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters, LLC		
Communications & Outreach	Kaitlyn Egan		
Engineers	Stephanie Johnson, Josh Phillips, Greg Wilson - Barr Engineering Co.		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Guests/Public	Jami Markle, Three Rivers Park District		

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Administrator Jester requested the addition of consideration for funding for the 4th-Annual Ȟaȟá Wakpádaŋ Water Blessing Ceremony. Item added as item 6G to the agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Polzin moved to approve the agenda with the addition of item 6G. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Administrator Jester requested to remove the August minutes from the consent agenda noting that Commissioner Polzin had found an error, and Commission Engineer Johnson recommended minor changes.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the consent agenda as amended. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- Acceptance of September Financial Report
- Approval of Payment of Invoices
    - Keystone Waters, LLC – August 2026 Administration
    - Keystone Waters, LLC – August 2026 Administrative Expenses
    - Barr Engineering – August 2026 Engineering Services
    - Triple D Espresso – September Meeting Catering
    - City of Plymouth – August 2026 Accounting Services
    - Kennedy & Graven – July 2026 Legal Services
    - Bolton & Menk – Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Project
    - Stantec – WOMP Activities
    - Kaitlyn Egan – August Communications & Outreach Activities
    - PLM Land and Lake Management – Medicine Lake Herbicide Treatment
    - HDR – Website Maintenance
    - Strategic Consulting and Coaching – Organizational Assessment
    - U of M – Annual Salt Symposium
- Approval of Staff and Commissioners to Attend Annual Salt Symposium
- Approval of Resolution 26-08 for Salt Symposium Contribution

4A. Approval of Minutes – August 20, 2026 Commission Meeting

Apply corrections to August meeting minutes: remove the names of some engineers who were on the attendance list but not actually in attendance and minor updates to the Commission Engineer's report in Item 6B.

MOTION: Commissioner Polzin moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Alternate Commissioner Leonardson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. **Receive Comments on Proposed 2027 CIP Projects**

i. **Dredging Sediment (Phase II) & Wetland Restoration in Bassett Creek Lagoons, Theodore Wirth Regional Park**

ii. **Crane Lake Chloride Reduction Demonstration Project**

iii. **Cost Share High Efficiency Street Sweeper for City of Crystal**

Chair Cesnik opened the public hearing at 8:35 a.m. No comments were made during the hearing nor received by Administrator Jester prior to the hearing. The public hearing was closed at 8:36 a.m.

6. BUSINESS

A. **Consider Approval of Resolution 26-09 Ordering 2027 Improvement**

i. **Ordering 2027 Improvements**

ii. **Making Findings Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.251**

iii. **Certifying Costs to Hennepin County**

Administrator Jester reviewed the resolution noting that in addition to ordering the projects, it assigns implementation responsibility for each project. She noted the Commission is slated to construct the Lagoon Dredging Project and the Crane Lake Chloride Reduction Project. She also reminded commissioners of the agreement in place with the City of Crystal regarding street sweeper cost share. She also noted that the final levy request remains $2,862,900 which is the same as the maximum levy request approved in June. She noted a minor adjustment to budget figures for the Bassett Creek Restoration Project (which did not change the levy amount) and that the resolution was reviewed by legal counsel and follows prior years' practice.

MOTION: Commissioner Polzin moved to approve Resolution 26-09 Ordering 2027 Improvement. Alternate Commissioner Leonardson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The City of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

B. **Consider Awarding Contract and Approving Access Agreements for Bassett Creek Double Box Culvert Repair Project (FCP-1)**

Commission Engineer Phillips reported that final design for this project was posted, a pre-bid on-site meeting was held and three bids received. He reported that Minger Construction Co., Inc. was the lowest responsive bidder. Low bid came in ~$280,000 below the engineer's estimate likely due to a competitive bidding environment and experience of the contractor. He noted the award of the contract is included in Resolution 26-10. Engineer Phillips anticipated the notice to proceed would be provided in mid-October with work to be substantially complete by end of March and final completion by end of June 2027. Risks and water controls were discussed including a potential for change orders (tunnel unknowns). It was noted the contractor will decide the method of water control within the tunnel. There were concerns about the significantly low bids compared to engineer's estimates. Engineer Phillips noted Barr Engineering has worked with Minger on past projects with good outcomes. Additional discussion included a note that trail closures aren't likely, that project funds remaining after project close out will go to the Closed Project Account, and inclusion of contingency funding if unknowns are encountered. Engineer Phillips again noted contractor past performance and noted that staff conducted follow-up QA/QC calls with Minger.

