

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE WEST FARGO PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
AUGUST 9, 2023

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on August 9, 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; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District (alternate); 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 and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Co.; and Danni Halvorson, International Water Institute.

Agenda

It was moved by Manager Weston, seconded by Manager Thompson and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as presented.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Thompson, seconded by Manager Weston and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2023, meeting.

Treasurer's Report

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Thompson to approve the Financial Report and payment of the wire transfers, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the following Managers voted in favor: Ihry, Weston, Kemp, Thompson and Varnson. The motion passed.

Cost-share request – Grand Forks County Water Resource District – Upper Turtle River Dam No. 2 – bank stabilization project

Manager Perdue discussed the Upper Turtle River Dam No. 2 bank stabilization project in Grand Forks County Water Resource District. The Upper Turtle River Dam No. 2 is in need of repairs and the project is estimated to cost \$71,938.84. Grand Forks County Water Resource District has also submitted an application for cost-share to the NDDWR. Randy Gjestvang indicated he has reviewed the project and recommends approval of 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Kemp to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Cost-Share Agreement* with Grand Forks County Water Resource District for up to 65% cost-share on the non-federal, non-state share regarding the Upper Turtle Dam No. 2 bank stabilization project, not to exceed \$18,704.10.

A motion was made by Manager Varnson and seconded by Manager Thompson to recommend to the RRJWRD Full Board approval of the *Cost-Share Agreement* with Grand Forks County Water Resource District for up to 65% cost-share on the non-federal, non-state share regarding the Upper Turtle Dam No. 2 bank stabilization project, not to exceed \$46,760.25, if the State Water Commission does not approve cost-share for the project. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NDAWN all-season gages

Mr. Gjestvang noted the Diversion Authority has committed to purchasing all-season gages upstream of Fargo-Moorhead that would not be covered by the RRJWRD. NDAWN has ordered the supplies for the fifteen all-season gages, which are expected to arrive in September. The Board discussed options for the location of the remaining all-season weather gage and agreed on Cavalier, North Dakota. Mr. Gjestvang said Daryl Ritchison anticipates successful installation of all sites by winter, except for the Cavalier site that is begin relocated.

NDDWR Dam Safety Standards Policy – RRJWRD comments

The Board discussed submitting comments on the NDDWR Dam Safety Standards Policy. The Board directed Mr. Gjestvang to submit comments on behalf of the RRJWRD, with input from Houston Engineering, Inc. and Moore Engineering, Inc. The comments are due August 14, 2023.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024 – email form Senator Cramer’s office seeking input by September 15, 2023

The Board directed the Secretary-Treasurer to work with Mr. Gjestvang to gather additional information from Senator Cramer’s office regarding the input requested regarding the Water Resources Development Act of 2024. Once the additional information from Senator Cramer’s office is received, the RRJWRD will coordinate with the Red River Retention Authority to discuss the matter and provide the requested input to Senator Cramer’s office.

Missouri River Joint WRD – Educate, Advocate, and Engage Program

The Board discussed a proposed Missouri River Joint Water Resource District public meeting this fall regarding the Educate, Advocate, and Engage Program related to the Missouri River. The Missouri River Joint Water Resource District has asked the RRJWRD to be involved in facilitating the meeting, which aims to engage the public, various stakeholders, legislators, and others on matters related to the Missouri River. Manager Weston volunteered to assist in facilitating the public meeting.

Legislative updates

Sean Fredricks reported the North Dakota legislature Water Topics Overview Committee meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023. Mr. Fredricks also discussed HB 1391, SB 2372 and SB 2037 approved during the 2023 legislative session, and noted a staff-level working group is being coordinated with the NDDWR to discuss legislative issues regarding water resource districts during the interim. Discussion was also held regarding subsurface water management permits.

Member WRDs project reports

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

Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District is currently working on drain maintenance projects and coordinating with various entities to help facilitate local projects.

Manager Varnson discussed snagging and clearing and improvement projects in Nelson County Water Resource District. Manager Varnson also updated the Board on the activities of the Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource District.

Manager Thompson stated Traill County Water Resource District is continuing various legal assessment drain maintenance and reconstruction projects.

Manager Kemp said Pembina County Water Resource District recently completed construction of a new legal assessment drain. Pembina County Water Resource District is also working on various drain reconstruction and maintenance projects and a feasibility study for a potential project.

Manager Burvee discussed upcoming Richland County Water Resource District drain maintenance, improvement projects and weed control efforts. He reported that property owners have donated right of way needed on a couple of projects, leaving more funds to use toward the projects.

Manager Perdue discussed maintenance and weed control issues identified during recent inspections of Grand Forks County Water Resource District facilities.

Chairman Ihry reported on activities in Steele County Water Resource District including the future reassessment of legal assessment drains, tree removal projects and working with FEMA to obtain funding for repairs related to previous flood events. Chairman Ihry also noted Steele County Water Resource District is utilizing the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data.

Education

Mr. Fredricks discussed updates related to the Waters of the United States and how it relates to Water Resource Districts. Discussion was also held on various situations related to *Complaints for Water-Related Issues*.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the RRJWRD Executive Committee will be held at 9:30 a.m. on November 8, 2023, originating at the West Fargo Public Works building in West Fargo, North Dakota.

Elm River Dam Nos. 1, 2 and 3

Chairman Ihry updated the Board on construction permits for Elm River Dams No. 1 and No. 2 Improvement Project No. 2022-01 and Elm River Dam No. 3 Improvements 2022 Project. The construction permit for Elm River Dam No. 3 Improvements 2022 Project has been approved and the project is being advertised for bids.

Secretary-Treasurer position / office staffing

Brief discussion was held on the Secretary and Treasurer positions upon retirement of the current Secretary-Treasurer towards the end of the year. A motion was made by Manager Thompson and seconded by Manager Varnson to name Melissa Hinkemeyer as Secretary and Nina Stone as Treasurer of the Red River Joint Water Resource District upon retirement of the current Secretary-Treasurer. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

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