

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Supervisors Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Pam Tomevi, Jolen Simon, James Aasen, Austin Wallin, Austin Vinar (SWCD), Jody Peek (NRCS).

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Michael (last name unknown)

Chair Reller called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

2026/4-1 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to approve consent agenda items as follows: 4/6/2026 Agenda as presented; 3/2/2026 Minutes with corrections; Ratification of paid bills for February 2026 totaling \$34,367.60; Treasurer Report ending 2/28/2026; and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Motion carried.

Guest Introductions:

Invited online guest to introduce themselves or provide comment; no response.

Supervisor Reports

Lewis reported on speaking with a Koochiching County Commissioner who was very happy with last fall's well testing clinic; Lewis commented that the drone seeding completed by District staff went very well.

Voigt reported on his attendance at the Lake of the Woods Sustainability Foundation Forum and at the legislature to speak with our representatives. Discussion also included that Voigt was not chosen for the BWSR Board position.

Aitchison reported on his attendance at the Big Fork River Watershed and Little Fork River Watershed 1WIP Policy Committee meetings. The public hearings will be held in September. The project is currently on track and under budget.

Committee Reports:

Budget Committee:

Tomevi reported that the Budget Committee met to review the proposed 2026 budget update reflecting a reduction in total revenues and total expenditures. Tomevi noted that the reduction in estimated revenues was the result of unearned revenue that will be deferred until 2027 as a result of the estimated costs for personnel services coming in less than originally projected. Copies of the Budget Committee recommendation BC 2026-2 were reviewed.

Personnel Committee:

Tomevi reported that the Personnel Committee met to review updated staff pay scale/grading and job description updates as proposed by David Drown Associates, Inc. Copies of the Personnel Committee recommendation PC 2026-2 were reviewed.

2026/4-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to approve BC 2026-2 for the updated 2026 operating budget as proposed and to approve PC 2026-2 for updated 2026 staff wage and benefits as proposed. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Motion carried.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

Peek reported on an EQIP assessment and ranking deadline of March 20th. There were six applications in Koochiching County. Funding is more competitive now than previously. Staffing is down and wait times may vary. SWCD staff may be asked to assist with field work at times and there may be a possibility of unfunded and/or funded agreements. Discussions regarding this will continue as more information is available. Next ranking deadline for CSP will be April 24th. Renewals for CSP were discussed, it is unclear if they will be allowed. There is a level 1 planning course for resource professionals through NRCS available now, which might positively affect agreements.

District Administrator Report

Discussion included working with consultant DDA; prepping meetings and timelines for the Little Fork River 1WIP, preparation for the 2025 financial audit, and welcoming our new CCM Intern, Madelyn Swanson, who introduced herself. The IJC's Water Levels Committee is now meeting weekly to review basin conditions and is preparing for upcoming public engagement presentations.

Watershed Coordinator Report

Discussion included tree sale preparation, coordinating with various agencies for 1WIP projects, attendance at 1WIP Advisory Committee meetings, a soil health grant was recently approved and can cost-share hay and pasture, cone collection events completed and reported on the public event at which Kira Pollard of U of M was the key speaker and 15 participants attended, coordination of MFRC meetings.

Program Coordinator

Discussion included the Keep It Clean program wrap-up. 6.94 cubic yards of garbage were collected. Discussion also included youth cone collection events at which there were approximately 200 participants in total.

Clean Water Forester Report

Discussion included 1WIP meetings, Keep It Clean Program, cone collection events and collection of spruce tops, writing forest stewardship plans, water sampling for MPCA, drone seeding for 65 acres. Attendance at the NW Soil & Water Ag. Exchange in Thief River Falls where a drone presentation was done. Videos were shown of the first drone seeding.

Resource Conservationist Report

Discussion included the first drone seeding, training presentations, and spruce top collection,

CCM Intern

Madelyn Swanson introduced herself and gave an overview of her education and previous work. She will be with the SWCD through September.

OLD BUSINESS

Letter of Support request LOW

The SWCD Manager of Lake of the Woods (LOW) County has requested a letter of support for the LOW County Board. The Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is aware of Resolution #25-12-07 adopted by the Lake of the Woods County Board of Commissioners on December 30, 2025.

Discussion included if a landowner wanted a determination, an AD1026 form would need to be completed through NRCS which is currently delayed for those enrolled in the federal farm program due to NRCS staffing shortages and will compromise the ability for those not enrolled in the federal farm program.

2026/4-3 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to approve the letter of support for Lake of the Woods County Board in support of a resolution to reinstate statutory language deleted during the 2024 Legislative session (e.g. 103G.2241, subdivision 2, e) as presented with changes, and authorizing the Chair's signature.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

RRRL WBIF Cost Share

2026/4-4 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison approving the amendment of RRRL_FY25-2_Lewis (non-structural management), increasing the estimated project cost from \$1500 to \$3100 due to the addition of 80 acres not included in the original estimate, pending NRCS approval.
Voting yes: Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Abstain: Lewis. Motion carried.

Envirothon

Tomevi reported that \$850 in donations has been collected for the 2026 Envirothon to date. Tomevi requested that \$300 be sent to support the 2026 Area VIII Envirothon event, the remainder of current year donations be split between registered teams (Northome School) as participants of the event.

2026/4-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis approving \$300 to be sent to the Area VIII Envirothon with the remainder of donations to be sent to the Northome School to support each registered team as participants of the event.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

Supervisor Voigt asked for a approval to attend the upcoming Northern Landscape Committee meeting.

2026/4-6 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lewis authorizing Supervisor Voigt to attend the upcoming Northern Landscape Committee meeting in International Falls, date/time TBD.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller, Becker. Motion carried.

Permits:

None.

General Business:

Tomevi reviewed an email regarding resolutions. District Managers throughout the state formed a committee that will look at draft resolutions to provide feedback, supported by MASWCD.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, May 4, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cobblestone Hotel & Suites.**

2026/4-7 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Becker to adjourn at 10:19 a.m.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker, Reller. Motion carried.

Approved:

_____ **Chair, Jody Reller**

_____ **Date**