Engineer Phillips also described the access agreements needed with three private properties. He

noted that Commission Attorney Anderson drafted the agreements which may or may not be needed for contractor access but should be in place.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve Resolution 26-10 awarding the contract to Minger Construction Co., Inc. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polzin moved to approve the access agreements with Excel Energy, Twins Ballpark, and Minneapolis School District. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

C. **Consider Approval of 90% Plans for Sochacki Park Water Quality Project (BC-14)**

Commission Engineer Wilson and Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) Natural Resources Manager Jami Markle presented the 90% designs and noted that since the feasibility study additional geotechnical investigations and contamination testing have expanded the project scope, requiring additional excavation, disposal planning, and protective liners. The Commission's $600,000 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) contribution, combined with HUD Community Project funding and a Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF) grant, will help cover increased costs. The DNR permit for drawing down the water level of the three ponds was issued following a public open house on August 10th and documentation of support from more than 75% of riparian landowners. Additional permits are pending or being finalized. Due to expanded project footprints, approximately 400 trees are now expected to be removed, up from the original estimate of 300. The drawdown contract has been executed separately, with substantial drawdown targeted by the end of the month ahead of winter freeze. Engineers are hoping that less than 2 feet of water will remain after drawdown. Ponds should refill in the spring. Structural best management practices (BMPs) are expected to be bid in October, with construction largely planned for this winter. Final design, remaining permits, formal bidding, and contract execution with Three Rivers Park District are anticipated in November.

Upon a question, Mr. Markle noted that any HUD funding left over after completion of the water quality project will be used to enhance recreation features at the park. Other discussion covered safety of the ponds, possibility of a warm winter, and fact that drawdown and construction contracts are held by TRPD.

MOTION: Commissioner Polzin moved to approve the 90% Plans for Sochacki Park Water Quality Project (BC-14). Commissioner Pentel seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

D. **Consider Approval of Scope and Budget for Wirth Lake Aeration Study**

Commission Engineer Johnson presented the scope for this project noting the study will involve coordination with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and DNR fisheries staff, review of long-term water quality and fisheries data, and collection of additional winter depth-profile samples by the Park Board. Three alternatives (including possible no-action) will be evaluated for feasibility, cost, potential impacts on recreation and ice safety, and future maintenance needs. The study will also consider Wirth Lake's chloride impairment and potential lake stratification due to chlorides, and the current aeration system's operational history but will not include a comprehensive investigation of chloride sources. It was noted that the lake was delisted for nutrients due to the outlet structure constructed by the Commission and the Watershed Management Plan includes goals for water quality

protection. A draft report is expected in May, with a final report anticipated in June to inform future levy decisions. It was confirmed that this is similar to a feasibility study and will be funded with CIP funds.

MOTION: Commissioner Twiford moved to approve scope and budget for Wirth Lake Aeration Study. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

[Chair Cesnik called a 5-minute break.]

E. **Consider Approval of Scope and Budget for Feasibility Study for Toledo Ave/Minnaqua Pond Stormwater Improvements & Flood Reduction (CIP BC-13/#9)**

Commission Engineer Johnson presented the scope and budget for the proposed feasibility study to identify opportunities for flood reduction, water quality improvement, and habitat enhancement in the Minnaqua pond/backwater area and adjacent wetlands. The study will evaluate recurring flooding, including impacts to a nearby trail and properties within the 100-year floodplain, and consider potential flood-storage improvements for 2-, 10-, 50-, and 100-year flood events. The scope includes bathymetric surveys, wetland delineations, sediment sampling for contaminant screening, creek habitat and stream restoration screening, and XPSWMM modeling to assess potential flood impacts. A high-level review of upstream green spaces, parks, and wetlands will identify additional flood-storage opportunities, while nearby and planned projects will be considered to help avoid unintended impacts to other areas. The City of Golden Valley is conducting a separate, concurrent drainage study and has expressed interest in coordinating potential improvements, including trail upgrades. The estimated study cost is $114,000, reflecting the project's broader scope and multiple study locations. A draft report is expected in May, with a final report anticipated in June to inform Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and levy planning.

Commissioner Pentel expressed support for the project and noted the localized flooding of the trail and some homes. There was a note that this project area is in proximity to a Flood Control Project structure upstream near the Crystal-Golden Valley border which may offer an opportunity to assess potential changes to the structure. There was discussion on how the study's budget compares with other feasibility studies.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve of scope and budget for feasibility study for Toledo Ave/Minnaqua Pond Stormwater Improvements & Flood Reduction (CIP BC-13/#9). Alternate Commissioner Schultz seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

F. **Appoint BCWMC Representative to "Convene" Meeting on Watershed Based Implementation Funding**

Administrator Jester noted the Commission must appoint a representative to attend the "convene" meeting, where eligible entities determine how Watershed Based Implementation Funding will be allocated and will work toward agreement on funding priorities. Administrator Jester noted she has served as the Commission's representative for the past three funding cycles, with authority to make funding decisions on the Commission's behalf without additional Commission approval. Jester noted that most funding in recent cycles has supported the WMWA coordinator position. The discussion included questions about whether any issues had arisen with this arrangement over the

past three years.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to appoint Administrator Jester as BCWMC's representative to "convene" Meeting on Watershed Based Implementation Funding. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

Administrator Jester noted she would send the convene meeting date and time to all commissioners.

