MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
MARCH 8, 2023

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on March 8, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District (alternate for Ben Varnson); Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District (alternate); Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Nina Stone, Accountant; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources; Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Jack Dwyer, North Dakota Water Users Association; Danni Halvorson, International Water Institute (IWI); and Daryl Ritchison, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN). Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District, was absent.

Agenda
It was moved by Manager Weston, seconded by Manager Burvee and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as amended.

Minutes
It was moved by Manager Thompson, seconded by Manager Burvee and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2023, meeting.

Treasurer's Report
Manager Weston moved to approve the Financial Report, as presented. Manager Kemp seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Bills
Manager Thompson moved to approve the payment of the wire transfers, as presented. Manager Burvee seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

2024 Budget
Discussion was held on the 2024 budget for the RRJWRD. After discussion, Manager Weston moved to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Red River Joint Water Resource District Resolution Approving 2024 Budget*. Manager Thompson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NDAWN all-season weather gages

Daryl Ritchison presented on NDAWN all-season weather gages and their capabilities. NDAWN all-season weather gages provide valuable weather data such as snow depth and precipitation that is used for many purposes, including flooding predictions. NDAWN is seeking funding to install 55 more all-season weather gages throughout the Red River Basin, 33 of which would be in North Dakota. The additional gages will help provide more accurate data throughout the Red River Basin and NDAWN data can be accessed by the public for free at www.ndawn.info. Randy Gjestvang noted the North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR) PRESENS gages can also measure soil temperature and soil moisture, the NDDWR will work with NDAWN to share information from PRESENS gages. Kurt Lysne noted NDAWN-collected data is also useful for hydraulic models as well as operation of dams in the Red River Basin as the gages offer real-time data that is incredibly useful for Emergency Action Plan notifications / actions. The real-time data is also very valuable information for Water Resource District decision-making purposes during events. Manager Weston suggested potentially funding gages over time. Mr. Ritchison noted the Diversion Authority is also interested in purchasing gages that would be beneficial to the Metro Flood Diversion Project, which would lower the number of gages left to fund. Discussion was held on the cost estimate for the gages. Mr. Ritchison stated the cost of the gages is a one-time cost for purchase of the materials and installation as operation costs are covered through other resources. The all-season weather gages have an estimated lifespan of 20 years and are typically installed in the summer.

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Thompson to request Daryl Ritchison prepare a formal proposal regarding funding of NDAWN all-season weather gages in the Red River Basin in North Dakota for discussion at the April 12, 2023, RRJWRD Full Board meeting. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative updates

Jack Dwyer and Sean Fredricks reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Mr. Dwyer thanked the Board for contacting legislators during this legislative session regarding various bills.

IWI Letter Agreement – hydro-conditioning for development of LiDAR derived tools

It was moved by Manager Thompson and seconded by Manager Burvee to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Letter Agreement* with IWI regarding hydro-conditioning of the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data for the development of LiDAR derived tools in the Red River Basin in North Dakota. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Snagging and clearing projects – State Water Commission cost-share

Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District is working with Cass County and State Water Commissioner April Walker to provide information to the NDDWR Economist to accurately calculate the economic analysis of snagging and clearing projects for State Water Commission cost-share funding. Southeast Cass Water Resource District will also be presenting on snagging and clearing at the March 16, 2023, State Water Commission pre-commission meeting. Discussion was held on the purpose of snagging and clearing. Manager Weston stated snagging and clearing is a best

management practice that helps avoid damage to public infrastructure and breakout flows that damage property. Zach Herrmann noted Walsh County and Pembina County will also share information with the State Water Commission on snagging and clearing efforts in those counties.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) meeting with Senator Hoeven

Manager Weston reported on an RRRA meeting with Senator Hoeven and his staff and others to discuss potential changes that could be implemented in a future federal Farm Bill, particularly changes to the Natural Resources Conservation Service PL-566 Program. Manager Weston discussed the proposed changes in more detail and noted this opportunity to discuss these changes with Senator Hoeven and others was very productive and the RRRA hopes the meeting results in bipartisan-supported multi-state updates included in a future Farm Bill, as discussed.

Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study

Mike Opat discussed the Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study downstream of Baldhill Dam to the confluence of the Red River. Barnes County Water Resource District gathered input from public and private property owners with infrastructure along the Sheyenne River to identify erosion and bank failure issues, with emphasis on threats to public and private structures, utilities and other facilities. Houston Engineering, Inc. also utilized LiDAR and aerial photography data to identify issues. The data collected will be verified with a field check along the Sheyenne River. Approximately 900 areas of interest were identified and have been assigned a priority level. Barnes County Water Resource District will discuss the inventory this summer and determine if there is interest in pursuing a project. Mr. Opat indicated he will provide an update on the study at a future meeting.

Pilot project

Discussion was held on the Pilot Project for North Dakota RCPP projects in the Red River Basin through the RRJWRD. The North Dakota legislature currently has $1 million earmarked in SB 2020 for the project. The original funding request was for $12 million. The Board discussed the matter and indicated funding below $7,800,000 will not be adequate for the Pilot Project as the Pilot Project is intended to help complete more than one project.

Lake Traverse, Mud Lake Water Management Plan update

Randy Gjestvang stated the Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments on an update of the water control plans for Lake Traverse and Mud Lake. Mr. Gjestvang indicated the facilities are key for flood damage reduction downstream and the Red River Joint Water Resource District wishes to maintain maximum storage available for maximum flood damage reduction downstream.

A motion was made by Manager Burvee, seconded by Manager Kemp and unanimously carried to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a letter to be sent to the Corps of Engineers regarding comments on the update of the water control plans for Lake Traverse and Mud Lake.

Member WRDs project reports

Member Water Resource Districts reported on current activities in their districts. Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District continues to work on the rural – urban interface regarding Southeast Cass Water Resource District facilities. Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which encompasses Cass County member Water Resource Districts, continues to work on aspects related to the Metro Flood Diversion Project and operation and maintenance of the Maple River Dam. Manager Thompson reported Traill County Water Resource District is preparing for the spring melt and various legal assessment drain reconstruction projects. Manager Burvee stated Richland County Water Resource District is completing snagging and clearing projects as well as preparing for the spring melt and upcoming legal assessment drain reconstruction and maintenance projects. Manager Kemp said Pembina County Water Resource District also completed snagging and clearing work on the Tongue River. Pembina County Water Resource District is also working on various legal assessment drain and dam projects within their District, including work on Bourbanis Dam. Manager Ihry reported Steele County Water Resource District is working with FEMA on damaged sites from the 2022 spring melt as well as working on reconstruction of a damaged facility and the ongoing Elm River Dam projects.

Education

Mr. Fredricks presented on North Dakota open meeting laws related to water resource districts.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the RRJWRD Executive Committee will be held at 9:30 a.m. on May 10, 2023, originating at the Cass County Highway Department.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

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Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

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Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer