

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

September 24, 2025

Hybrid Meeting – MN State Capitol 120 & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 08:35 a.m. [\(00:04:34\)](#)

Members Present	Members Absent
David Hartwell (Chair)	
Ron Schara (Vice Chair)	
Suzanne Baird	
Rep. John Burkel	
Kristin Eggerling	
Sen. FOUNG Hawj	
Matt Kucharski	
Sen. Andrew Lang	
Darrel Palmer	
Tom Saxhaug	
Ted Suss	
Rep. Samantha Vang	

A quorum was present.

1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(00:05:44\)](#)

Councilmember Palmer made a motion to approve the agenda. – **Motion Prevailed**

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(00:06:04\)](#)

Councilmember Saxhaug made a motion to approve the minutes from August 26 and August 27, 2025 – **Motion Prevailed**

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported:

(00:06:28)

Chair Hartwell noted the previously disclosed conflicts of interest concerning Chair Hartwell and Councilmember Palmer. Chair Hartwell and Councilmember Palmer will abstain from discussion and allocation for the Audubon Society proposal, HRE 01, "A River of Birds in the Sky: Conserving Minnesota's Flyway". No other conflicts were reported related to today's agenda.

4. Chair's Comments:

(00:06:45)

Chair Hartwell discussed that a draft policy regarding acquisition of parcels with existing buildings would appear on the agenda for the November 12, 2025, Council meeting.

5. Executive Director's Report:

(00:07:50)

Executive Director Mark Johnson thanked members for their work in completing funding allocations, and thanked House and Senate legal staff for their assistance.

6. Discussion / Action: Chair's Recommendation and Allocation Selection

(00:08:20)

Chair Hartwell described the funding recommendations included in the Chair's Proposal and noted that the average allocation amount was used as the basis for funding amounts with minimal exceptions. Chair Hartwell further detailed the Chair's Proposal, referring to four programs which were not selected for funding, specific funding requirements for certain programs, and noted adjustments made that differ from the average allocations.

The Chair's Proposal also provides guidance to the legislature regarding adjustments to be made depending on changes to the fund total based on the November and February forecasts. Funding amounts would be adjusted proportionally.

Action:

(00:20:30)

Chair Hartwell and Vice Chair Schara jointly moved approval of the Chair's proposal as presented.

There were several items in the Chair's proposal that called for the Council to have discussion where there were comments from members that differed.

Council discussion followed.

Action:**(00:53:22)**

Vice Chair Schara made a motion to require funds for HA19, “Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program”, be used only for easement acquisition, and exclude budget categories for restoration and enhancement as an amendment to the previous motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell	Baird	Rep. Burkel
Eggerling	Sen. Lang	
Sen. Hawj	Rep. Vang	
Kucharski		
Palmer		
Saxhaug		
Schara		
Suss		

8 AYES, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

The Council evaluated member suggestions for supplementary funding requirements. By consensus, the Council agreed to advance funding recommendations without added restrictions for HA03, “DNR AMA Fee-Title and Trout Stream Easement Acquisition”, HA06, “Greenbelt Phase 1”, and HA16, “Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program”.

The Council confirmed that for any programs with restrictions added to fund acquisition only, restoration of the acquired parcels remains an allowable expense.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve the Chair's Proposal as amended.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		
Schara		
Baird		
Rep. Burkel		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Kucharski		
Sen. Lang		
Palmer		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

12 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

7. Discussion / Action: LSOHC Staffing – Discussion of growing needs [\(01:19:51\)](#)

Executive Director Johnson provided background information on the request for Council approval of an addition of one full-time employee to Council staff. Mr. Johnson explained that the workload has increased in tracking programs, with a growing number of partnerships, open appropriations, and larger amounts of funding than in past years.

Council discussion followed.

Action: [\(01:30:23\)](#)

Councilmember Saxhaug made a motion to advance Council approval of an additional full-time employee and to seek approval from the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		
Schara		
Baird		
Rep. Burkel		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Kucharski		
Sen. Lang		
Palmer		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

12 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

8. Presentation / Discussion: DNR Fisheries: Project Work Benefiting Native Fish and Aquatic Systems [\(01:31:50\)](#)

Brad Parsons, Fisheries Section Manager, MN DNR, presented an overview of OHF-related work in fisheries habitat management and enhancement. Mr. Parson's presentation discussed lake and river connectivity, stream and river restoration, and shallow lake restoration projects as well as easement acquisition within a watershed. Mr. Parson described developments in fisheries management and potential opportunities for future OHF-funded habitat work.

Council discussion followed.

9. Presentation / Discussion: BWSR RIM Easement Program Overview [\(02:03:34\)](#)

Sharon Doucette, Easements Section Manager, MN BWSR, presented an overview of Reinvest in Minnesota Conservation Easement programs led by BWSR, and OHF-funded partner programs. Ms. Doucette's presentation described the goals, eligibility requirements, and achievements of various RIM programs.

Council discussion followed.

10. Presentation / Discussion: Potential Changes to ML2026 / FY2027 Call for Funding [\(02:48:40\)](#)

Chair Hartwell introduced the future Council discussion to be had regarding potential changes to the Call for Funding document and encouraged the Council to consider any suggested revisions.

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.