

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
APRIL 12, 2023

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on April 12, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Rodger Olson, Maple River Water Resource District; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Michael Wyum, Sargent County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Nina Stone, Accountant; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Randy Gjestvang, Karen Goff and Aaron Carranza, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Jack Dwyer, North Dakota Water Users; Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Lyndon Pease and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Co.; Blake Carlson, Widseth, Smith, Nolting; Daryl Ritchison, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN); and Taylor Lemieux, International Water Institute (IWI). North Cass, Ransom County, Rush River and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Agenda

It was moved by Manager Varnson, seconded by Manager Thompson and unanimously carried to approve 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.

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 56 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. 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. Mr. Ritchison said 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. The State of Minnesota is also considering funding gages through a bill in the Minnesota legislature. Discussion was held on the cost estimate for the gages. Mr. Ritchison stated the cost to install one all-season weather gage is currently approximately \$15,377.99. 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; however, the timeline to install gages depends on the availability of supplies. Mr. Ritchison stated this year's spring melt proved how useful data from the gages would have been in predicting flooding in the area. Manager Ihry noted the data can also be used for various agricultural and other purposes. Manager Weston suggested installing around 15 gages this year, with gages in each RRJWRD member Water Resource District. Funding of additional all-season weather gages could be considered in future years.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Varnson to enter into an agreement with NDAWN / North Dakota State University allocating \$250,000 from the RRJWRD to fund the installation of approximately 15 NDAWN all-season weather gages in the Red River Basin in North Dakota in 2023. The placement of the gages will be determined by NDAWN and Randy Gjestvang, with input from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Upon roll call vote, the following member Water Resource Districts voted in favor: Barnes County, Grand Forks County, Maple River, Nelson County, Pembina County, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, and Traill County. Richland County Water Resource District voted against the motion. The motion passed.

The Board directed the Secretary-Treasurer to invite representatives from the Diversion Authority and Mr. Ritchison to a future meeting to discuss all-season weather gages that the Diversion Authority may be interested in funding.

Treasurer's report

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Anderson to approve the Financial Report, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Letter of engagement to the Office of the State Auditor for 2022 audit services

A motion was made by Manager Varnson, seconded by Manager Perdue and unanimously carried to approve the letter of engagement to the Office of the State Auditor for 2022 audit services for Red River Joint Water Resource District.

2024 budget

A motion was made by Manager Kemp and seconded by Manager Olson to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Red River Joint Water Resource District Resolution Approving 2024 Budget*. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund – proxy for annual meeting

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Thompson to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to sign and return the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund proxy for RRJWRD. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NDDWR Hazard Classification and Legacy Dam Designation Policy

Zach Herrmann discussed the updated NDDWR Hazard Classification and Legacy Dam Designation Policy, North Dakota Administrative Code 89-08-01-01. Mr. Herrmann indicated the draft Policy is shifting towards risk-based assessment such as loss of life potential that is more similar to national dam standards. Mr. Herrmann discussed the new dam hazard classifications in more detail. North Dakota dam owners can continue to operate dams as they have been; however, if there is upcoming work that requires a permit from the NDDWR, the facility will need to comply with the updated Policy. The NDDWR is accepting comments on the Policy until April 18, 2023. Aaron Carranza said the goal of the Policy is to represent and protect public safety of the State of North Dakota and North Dakota residents. Comments on the policy will be reviewed and considered before the draft Policy is finalized. Mr. Herrmann suggested reinforcing comments made by the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association. Randy Gjestvang agreed with Mr. Herrmann's suggestion.

IWI assistance to USGS by providing information on break lines (hydro-conditioning)

Mr. Gjestvang said the USGS is updating information and equations to determine water flow patterns for their StreamStats model. The NDDWR has approved cost-share for the project. The USGS is looking for culvert size information in the Red River Basin for their project; however, that information is not available in totality in the Red River Basin. The USGS indicated the hydro-conditioning data for the development of LiDAR derived tools using the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data that is funded by the RRJWRD would be very useful for their project. IWI is willing to share the information with the USGS if permission is granted from the RRJWRD. Mr. Gjestvang noted the data sharing should reduce the cost for the USGS to update the StreamStats model.

