

1 **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Tuesday, January 9, 2024**
4

5 **1. Call to Order**
6

7 President Schmaltz called the January 9, 2024, special board meeting to order at 5:30
8 p.m. at the CLFLWD office at 44 Lake Street South, Forest Lake, MN and via online video
9 conference.
10

11 **Managers Present:**

12 Steve Schmaltz, President
13 Christopher Loth, Vice President
14 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
15 Jackie Anderson, Treasurer
16 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer
17

18 **Staff Present:**

19 Mike Kinney, Administrator
20 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
21 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
22

23 **Others Present:**

24 Danyelle Pierquet, ISG Inc.
25 Bryan Paulsen, ISG Inc.
26

27 **2. Office Space Feasibility**
28

29 Administrator Kinney introduced Danyelle Pierquet and Bryan Paulsen with ISG Inc. Ms.
30 Pierquet summarized the feasibility project which entailed architectural review, surveys,
31 focus groups, and open houses. Ms. Pierquet confirmed that she received a list of
32 questions from President Schmaltz, and she had shared responses with Administrator
33 Kinney via email. Ms. Pierquet noted that the number of survey respondents isn't
34 concerning, but the low attendance rates at the open houses were notable. She
35 explained that many survey respondents indicated cost-effectiveness as a priority for
36 the office space location. She noted that several survey respondents indicated that it
37 isn't necessarily important for the office space to be located in a central, convenient
38 location. Rather, when individuals visit the office space, they are intending on making the
39 trip, and they aren't stopping by on a whim.
40

41 Ms. Pierquet recommended the top three office space grants to focus on include the
42 Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Grant
43 Program, and Small Town Grant Program.

44

45 Manager Anderson explained that the Forest Lake Area High School is busy from now
46 until the end of May with extra-curricular activities. She further noted that the auditorium
47 may not have the audio/visual resources that the District needs for its meetings. She
48 recommended that holding meetings at the local high school is not a viable option.

49

50 President Schmaltz asked if the District should reach out to additional local organizations
51 such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Jaycees, and Chamber of Commerce. Manager Anderson
52 agreed it is a good idea to reach out to these groups, and District staff can perform this
53 outreach. She noted that it is important for the District to engage in outreach with
54 organizations like these and make a strong case for the District's work and the District's
55 need for office space. Bryan Paulsen recommended that the District needs to tell its story
56 and sell itself.

57

58 Manager Anderson noted that the District cannot control the turnout at events, but the
59 District's work is notable. Ms. Pierquet explained that it is hard to engage people with the
60 broad questions that were being asked. She indicated that direct connection with
61 constituents is useful, and she recommended that the District do another survey in the
62 future with more specific questions.

63

64 Manager Bakke noted that the City of Forest Lake declined to respond to the survey and
65 asked if the City of Scandia was approached in the survey effort. Ms. Pierquet indicated
66 she would check on that. Manager Bakke noted the District's focus on the City of Forest
67 Lake for the office, but there is a very supportive community in the City of Scandia. He
68 noted Ramsey Washington and Nine Mile received their office locations as donated land.
69 He recommended the District not limit itself to the boundaries of the City of Forest Lake.
70 Manager Anderson agreed the outreach should be inclusive of organizations and
71 communities throughout the District. Manager Toavs indicated such organizations
72 might be counted on as supporters.

73

74 Manager Loth pointed out the Small Town Grant Program has a \$10,000 grant award limit
75 and is only for communities with populations under 10,000. President Schmaltz asked for
76 ISG's recommendation for which grant programs are most applicable to the District's
77 situation. Manager Loth asked for ISG's recommendation on how to get in touch with
78 individuals who might be inclined to donate land. Mr. Kinney explained the staff is
79 working with Access Philanthropy, a non-profit organization that specializes in engaging
80 with private donors. Staff will provide a more detailed update in February.

81

82 President Schmaltz suggested the District work on setting up a fund so the District can
83 start saving for an office space, or at least for the match portion for a grant. Manager

84 Anderson noted publicly owned land in the area that District has used for water quality
85 projects. She asked Mr. Kinney to provide more information on District-owned properties.

86

87 Manager Anderson moved to accept the facility feasibility study dated November 3,
88 2023. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

89

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

90

91 Mr. Kinney mentioned that the District may consider reviewing and revising its
92 boundaries, which may open up more options for office spaces within its borders.
93 Manager Anderson recommended the District take a phased approach to this effort in
94 order to ensure funding is available. President Schmaltz indicated he plans to provide
95 Mr. Kinney with a writeup of his notes regarding next steps, which may include engaging
96 with an architectural design firm.

97

98 **3. Heath Avenue Appraisal**

99

100 Administrator Kinney explained that staff has pursued multiple project options in the
101 Little Comfort Lake subwatershed. Currently, the most feasible project option is to
102 implement an iron enhanced sand filter on a property on Heath Avenue. The District has
103 been in touch with the landowner, and it is possible to subdivide the lot and have the
104 District purchase the southern portion of it in order to construct the project. The Board
105 may convene in closed session in order to discuss the associated property appraisal in
106 greater detail.

107

108 Manager Anderson moved to convene in a closed session to discuss the appraisal of the
109 Heath Avenue North property, PID number 21.10703.00, and consideration of an offer to
110 acquire the property. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion
111 carried 5-0.

112

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

113

114 The board reconvened in open session.

115

116 Manager Toavs moved to authorize the administrator to release the appraisal to, and
117 proceed with acquisition discussions with, the landowner. Seconded by Manager
118 Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

119

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

120

121 **4. Adjourn**

122

123 **a) Next regular board meeting – January 11, 2024, 6:30 pm**

124

125 Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Loth. Upon
126 a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

127

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

128

129 Dave Bakke, Secretary _____