

Healthy Pine River  
Membership Meeting Minutes  
October 9, 2025  
7:00pm @ Alma Public Library

Call to Order: Dr. Ben Peterson

Approval of Minutes: Doug Brecht/Brittany Sommerville

Financial Report:

Opening Balance as of 09/01/25:	\$47,392.74
Deposits and Credits:	\$2,040.00
Withdrawals and Debits:	\$1,578.73
Closing Balance as of 08/30/25:	\$47,854.01

Meeting Adjourned: Gary Rayburn/Brittany Sommerville

**2025-2026 Strategic Goals:** Board Chair Dr. Peterson discusses HPR's goals for the upcoming year. These goals include building organizational capacity in the form of member participation and finances. HPR looks to expand membership engagement with new committees and volunteer opportunities. Alma College students are recruited to improve social media presence of HPR.

**New Committees:** HPR is looking for member participation in two new committees, an advocacy committee and a farm engagement committee. The advocacy committee will be formed to develop political and local advocacy skills. The goal of this committee is to strengthen member voices and increase membership's ability to be heard by legislators. The farm engagement committee will be formed to strengthen relationships with the farming community and work together towards minimizing agricultural/livestock sourced pollutants.

**Summer Water Testing:** Alma College's Great Lakes Watershed Institute has completed 2025 testing. This year, the team found methods to trace notoriously difficult to trace non-point source pollutants to a source. This methodology is to be published in a peer-reviewed journal by the institute in hopes that other communities may also use these strategies in their own waterways.

The focus this year was on the St. Louis Algal bloom. Students traced the bloom's source to four areas (Alma Dam, Sugar Creek, Horse Creek, and Alma Wastewater Treatment Plant. Horse Creek has severely high levels of phosphorus pollutants and e. coli after rain events. The students traced these pollutants to two possible sources: outdated septic systems in Forest Hill, or the CAFO directly north of Forest Hill. They discovered a drainage pipe in agricultural fields directly east of Forest Hill that has high vegetation growth following the pipe (according to satellite imagery). They have been working with the Drain Commissioner of Gratiot County to gather more information on the pipe. They are currently in the process of investigating the Sugar Creek pollutant sources and this drainage pipe.

The students attempted to locate a clean area of the Pine River watershed to take samples of water quality unimpacted by agricultural runoff. The students did not locate a fully clean site, but did notice that Bush Creek, located close to the Chippewa River watershed, has a possibility of being unimpaired. They will test this area next year.

The meeting livestream is available to view under the Meeting Minutes Archive- October 2025 tab at <http://www.healthypineriver.org/meetings>. The slides from this presentation can be viewed at <https://www.healthypineriver.org/2025/10/09/summer-2025-water-testing/>.

**Updates:** The City of Alma, HPR, and GEI engineering consultants have moved ahead with EGLE's Dam Risk Reduction Grant, awarded to the city to create a feasibility study that will create options on what the city will do with the State Street Dam in the future. This feasibility study is to ensure that whichever option is chosen, the risks to property, river channel, and economic factors are considered and minimized.

**Next Meeting**  
November 13, 2025, 7PM  
Alma Public Library