It was moved by Manager Thompson, seconded by Manager Perdue and unanimously carried to authorize IWI to provide hydro-conditioning data for the development of LiDAR derived tools that is funded by the RRJWRD to the USGS for assistance in updating the USGS StreamStats model.

2023 flood outlook

Mr. Gjestvang discussed the current 2023 flood outlook in the Red River basin including snow water equivalent data throughout the basin. Mr. Gjestvang also reviewed the most recent National Weather Service flood outlook for the Red River Basin. If any member Water Resource Districts are interested in installation of PRESENS sensors on their facilities, please contact Mr. Gjestvang or the NDDWR.

Pilot Project

Jack Dwyer and Manager Weston updated the Board on the Pilot Project through the RRJWRD. Manager Weston presented additional testimony to the North Dakota legislature requesting \$12 million in funding through SB 2020 for a pilot project for North Dakota RCPP projects in the Red River Basin. Mr. Dwyer noted the legislature does not currently have funding for the project in SB 2020; however, he is still meeting with legislators to discuss the project. The Board noted adequate funding would be necessary to carry out the Pilot Project. The Board will continue to be updated on the matter at a future meeting.

Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study

Mike Opat reported the data collected by Barnes County Water Resource District regarding the Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study downstream of Baldhill Dam to the confluence of the Red River has been compiled into a draft report. Approximately 900 areas of interest were identified and have been assigned a priority level. About 10% of those areas identified are on public properties and there are 43 high priority sites. 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.

Legislative updates

Sean Fredricks and Mr. Dwyer reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. The Board thanked Mr. Dwyer and Dani Quissell for their work during this legislative session.

Member WRDs project reports

Member Water Resource Districts reported on current activities in their districts.

Manager Anderson reported Barnes County Water Resource District is currently working on the Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study, snagging and clearing work, and subsurface water management permits, as well as keeping abreast of the flood outlook in Barnes County.

Grand Forks County Water Resource District is inspecting and clearing debris from drains and repairing their facilities, as well as conducting some ongoing reassessment proceedings.

Manager Kemp stated Pembina County Water Resource District has ongoing construction projects, snagging and clearing work, flooding issues, and is currently completing the Bourbanis Dam partial decommissioning project. Pembina County Water Resource District appreciates the tremendous support received regarding Bourbanis Dam.

Manager Burvee reported Richland County Water Resource District is monitoring the spring melt and preparing for upcoming maintenance projects this summer, as well as snagging and clearing work and permitting for subsurface water management systems.

Manager Wyum said Sargent County Water Resource District is also continuing to monitor the spring melt, especially areas near municipalities, and is working on various improvement projects and reassessments.

Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District is largely focused on the spring melt / flood outlook, snagging and clearing, as well as the rural and urban interface with their facilities.

Manager Thompson said Trail County Water Resource District is completing snow removal in facilities with a history of flooding residential areas or erosion, as well as working on an upcoming drain reconstruction project and permitting of subsurface water management systems.

Manager Ihry noted Steele County Water Resource District is clearing snow from facilities, working on upcoming reassessments and working with FEMA on previous events. Public meetings are also being held on Elm River Dam projects that may be constructed this summer.

Education

Mr. Fredricks reviewed the current permitting process and laws related to subsurface water management systems.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects

Manager Weston suggested the Board receive an update from North Dakota RCPP Plan sponsors at a future meeting. Manager Weston also noted the Natural Resources Conservation Service is interested in potentially coordinating a tour in Manitoba, Canada of biomass harvesting this fall with RCPP Plan sponsors. Biomass harvesting has been included in several North Dakota RCPP Plans.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Full Board meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

IWI – River Watch and River of Dreams update

Taylor Lemieux gave a brief update on the IWI River Watch and River of Dreams programs. Ms. Lemieux reviewed the 28th Annual River Watch Forum that was held March 1, 2023, and noted the River of Dreams program was implemented in 20 North Dakota schools with over 550 students participating in the program. In total, the River of Dreams program is in 44 schools and 68 classrooms. Ms. Lemieux thanked the Board for their continued support of the IWI River Watch and River of Dreams programs.

Adjournment

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

APPROVED:

Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer