



East Dakota Water Development District
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MINUTES
August 27, 2026

The Board of Directors of the East Dakota Water Development District (EDWDD) held a regular meeting on August 27, 2026, at the District Office in Brookings, SD. Chairman Moes called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following persons attended:

Directors Present

Mark Anderson
Jeff Barth
Rick Bonander
Debra Elofson
Spencer Hawley
Troy Larson
Julie Loveland-Swanstrom*
John Moes
Sheldon Osborn

Others Present

Joshua Haiar, South Dakota Searchlight*
Sushant Mehan, South Dakota State University
Mike Plooster, City of Madison

Staff Present

Jay Gilbertson
Deb Springman

* - participated via video-conference.

Administrative Items

Approval of Agenda -

Motion by Bonander, seconded by Barth to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes - The Board reviewed the Minutes of the July 16th, 2026, Board of Directors meeting.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Barth to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports - The Board reviewed the July 2026 Financial Reports.

Motion by Hawley, seconded by Barth to accept the July 2026 financial reports. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman Moes asked that the reports be placed in the District files.

Report of Meetings and Conferences - Director Anderson reported on a presentation on the new Smithfield facility near Crooks given at the Noon Sertoma Club meeting on August 25th in Sioux Falls.

Directors Hawley reported on the August 1st meeting of the Lake Poinsett Association Annual Meeting held at Lake Poinsett.

Director Loveland-Swanstrom reported on the Pickerel Lake Conservancy Annual Meeting held on August 8th at Lake Pickerel.

The Manager briefly commented on the following meetings he had attended:

1. July 21st - Sioux Falls. SDARWS Rural Water Open.
2. July 22nd - Sioux Falls. SDARWS Manager's Group meeting.
3. July 30th - Clear Lake. Deuel County Planning & Zoning discussion of proposed gravel operation near Brookings-Deuel RWS well field.
4. August 1st - Lake Poinsett. Lake Poinsett Management Plan Steering Committee.
5. August 3rd - Dell Rapids. Landowner informational meeting on a proposed dairy.
6. August 4th - Watertown. Lake Kampeska Water Project District meeting.
7. August 10th - Brookings. South Dakota Lakes & Streams Association Board of Directors.
8. August 10th - Crooks. Minnehaha Conservation District Board of Supervisors.
9. August 18th - Sioux Falls. Interview with KELO TV on Town of Ward water issues.

Upcoming Meetings

1. **September 4th** - Madison. South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) Board of Directors.
2. **September 4th** - Madison. SDARWS Rural Water Center Board of Directors.
3. **September 10th - 9:00 a.m.** - Huron. James River Water Development District Board of Directors.
4. **September 14th - 3:00 p.m.** - Sioux Falls. Minnehaha Conservation District Board of Supervisors.
5. **September 16th - 10:00 a.m.** - Brookings. South Dakota Lakes & Streams Association Board of Directors.
6. **September 17th - 9:00 a.m.** - EDWDD Office, Brookings. September EDWDD Board of Directors meeting. Public hearing on 2027 District budget at 10:00 a.m..
7. **September 21st - 23rd** - Fargo, ND. 2026 International Legislator's Forum.
8. **September 21st & 22nd** - Pierre. Upper Missouri Water Association Conference.
9. **September 24th** - Pierre. South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources.
10. **October 1st** - Owatonna, MN. 25th Annual Tri-State Drainage Research Forum.
11. **October 7th** - Brookings. 2026 Eastern South Dakota Water Conference.

Payment Requests - The Manager presented three payment/reimbursement requests that required Board action. He noted that the requests were in order and consistent with the conditions established by the Board at the time of the award.

<u>Grant Recipient/Activity</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>
DSU - East Dakota Micro-Plastics Survey (Bakker & Sathoff)	\$ 22,102.70
SDSU - Establishment of a Certified PFAS Lab (Islam/Schmit)	\$ 4,328.14
SDSU - Environmental & Economic Assessment of SRAM (Mehan)	\$ 3,472.18
Total	\$ 29,903.02

Motion by Larson, seconded by Bonander to authorize payments totaling \$29,903.02 as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee Report - The Manager reviewed the DRAFT FY 2027 budget developed at the Finance Committee meeting held on August 19th at the offices of the Minnehaha Community Water Corporation (MCWC) near Dell Rapids. Directors Anderson, Barth (Chair), Elofson and Osborn participated. Chairman Moes participated in an *ex officio* capacity. The Finance Committee recommended an increase in the tax levy from \$948,700 to \$985,000, which is reflected in the budget presented. He noted that there were no substantial changes in the proposed budget from the prior year. The Manager noted that the proposed budget contained sufficient funds to cover staff salary adjustments considered by the Personnel Committee.

The Manager stated that this was purely informational discussion, and that no action would take place at this time. However, he did request that the Board establish the time and place for the formal public budget hearing required under South Dakota Codified Law 46A-3E-10. He recommended that it be held at the September 17th, 2026, Board meeting in Brookings.

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Hawley to hold the public hearing on the District's FY 2027 budget on Thursday, September 17th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the District office in Brookings and to authorize publication of the draft budget and necessary public notices. The Manager indicated that the draft budget will be published in all District newspapers in advance of the public hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Committee Report - Director Hawley, representing the Personnel Committee, presented the results of the Committee's meeting held on August 19th at the MCWC office near Dell Rapids. Directors Bonander, Hawley (Chair), Larson and Loveland-Swanstrom participated. Chairman Moes participated in an *ex officio* capacity. The Manager had completed the annual performance reviews on District staff, and he reported no significant concerns or problems. He recommended an increase in staff salary compensation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 of 2.9%, reflecting the Consumer Price Increase (CPI) adopted by the South Dakota Department of Revenue, with an additional increase of 2.5% for Jaelynn Dreckman.

Director Hawley reported that the Manager's performance evaluation, a composite completed by all Board members, also indicated a high level of satisfaction with his efforts. For salary compensation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, the Committee agreed to an across the board increase of 3.5 %, reflecting the July Midwest CPI from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, along with the additional increase recommended for Ms. Dreckman.

The Committee also discussed formalizing annual CPI adjustments to staff compensation (see below), having staff complete self-evaluations, development of a pay matrix and a time line for replacing the District Manager.

Annual Staff Wage Adjustment Policy

The Personnel Committee recommended establishing a formal policy on determining an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for District employees. The Manager noted that up to this point, this has been done on an *ad hoc* basis, and creating a fixed policy would provide a degree of stability. Additional adjustments to employee wage and benefit compensation would still be at the discretion of the District.

For it's recommendations for the 2027 District fiscal year, the Committee opted to use the July Midwest Consumer Price Index (CPI), developed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Given the time line for developing it's annual budget, the July CPI would be the most current figure available. For the current budgeting cycle, this would result in a 3.5% increase, year-over-year, which is what the Committee has endorsed for 2027 staff wage adjustments. The Board discussed the proposal, and the relative merits of different cost-of-living adjustments.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Anderson to adopt the following language, to be applied during the District's 2028 budgeting cycle and beyond: "The East Dakota Water Development District uses the July Midwest Consumer Price Index from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic to determine the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA)." Motion carried unanimously.

Project Assistance Requests

City of Madison - Michael Plooster, Public Works Director for the City of Madison, presented the Board with a request for District cost-share assistance for the completion of a utility rate study. He noted that the proposed study would provide the City with data and guidance necessary to make informed decisions that support stability and responsible future development. The projected cost of the study is \$25,000, and the City is requesting a grant of fifty percent (50%) of the costs, which would amount to \$12,500.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Bonander to provide District cost-share assistance to the City of Madison to cover fifty-percent of the costs of the proposed rate study, up to a maximum amount of \$12,500. Motion carried unanimously.

Big Sioux & Sioux Empire Water Festivals - Deb Springman, District education and outreach coordinator, requested District cost-share assistance for the printing of additional copies of the publication entitled, **WaterWise: A Magazine about the Big Sioux River Basin**. The publication contains a range of information about the river, which supplements material area students receive in class and at the Big Sioux (Brookings) and Sioux Empire (Sioux Falls) Water Festivals. Every student and teacher who attends either event gets a copy. In January 2021, the Board agreed to fund the initial printing costs of the document. Additional funds were provided in October 2022, November 2023 and October 2024, which were applied to printing copies to cover festivals through 2026. Ms. Springman requested \$2,700 to print sufficient copies for the 2027 and 2028 water festivals.

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Motion by Larson, seconded by Hawley to allocate \$2,700 in District project assistance to be applied toward the printing of the document, **WaterWise: A Magazine about the Big Sioux River Basin**, and to authorize expenditure as needed. Motion carried unanimously.

2026 Eastern SD Water Conference - The Manager presented a request from South Dakota State University (SDSU) Water Resources Institute for support of the 2026 Eastern South Dakota Water Conference. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7th, and will be held at the McCrory Gardens Education & Visitor's Center in Brookings. The request is for \$500, which represents a Gold Sponsorship.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Hawley to provide \$500 in District funding in support of the 2026 Eastern SD Water Conference as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

SDSU Environmental & Economic Assessment of SRAM

Sushant Mehan, with the South Dakota State University Department of Ag & Biosystems Engineering, provided the Board with an update on efforts to assess the environmental and economic impacts of the seasonal riparian area management (SRAM) best management practice being deployed by the Big Sioux River Project (Project). Continuous grazing in riparian zones has degraded water quality and vegetation health in Skunk Creek, southeastern South Dakota. In response, the SRAM program was introduced in 2013 as a voluntary conservation initiative to defer grazing during the growing season within the 100-year floodplain and promote vegetation recovery. This study evaluates the ecological and economic effectiveness of SRAM using a multidimensional approach integrating Landsat-derived vegetation indices, in situ water quality data and USDA Cropland Data Layer land-use maps. Eight water-quality indicators were analyzed at a downstream station: total dissolved solids, total suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, *Escherichia coli*, nitrate + nitrite as N, total Kjeldahl nitrogen and total phosphorus. Vegetation trend analysis using the modified Mann–Kendall test showed significant ($p < 0.05$) increases in vegetation health across 26 (277 acres) of 114 polygons (1484 acres) with greater recovery from 2014 to 2018. Water-quality analysis using Pettitt's test, the Modified Mann–Kendall test and Sen's slope estimator indicated improvements after SRAM implementation, including reductions in *E. coli*, nitrate + nitrite as nitrogen and total suspended solids. Land-use analysis (2010–2023) showed that 73 of 114 enrolled polygons experienced increases in pasture area, consistent with deferred grazing. Interrupted time series analysis suggests vegetation recovery and grazing deferment contributed to downstream water-quality stabilization. Furthermore, benefit–cost analysis showed favorable returns ($BCR > 1$) for landowners and public stakeholders. This research offers a practical framework to support agencies, planners and landowners in implementing sustainable, nature-based strategies that unite ecological restoration with economic feasibility.

Adjournment

There being no further District business, Chairman Moes declared the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Jeff Barth, Secretary