

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

June 17, 2026

Hybrid Meeting – Winona County Historical Society & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. [\(0:00:00\)](#)

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

A quorum was present.

1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(0:01:06\)](#)

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

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(0:01:24\)](#)

Councilmember Baird made a motion to approve the minutes from May 27, 2026 –
Motion Prevailed

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported: No conflicts of interest were reported. [\(0:01:43\)](#)

4. Chair's Comments:

(0:02:22)

Chair Hartwell thanked Council members in attendance and staff for the June 16, 2026 habitat tour in Southeast Minnesota. Chair Hartwell noted that new proposals for FY 2028/ML 2027 will be available for review shortly.

5. Report from the Executive Director:

(0:3:25)

Executive Director Kristina Smitten expressed gratitude to members, staff, and OHF project partners for their work on the June 16, 2026, habitat tour. Director Smitten alerted the Council to two upcoming events led by OHF partners.

Director Smitten introduced the status update reports provided summarizing past appropriations and spending to date for OHF programs. Project Analyst Manager Sandy Smith described the information contained within each handout. Ms. Smith provided a high-level summary of each status update report relating to total balances spent per year, balance of funds spent within particular budget categories, and the availability of funds in the acquisition budget category. Councilmembers requested staff provide additional data regarding achieved leverage dollars for existing funded programs.

Council discussion followed.

6. Discussion/Action: ML 2026/FY 2027 Accomplishment Plans

(0:25:42)

Chair Hartwell noted that draft accomplishment plans of the ML 2026/FY 2027 programs had been reviewed and progressed by the Council in December 2025, and described that spending beginning July 1, 2026, is contingent upon Council approval of their final accomplishment plans. Chair Hartwell noted that subd. 4(g), Roseau Lake Rehabilitation: Phase III has a modified accomplishment plan to account for legislative changes, including a stipulation that funds will not become available until January 1, 2027.

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko noted that a spreadsheet provided to the Council notes any changes between the draft accomplishment plans and the versions presented today. Assistant Director Pavelko noted there were very few substantive changes, but did highlight personnel and outreach expenses for certain programs based on the Council guidelines on reimbursable and outreach expenses as approved on May 27, 2026.

Council discussion followed.

Action:

(0:29:47)

Councilmember Eggerling made a motion to approve the ML 2026/FY 2027 Accomplishment Plans as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

10 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed.

7. Presentation/Discussion: Review of Conflict-of-Interest Procedures [\(0:32:02\)](#)

Chair Hartwell introduced this agenda item and noted the conflict-of-interest procedure will be relevant during the upcoming proposal review and allocation selection process. Chair Hartwell introduced Naomi Munzner, Policy Director, Office of Grants Management Policy at the MN Department of Administration.

Ms. Munzner provided an overview of relevant grants management policies and procedures related to grant review and identification and disclosure of both potential and actual conflicts of interest.

Council discussion followed.

8. Presentation/Discussion: Overview of Proposal Review Process [\(0:46:00\)](#)

Executive Director Kristina Smitten provided an overview of this agenda item, noting the Call for Funding Requests release process will be discussed alongside an overview of the information contained within proposals. Director Smitten introduced Commission Assistant, Tom Rebman, to present.

Mr. Rebman described the process by which staff distributed a press release announcing the Call for Funding Requests to local and state media, legislators and staff, as well as relevant interest groups. Mr. Rebman noted positive results in readership and number of proposals received. Council discussion followed.

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko and Commission Assistant Tom Rebman walked through an ML 2027 proposal template, provided to demonstrate changes made to the proposal and the range of possible answers from applicants given to each question. Notable changes to this year's proposal include revisions to certain questions as well as the hearing criteria as previously approved by the Council, an updated leverage table with categories added to further delineate the level of commitment to leverage funds by each proposer, a narrative question related to unspent funds, as well as auto-populated data from the most recently approved status update to standardize the spending to date of past OHF appropriations.

Council discussion followed.

9. Presentation/Discussion: Updates on DNR Continuous Improvement Projects

(2:07:47)

Melissa Kuskie, Director, Ecological and Water Resources Division, MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided an overview presentation on the process improvement workgroup convened to address stream restoration permitting efficiencies. Ms. Kuskie described the membership of the workgroup, the regulatory landscape within stream restoration, as well as provided an expected timeline for development of efficiency suggestions from the workgroup and noted an additional update will be provided to the Council in November 2026.

Kerstin Larson, Supervisor, Strategic Land Asset Management, MN DNR, updated the Council on ongoing continuous improvement efforts related to land acquisition. Ms. Larson noted these efforts focus especially on two areas: improving the appraisal review process, and the title review and resolution process.

Council discussion followed.

10. Presentation/Discussion: From Rocks to Streams: The Geologic History of Southeastern MN

(2:26:03)

Chair Hartwell and Executive Director Smitten welcomed Dr. Dylan Blumentritt, Professor of Geoscience, Winona State University, and described his expertise in the geomorphology of the driftless area of Southeast Minnesota. Dr. Dylan Blumentritt presented on the unique geologic history of Southeast Minnesota in contrast to other biotopes and noted several features of the Southeast that affect the habitat types and quantity seen in the area.

Council discussion followed.

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.