



Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2026

Location: Winthrop Library and Zoom

Council Members Present: *David Asia, Chair; Boo Turner, Wren Soperanez, Murray Taylor, Robert Grim, Tim McGuire (Twisp alternate), Seth Miles, Lorah Super*

Council Members Absent: *Andy Hover*

Others in Attendance: *Sarah Lane, MWF/MWC Administrator; Rita Stewart, MWC Outreach Coordinator; Chris Allen, AESI; Lindsey Branam, Jim Clement, Susan Crampton, Don Davidson, Shirley Evans, Ray and Tammie Ellis, Skyline Ditch; Griffin Hemelgarn, MOBP; Kathy Kniep, Mike Locatelli, Ecology; Caroline Mellor, Ecology; Gina Moteverde, Jack Owen, OCD; George Schneider, Daniel Senner, MC; Marcy Stamper, MVN; Lucinda Tear, Joe Weirich, MOBP; Chantel Welch, American Farmland Trust*

Minutes recorded by: *Sarah Lane, MWF/MWC Administrator*

[Recording available here](#)

Non-Procedural Motions:

Motion #	Short Title	Yeas	Nays	Abstain

1. Call to order: David Asia called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.
2. Roll Call. Administrator Lane administered the roll call.
3. Guests in attendance: Guests introduced themselves.
4. Agenda – Additions or changes, Approval. Chair Aisa offered a change in the order of the agenda to hear public comment after Councilmember Taylor’s presentation. Hearing no objections, Asia approved the agenda.
5. Minutes – Review and Approval of January 28, 2026, Minutes. Councilmember Taylor moved to approve the minutes; Councilmember McGuire seconded; motion carried.
6. Presentation: Caroline Mellor, Washinton State Department of Ecology Drought Lead: Ms. Mellor presented [a Drought and Water Supply Update](#) based on current status of the snowpack across the state and in the Methow Watershed. She discussed the drought declaration process and then presented several sources of information used to track the current snowpack and to predict future conditions. Mellor said it is likely the drought declaration process will be convened in April. Funding remains available for addressing 2025 drought impacts currently.

A member of the audience asked if impacts from fire related to drought conditions could be funded. Mellor classified water issues related to drought are funded under current programming. Mellor offered NRCS website links in her presentation to look further into soil moisture information. Another audience member asked if the higher-than-normal winter flows this winter are recharging the aquifer. Mellor said it is unclear what effect higher levels would have. An audience member noted that higher flows do not necessarily translate to recharging the aquifer; the water may run downstream. Mellor was unable to speak to the dynamics of aquifer recharge specifically. Administrator Lane noted links in [MWC January 2026 newsletter](#) for soil moisture and an Ecology blog discussing how the drought may continue despite flooding and higher flows.

Please note: Links to relevant and updated data sources are provided in the slides linked in these minutes.)

7. Agenda Items

<i>Item #</i>	<i>Agenda Item</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
2.25.26-01	<p><i>Presentation on Water Retention:</i> <u>Water Retention: Opportunities for the Methow</u> Councilmember Taylor presented a high-level overview presentation of ways water could be slowed or stored in the watershed . The presentation concluded with a prioritized list of potential storage projects, from high impact, high feasibility, to the opportunistic. Councilmember Super asked to include the list of projects in the LDPP drought project. Taylor commented that there is opportunity around these ideas to talk with other organizations, connect partners together, share knowledge the MWC holds, and explore ideas in the field and through various forums. Taylor said the next step is to think about how the MWC would follow up on any of these ideas and others. Lane will post Taylor’s slides on the MWC website and noted some of the documents referenced are also available on the website. An audience member notes the large regulatory and agency permitting hurdles related to some of the ideas presented. Jack Owen noted that Walla Walla Watershed Council has sponsored a few managed aquifer recharge projects.</p>	Taylor
2.25.26--02	<p><i>Public Comment</i> There was no public comment.</p>	Asia
2.25.26--03	<p><i>PUD MOU Status, Next Steps</i> Chair Asia has been discussing the project to identify potential fire protection water sites. MWC did research in 2025 to investigate locations feasible for such sites up Twisp River, a top priority of Fire District 6. MWC in in the process of working on an MOU with FD #6, and Douglas County PUD (site owner). Next steps include meeting with Fire District 6 commissioners on March 9; agreeing on the MOU,; engineering a design, funding, and development. Other sites identified included upper Chewuch, and East County Road near the smoke jumper base.</p>	Asia
2.25.26--04	<p><i>SWOT and Next Steps for Strategic Planning this Year</i> Councilmember Turner would like to allow more time to complete the SWOT survey. Four responses have been made to date. Lane shared a response from Councilmember Soperanez as an example of how responses are being given. Turner said the SWOT due date will be extended until March 6. Asia asked if the council would go over the SWOT as a council, in a workshop format. Tuner confirmed that next steps, while not defined to date, include finding a person to help facilitate discussion for the MWC. This work is intended to lead to an eventual five-year plan. Lane suggested meeting in May (and November) when there is not a council meeting currently scheduled.</p>	Turner
2.25.26--05	<p><i>Committee Membership</i> All committees will retain current membership.</p>	Lane/Asia
2.25.26--06	<p><i>Position 5 Outreach Plan</i> Councilmember Super asked to be contacted regarding her lead for the lower valley MWC position #5.</p>	Asia

8. Report from the Council Chair: Chair Aisa reported that he is working on setting up a presentation from Crystal Elliot regarding the Red Shirt Mine.
9. MWF Report, Chair – Michael Bastian. Bastian reported that MWF should learn about grant results for Icicle Fund and Methow Valley Fund in 4-6 weeks.

10. *Committee Reports:*

Outreach and Education Committee, Chair – Turner. Councilmember Turner reported that the Outreach Committee is continuing to work on having presenters at MWC meetings, working on a partnership with Methow Conservancy for Schoolyard Science and “First Tuesday” event with Methow Conservancy, for November 3, 2026. Outreach is

also putting together a panel based on Perceptions of Drought interviews that may coincide with new drought declaration and LDPP project. Lane is working on a grant to Moccasin foundation to support outreach.

Policy Committee, Chair – Super: No report.

Technical Committee, Chair – Bastian, Acting Chair Bastian reported that the committee is working on planning for work and funding to do the work.

Ad Hoc: Fire Water, Chair – Asia No further report

11. Local Governments Report

Town of Winthrop: Mayor Grim reported that Town of Winthrop has approved David Asia to continue with the council in position 6.

Town of Twisp: Councilmember McGuire had no news to report. Lane asked about progress on Twisp's Water System Plan Update, which Mayor Smith said may be done near the end of February. McGuire said he would check this.

Okanogan County: Councilmember Hover was absent.

12. Members Report: News from the Community and Upcoming Events: Councilmember Super reported that portions of reaches upper Chewuch and Methow headwaters will officially be submitted to Ecology for nomination as Outstanding Resource Waters, by the Protect Washington Waters Coalition, of which MVCC is a member. If approved, the designation would provide additional protection, by setting a higher bar if projects are proposed in the area. Public comment opportunities will follow. Super is also participating with an International Joint Commission working group addressing Lake Osoyoos water and groundwater issues.

13. Next Steps

- a. Tasks: None
- b. Next meeting dates: March 25, 2026; planned for Methow Store. May session for MWC SWOT review.

14. Adjourn. Councilmember McGuire moved to adjourn; Councilmember Taylor seconded. Motion carried; Chair Asia adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.