

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL SPECIAL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE WEST FARGO PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING
810 12TH AVENUE NW, WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

A special meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on September 13, 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; Wes Ecker, North Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; William A. Hejl and Richard Sundberg, Rush River 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.; Sindhuja Pillai-Grinolds, Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users; Duane Breitling, Cass County Commissioner; Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Co.; Robin Glas, Rochelle Nustad and Fleford Redoloza, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Ransom County and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Agenda

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

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Weston, seconded by Manager Sundberg and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2023, meeting.

Treasurer's report

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

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 dam 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 reported at the August 9, 2023, RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Committee approved 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed \$18,704.10. The Executive Committee also recommended the Full Board approve 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.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Sundberg 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 \$46,760.25, if the State Water Commission does not approve cost-share for the project. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Manager Perdue indicated the Grand Forks County Water Resource District anticipates beginning the project next spring as adequate vegetation may not be established before winter if the project is completed this year.

NDAWN all-season weather gages

Mr. Gjestvang updated the Board on the NDAWN all-season weather gages in the Red River Basin in North Dakota that are being funded by the RRJWRD. NDAWN has purchased the equipment for all 15 sites funded by the RRJWRD and are currently installing the equipment at all sites to be operational this winter except for the Cavalier site, which will be installed in 2024. Chairman Ihry noted the data from the all-season weather gages is incredibly useful and he encouraged the Board to share the information throughout their member districts.

USGS Drought Risk Analysis / low flow investigations update

Rochelle Nustad, Robin Glas and Fleford Redoloza presented an update on the ongoing USGS Drought Risk Analysis / low flow investigations study. Ms. Nustad thanked the Board for their support in being a cost-share participant in the study. Ms. Glas indicated the objective of the study is to simulate future low flow situations under various climate conditions. Ms. Glas discussed how they studied and utilized past climate conditions in the Red River Basin to build the models used for the study. Mr. Redoloza went into more detail on the model that was created for the study and the probabilities generated from the model. The results of the model help extrapolate estimates and probabilities related to low flows based on different environmental scenarios. Mr. Redoloza said the USGS has completed a majority of the simulations in the study and is working on interpreting the results. Ms. Nustad said she anticipates the study report will be available to the public in early 2024. The Board thanked Ms. Nustad, Ms. Glas and Mr. Redoloza for the presentation on the USGS Drought Risk Analysis / low flow investigations study.

Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study

Mike Opat updated the Board on the Barnes County Water Resource District Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study downstream of Baldhill Dam to the confluence of the Red River. Houston Engineering, Inc. recently conducted field reviews of various sites, categorized and prioritized the sites and compiled the data into a report. Mr. Opat briefly discussed the study findings and said the next step is to look into hosting a public meeting to discuss the study results and gauge if there is interest in moving forward with a project. Bruce Anderson expressed appreciation for the funding provided by the RRJWRD.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2024 – response to Senator Cramer’s request for input

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Thompson to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a letter to Senator Cramer’s office regarding requested input on WRDA 2024. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative updates

Sean Fredricks discussed SB 2372 approved during the 2023 legislative session. Mr. Fredricks indicated the topic will continue to be discussed at the staff level with the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association. Concepts regarding RRJWRD membership options for North Dakota counties partially in the Red River Basin regarding SB 2372 will be brought to a future meeting for further discussion.

Dani Quissell reported on the Water Topics Overview Committee meeting held yesterday. The Committee may request the RRJWRD give a presentation at a future meeting on the matter. Ms. Quissell briefly discussed a presentation she gave at the meeting on behalf of the Water Resource Districts Association.

The Board discussed State Water Commission cost-share funding for federally approved projects that have a benefit-cost ratio less than one as well as the current NDDWR economic analysis process for State Water Commission cost-share funding.

Member WRDs project reports

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

Manager Anderson reported Barnes County Water Resource District is working on various maintenance projects on legal assessment drains, permitting for a project on a dam, work on 10 Mile Lake Water Management Feasibility Study, permitting of subsurface water management systems, and the Sheyenne River Bank Stability Study.

Manager Perdue said Grand Forks County Water Resource District had a successful year at their campgrounds and is working on a joint project with Nelson County Water Resource District as well as various maintenance projects on legal assessment drains.

Maple River Water Resource District has been in discussions with the NDDWR on economic analyses related to State Water Commission cost-share for legal assessment drain projects, as well as progressing on the Davenport Flood Risk Reduction Project and

permitting for subsurface water management systems. The Cass County Joint Water Resource District continues to work with the NRCS on Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects.

Manager Ecker said North Cass Water Resource District is addressing slides and culvert replacements on various legal assessment drains as well as a drain reconstruction project and permitting of subsurface water management systems.

Pembina County Water Resource District is working on construction of a new legal assessment drain, various maintenance projects and finishing coordinating with FEMA on repair projects from 2022.

Manager Burvee reported Richland County Water Resource District is conducting routine maintenance of various facilities and a major maintenance project on one legal assessment drain, as well as permitting for subsurface water management systems.

Manager Sundberg said Rush River Water Resource District continues to be involved in the RCPP – Rush River Watershed Plan design and is also processing permits for subsurface water management systems and utilities. Construction of the Diversion Channel and Associated Infrastructure of the Metro Flood Diversion Project is also occurring within the Rush River Water Resource District boundaries.

Southeast Cass Water Resource District is coordinating use of Sheyenne-Maple Flood Control Project #2 to assist with City of Fargo and Cass County infrastructure projects on the Sheyenne River. Southeast Cass Water Resource District also completed snagging and clearing work on the Wild Rice River at State Highway 46, maintenance on legal assessment drains and slide repair projects.

Manager Varnson reported Nelson County Water Resource District continues to be involved in Regional Conservation Partnership Program project efforts with the Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource District, snagging and clearing projects and various reconstruction and maintenance projects on legal assessment drains.

Manager Thompson said Traill County Water Resource District is working on a legal assessment drain reconstruction project, maintenance and crossings of legal assessment drains and a public meeting for a potential legal assessment drain reconstruction project.

Chairman Ihry reported Steele County Water Resource District is continuing to permit subsurface water management systems, is working on tree control in legal assessment drains and working with FEMA on site repairs from previous floods.

Missouri River Joint Water Resource District - Educate Advocate Engage Program

Manager Weston stated the Missouri River Joint Water Resource District is hosting upcoming public meetings in Linton, Fargo and Devils Lake regarding the Educate Advocate Engage Program. The meeting aims to engage the public, various stakeholders, legislators and others on matters related to the Missouri River. All are welcome to attend the meeting.

NDDWR Dam Safety Standards Policy – RRJWRD comments

Mr. Gjestvang reported the RRJWRD Executive Committee submitted comments on the NDDWR Dam Safety Standards Policy with input from Houston Engineering, Inc. and Moore Engineering, Inc. at the August 9, 2023, meeting.

Education

Mr. Fredricks updated the Board on Waters of the United States rules related to Corps of Engineers permits.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Full Board meeting is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center, 800 South 3rd Street in Bismarck.

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