



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

May 29, 2025 – 1:00 PM

County of Warner ASB Meeting Room

Present:

In-Person: John Ross, Ed Sloboda, Ron McNeil, Will Lindeman, Scott MacCumber, Peggy Losey, Joan Hughson, Ben Ellert, Jollin Charest, Roger Houghton, Warren Cunningham, Richard Oster, Ken Miller, Jon Boyle, Tim Romanow, Mary Lupwayi

Absent:

Kristen Dykstra, Darcy Wills, Mike Bruised Head, Cheryl Dash, Ross Ford, William King, Ken Brown,

1. Welcome and introductions

- Chairman John Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting
- He brought the meeting to order at 1:10 pm

2. Approve Agenda

Motion 1: Richard Oster moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ron McNeil seconded. Carried

3. Minutes from March 20, 2025 meeting

Motion 2: Warren Cunningham moved to accept the minutes as presented. Will Lindeman seconded. Carried

4. Organizational elections

- Executive Board election
 - Chairman
 - Nomination brought forward: **John Ross** as Chairman
 - Vice Chairman
 - Nomination brought forward: **Ron McNeil** as Vice Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Nomination brought forward: **Will Lindeman** as Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Nomination brought forward: **Warren Cunningham** as Secretary
- Nominations were called out 3 times as they were read. No further nominations were received

Motion 3: Peggy Losey moved to accept the Executive Board nominations as presented and elections to cease. Ed Sloboda seconded. Carried.

- Team Chair election
 - Community Awareness and Involvement Team
 - **Ed Sloboda**
 - Research and Monitoring Team
 - **Ben Ellert**
 - Water Supply and Management Team
 - **Ken Brown**
 - Transboundary Watershed Team
 - **Ron McNeil**
- Nominations were called out 3 times as they were read. No further nominations were received

Motion 4: Jollin Charest moved to accept Team Chair appointments. Scott MacCumber seconded. Carried.

5. Strategic Planning Session

- Dates: September 23 to 25, 2025
- Location: Yogo Inn, Lewistown, MT
- Facilitator: Ron McNeil
- Schedule of events was discussed
- Working on other logistics
- Spouses/significant others invited

Action 1: Mary to get Strategic Planning schedule of events for Board members

Motion 5: Peggy Losey moved to schedule the Strategic Planning Session for the 23rd to 25th September, 2025. Incorporate the September Board meeting during the session. The session is to take place at the Yogo Inn, Lewistown, Montana. ED Sloboda seconded. Carried.

6. Milk River Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) update/review

- It is a GOA requirement to review the IWMP according to the WPAC Mandate and Roles agreement. Little direction has been provided regarding process and responsibility
- WPACs proposal:
 - Review the plan to see what's relevant and ensure priorities are reflected in our work
 - Plan a public/stakeholder engagement process to accept changes
- Need to reassess alignment with key stakeholders such as municipalities
- GOA needs to establish a plan review process and how feedback is arranged in context of the current provincial priorities and planning environment.

Action 2: Tim to work with other WPACs to come up with the process that's comparable to other WPACs to see value and what process to adopt.

Motion 6: Jollin Charest moved to work with other WPACs, local municipalities, and GOA to put together the process of IWMP review. Ron McNeil seconded. Carried.

7. Community Appreciation Forum – October 8, 2025

- Celebrating the 20th Anniversary

- The agenda was presented
- Honouring Tom Gilchrist by memorializing the Environmental Stewardship Award in his name

Action 3: Tim to invite Tom's family and past Board members to the celebration.

Motion 7: Peggy Losey moved to invite Alberta Environment and Protected Areas Minister Rebecca Schulz and Associate Water Minister Grant Hunter to attend the celebration. Ron McNeil seconded. Carried.

8. Milk River Visitor Center update

- The business plan proposal for the Town of Milk River to purchase the Milk River Visitor Center and have the MRWCC as the primary tenant was well received by the Town Council
- If successful, the centre would be rebranded the Milk River Watershed Interpretive Centre and Science Hub. Not only a home for the MRWCC but it would support local business and tourism services, exhibits would be updated to reflect the watershed landscapes, biodiversity, and history
- As a secondary tourist destination, it would significantly increase MRWCC exposure and provide opportunities for increasing watershed literacy
- MRWCC would be responsible for interior building reconfiguration, and have the ability to sublease potential 3rd party tour operators, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions
- Negotiating the purchase of the property with GOA, \$300,000 offer was declined, and discussion is that the property will go to formal open sale this summer or fall. GOA insists the property valuation is 450,000 though two private realtors have stated that it is not in alignment with commercial property on the market or recent sales.
- No formal financial commitment has been made to the purchase via the MRWCC, but in keeping with our financial expectations, 30,000-50,000 of non-GOA assets and donations could be directed towards the facility purchase with an additional fundraising campaign to support needed interior upgrades via foundation dollar support.
- MRWCC would assume a 5-year lease agreement as facility tenant and operator

9. Round table discussions

- Jon Boyle:
 - Zoom meetings reception is poor due to spotty internet problems in Milk River
 - Solutions:
 - Have purchased a meeting owl hardware/software package with better compression rate and external mics which should help.
 - Using our new GIS computer should help, but limited by the internet capacity at the office building which is poor at best
 - Is there need to try Teams meeting software? – currently about a 50-50 split with teams vs zoom, open to trying and seeing if it works better over the winter meeting schedule
- Ron McNeil:
 - There is need to meet the new board members

Action 4: Staff and some of the Executive Board members to schedule a meeting to meet and welcome them

Action 5: Mary to send Board orientation package to the new Board members.

10. Meeting Adjournment

Motion 8: Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:39 pm.

11. Next meeting date

- September 23, 2025 (incorporated with the Strategic Planning Session in MT)

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____