G. **Funding for the 4th-Annual Ȟaȟá Wakpádaŋ Water Blessing Ceremony**

Administrator Jester reported the recent request for funding for the Ȟaȟá Wakpádaŋ Water Blessing Ceremony in the form of two $500 stipends ($1,000 total) from the education budget to compensate cultural advisors. She noted stipends would be paid after receipt of invoices and W-9 forms. Commissioners emphasized the importance of continuing support for cultural advisors while improving record-keeping to document the event and support future funding requests. Requested documentation will be minimal and may include photos and a brief event summary. Administrator Jester will ensure invoices include details about the services provided.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve $1,000 in funding for cultural advisors for the Water Blessing Ceremony. Commissioner Twiford seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 8-0. The city of Minnetonka was absent from the vote.

[Commissioner Twiford departs the meeting. Alternate Commissioner Johnston is voting member for St. Louis Park.]

7. COMMUNICATIONS (20 minutes)

A. **Administrator's Report**

i. Organizational Assessment Project - Administrator Jester noted SCC is in the midst of conducting interviews and they plan to present preliminary findings at the Administrative Services Committee meeting October 7th.

ii. Medicine Lake Task Force and Survey - The community survey has received 49 responses to date. Outreach efforts include park postings, postcards mailed to lakeshore residents, promotion by the City of Medicine Lake, and distribution through additional community channels and events.

iii. Reminder of October/November Meeting Dates

iv. WMWA Educator Job Opening - The WMWA educator has stepped away from the role, and the position is now open. The job posting is available, and commissioners were encouraged to share the opportunity with potential candidates in their networks.

B. **Engineer**

i. Report on Bassett Creek Restoration Project

Commission Engineer Johnson reported that the Main Stem Restoration Project construction is currently underway in the first reach. The project team is addressing design adjustments, some of which were needed to address comments from the DNR, through a change order expected to be covered by existing project contingency, with no additional levy request anticipated. Rain has affected construction progress, and the contractor is

working toward completing major work for the 2026 season by mid-December, consistent with the contract schedule.

Golden Valley TAC Member Rakestraw reported that several riparian homeowners have raised concerns and objections to the native vegetation buffers planned on their properties now that buffer boundaries have been marked on lawns. She noted that some homeowners have indicated they will remove the native plantings. The project encompasses approximately 60 private properties in total, with about 10 properties in Reach 1 and an estimated four homeowners currently requesting removal of the planned buffers. TAC member Rakestraw noted the need for a decision on whether to revise vegetation plans on certain properties so the contractor knows how to proceed.

Commissioners discussed the buffers' role in supporting stream restoration including providing pollinator habitat, helping with streambank stabilization, and protecting water quality. There was discussion on applicable city buffer requirements, maintenance, and enforcement under existing code. It was noted that project easement documents identify construction limits but do not detail planting footprints, and that ambiguity in the City's code regarding natural vegetation vs. turf grass may warrant further review.

There was discussion about the potential need for additional outreach to homeowners on the benefits of native vegetation buffers. It was noted that BCWMC goals include improving buffers and riparian ecology and habitats, particularly in conjunction with stream restoration projects. There was a suggestion to provide homeowners with a narrow corridor through the buffer for creek access or to use native plants that don't grow as tall.

Upon a question, TAC member Rakestraw noted that conversations with residents at open house events were generally positive, including discussions on buffers, but reiterated that when markings were put in lawns delineating the native buffer area, some homeowners changed their minds. She noted the City prefers to treat properties throughout the whole length of the project with consistency – either allowing for changes to the planned buffers on a property-by-property basis or not allowing changes to the buffer design throughout the project area. Commissioners discussed further. There was consensus among commissioners to proceed with the approved project as designed, including installation of native buffers, emphasizing the importance of maintaining consistency and avoiding changes that could compromise restoration outcomes or establish a precedent that allows homeowners to opt out that would require design changes and contractor change orders.

C. Legal Counsel – No report
D. Communications & Outreach Coordinator – Working on establishing Google Workspace account
E. Chair – No report
F. Minnesota Watersheds
   i. Report on Summer Tour and Resolutions Hearing – Alternate Commissioner Kennedy noted a good summer tour with interesting projects and good networking. Commissioner Pentel and Alternate Commissioner Leonardson attended the resolutions hearing which was held online.
G. Commissioners
H. TAC Members
   i. Report on Sept 2nd Meeting

ii. Liaison for Oct 7th Meeting – Alternate Commissioner Kennedy appointed
iii. Report Plymouth Creek Restoration Project – TAC member Scharenbroich shared construction photos and reported that restoration is nearing substantial completion. Contractor performance has been positive, and the project team is addressing homeowner concerns about removal of buckthorn which reduces vegetation screening.

I. Committees
i. Report on Sept 2nd Administrative Services Committee Meeting – Alternate Commissioner Minderman reported committee's initial discussions on public-private partnerships and the current focus on larger (CIP-funded) projects rather than smaller residential grant program.

8. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

A. Administrative Calendar
B. CIP Project Updates www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects
C. Grant Tracking Spreadsheet
D. WCA Notice, Golden Valley
E. August Minnesota Watersheds Newsletter

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.