

January 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes  
To Be Approved March 5, 2026



**Advisory Committee**

(appointed by Board of Directors)

Via Zoom Video Conference Call and In-Person

Fox Waterway Agency  
45 S Pistakee Lake Rd  
Fox Lake, IL 60020

----- Minutes -----

**1.0 Call to Order**

Chair Smarto

Meeting called to order at 7:03 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

**2.0 Roll Call**

Secretary Basten

Present: Pat Smarto, Anne Basten, David Corrigan, Rob Bryson, Conner Remke, Kathy Johnson, Chris Poteet, Holly Garvey, and Mike Missak

Present via Zoom: Tom Fernstrom

Staff Present: Rob Bowman

Others Present: Director Hettermann and Director Stochl

Absent: Police, Pam Althoff, John Maguire, John Fischer, Greg Urban, and Rob Rinkenberger

Excused Don Schnurr and Karl Ohlwein

**3.0 Review of Minutes and subsequent comment/corrections/approval**

The Draft minutes of November 6, 2025, were provided to the members in advance for review and approval.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of November 6, 2025.

Motion: Rob Bryson

Second: Mike Missak

Motion carried

**4.0 Reports**

**4.1 FWA Update** - Rob Bowman reported on the most recent board meetings of November and December.

The Board approved the contracting of Get Sharp Inc for the redesign and improvements to the FWA website after getting approximately 23 RFPs. The improvements will be implemented in at least two phases, with the initial phase focused on enhancing the online sticker store, which is currently in the process of resolving technical issues. Several of us had tried the new system and ordered/renewed stickers and Mike Missak posted a video "how to" on YouTube.

The Board also supported the Executive Direct gathering additional information on forming a 501(c)3 to support the implementation of watershed-based water quality improvements. The field staff was directed to focus on three dredging projects in the coming 2026 field year.

A new audit firm was hired for the upcoming audit due to additional requirements with grants. Baxter & Woodman was retained for assisting in the final permitting phase of the Trinski Island project. The Attorney and Executive staff are working on adjustments of the FWA ordinances in Chapter 4 to sync

January 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes  
To Be Approved March 5, 2026

the ordinance with the actual process for commercial permits. The pole buildings are still on hold until the spring but compliance issues have been rectified and the grant time limit has been extended.

4.2 Regional (Upper/Lower/Lakes)

It was noted that there is not much ice on the system due to the current warmer weather. Water levels are typical for winter.

5.0 Old Business

5.1 Volunteer Coordination Update

No new volunteer opportunities at this time.

5.2 Website Updates/ Fix/ Redesign/ Resource Page

Approximately 23 RFP's were turned in by the due date with prices ranging from around \$30K to \$100K. The new consultant has revamped the online store and they are currently working out the few bugs. Mike Mssak made a short video on how to use the site and the office has printed an instruction manual. There is now a \$10 fee for all in person transactions as staff at the office and at the satellites will be manually entering the same data you could enter yourselves. Once this store is done, they will begin updating the data and resource pages. It was noted that the USGS sites that our website links to, will not be working shortly and we may end up sending visitors to the USGS pages directly. Go to the YouTube/foxwaterway page for the video by Mike and get your stickers renewed/ordered.

Satellite sites should be up and running in February but will no longer be handling cash and will only take credit/debit cards. They will also be using the set \$10 fee for manual processing.

5.3 Video Updates – Future Topics – Report Card – Shorts – Be the Messenger

Other than the online store video, no other new videos have been posted. Please provide ideas to Mike or Pat Smarto.

5.4 Resolution Adoption Outreach

Holly Garvey went over the units of government who have adopted a resolution adopting the Chain O'Lakes Watershed-based plans and those still pending. A few other committee members are working on Village of Lakemoor, McHenry Township, McHenry County and a few others. Volunteers from the Advisory Committee are encouraged to reach out to Holly to see if they can help with the outreach.

5.5 Area Water Quality Update

Rob Bryson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Lake response to nutrient growth. The goal is safe and clear water which has no limitations (impairment) for the designated uses. He noted that reduction in all nutrients is necessary at this time. He then covered results from Redhead Lake, Lake Matthews and Pistakee Lake from this summer. Redhead has plant domination which reduces the growth of algae (good); Matthews chemically removed vegetation and had a huge algae bloom; Pistakee Lake has a lot of boats and less plant growth naturally but algae was not able to get a toehold for concentrated algae bloom growth.

January 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes  
To Be Approved March 5, 2026

Rob noted that Long Lake has a history of algae blooms including the production of toxins. Green Lake in Wisconsin had a severe algae bloom the fall of 2025. Rob then briefly reviewed some of the ways to control nutrient additions such as using native plants in border, buffers and raingardens/swales, reducing fertilizer use, removing leaves from yards and roadways and the edges of the waterways, and other stormwater runoff slowing. Rob did share that Illinois Lakes Management for statistics that state that 60% of the annual phosphorus load in urban areas is from leaf litter getting into waterways.

**5.6 Lake Villa Pollinator Garden**

Kathy Johnson did additional research on the Lake Villa Pollinator garden which is being installed to help support the Rusty Patch Bumblebee habitat found in the area. They have already eradicated the vegetation previously covering the garden area and have begun seeding. Holly let Kathy know that she will have some extra native potted seedlings come spring that could be offered to supplement the seeding. This garden is in part of the park at Fairfield and Grant.

**6.0 New Business**

**6.1 Boat Show – February 26<sup>th</sup> – thru March 1st**

Chairwoman Smarto will send out a spreadsheet seeking volunteers from this committee to man the booth this year. Please watch for it in your emails soon.

**6.2 501(c)3 Non-profit**

The Board has given direction to Joe Keller to look into the creation of a Non-profit organization that can raise funds to help instigate water quality improvements by local businesses, HOAs and homeowners as well as help reach matching funds needed for governmental grants. Chairwoman Smarto ask if any members of the Advisory Committee would like to work on this additional organizational task. Chris Poteet and Karl Ohlwein have tentatively thrown in their hats. Agency staff and elected officials are not eligible to serve although advisory volunteers are eligible.

**6.3 HOA Contact List Research**

Chairwoman Smarto stated that we are trying to get a valid contact list together of HOA's within the jurisdiction of the waterway and the watershed plan so if you know of contact information for a particular HOA, please let Pat know.

**7.0 Member Comments**

Holly Garvey asked if there had been any follow up with the Education Staff at the Lake County Forest Preserve District (nothing over the holidays). Chris Poteet stated that a business he works with is offering to help fund another intern. Rob Bryson will work on the intern program proposal with Joe Keller before the budget comes out.

Tom Fernstrom asked if conifers were better for the watershed than deciduous trees and both can impact the waterways in different ways and best to consult a landscaper for the best species for specific properties. Conifers can cause acidity as well as nutrients and deciduous trees can be messy and need more maintenance.

**8.0 Public Comments**

January 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes  
To Be Approved March 5, 2026

There were no public present to comment.

**9.0 Adjournment -- 8:48 p.m.**

Motion: Holly Garvey

Second: Conner Remke

Motion carried