MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE PEMBINA COUNTY COURTHOUSE
CAVALIER, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 12, 2024
9:30 A.M.

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on June 12, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Rodger Olson, Maple River Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Ted Juhl, Bill Gunderson, and LuAnn Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Richard Sundberg, Rush River Water Resource District; Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Carolyn Fiechtner, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Jack Dwyer, North Dakota Water Users Association; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Rita Harmsen-Sveen, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority Executive Director; Annika Plummer, North Dakota Water Coalition; Julie Goehring and Stacey Lundberg, Red River Basin Commission; Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Co. Barnes County, Nelson County, North Cass, Ransom County, Sargent County, and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Approval of agenda
A quorum was not met to approve the order of the agenda.

Minutes
A quorum was not met to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2024, meeting.

Financial Reports
The Treasurer discussed the Financial Reports. No action was taken as a quorum was not met.

RRJWRD logo – name tags and apparel
The Board reviewed mockups of name tags and apparel with the new RRJWRD logo. After discussion, the Board requested adjustments to the design and logo used on the name tags and apparel. The Board directed the Secretary to engage the consultant that created the logo to revise the logo for use on name tags and apparel and bring it to the next Full Board Meeting for further review and approval.

Baldhill Dam Water Control Plan update

Randy Gjestvang reported on the Baldhill Dam Water Control Plan update stating that the second set of public and agency meetings are complete and a comment period on alternative operating plans ended on June 10, 2024. Mr. Gjestvang reported that a letter was sent from the RRJWRD with comments regarding the proposed updates to the Baldhill Dam Water Control Manual. Brian Fuder stated the Red River Retention Authority also sent a similar letter.

Discussion on strategic watershed planning (land rights)

Discussion was held on strategic watershed planning in regard to land rights needed for water resource district projects. Manager Weston suggested potentially forming a committee to discuss strategic planning regarding land rights for water resource district projects and indicated he will prepare a report regarding the topic for further discussion at the next Full Board meeting. The Board concurred.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Partner Summit

The RRRA Partner Summit will be held on July 31, 2024, in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Mr. Fuder discussed the agenda for the event and indicated all are welcome to attend. RSVPs for the event will be sent out and will also be available on the RRRA website soon.

Funding for NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Mr. Fuder reported funding for the NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program has decreased to $1 million nationwide. The Red River Basin currently has 6 projects that qualify for the Program, with estimated costs totaling $74 million. The RRRA is making a request to North Dakota and Minnesota legislative and congressional delegations to mandate a funding baseline of $30 million for the Program while retaining the current level of cost-share participation and continue current projects to construction. The RRRA is also requesting the ability to move funds from NRCS programs when and where appropriate. The Board thanked Mr. Fuder and the RRRA for their efforts regarding funding for the NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

WRDA 2024 bill

Mr. Gjestvang reported on the WRDA 2024 bill. Last fall Senator Cramer's office requested comments from the RRJWRD regarding the WRDA bill. Based off the comments submitted by the RRJWRD, the 2024 WRDA bill includes a funding increase to $15 million for the Corps of Engineers Section 205 Program.

Legislative Updates

Jack Dwyer and Sean Fredricks reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts including proposed bills regarding flowage easements, watercourse determinations and stream crossing standards, and discussion on funding and cost-share for water resource district projects.

Manager Thompson joined the meeting at this time.

Pembina County WRD updates

Manager Kemp welcomed the Board to Pembina County. Manager Kemp and Zach

Herrmann updated the Board on Pembina County Water Resource District activities and projects. Mr. Kemp stated there are 10 dams the Pembina County Water Resource District owns and operates, some of which the Water Resource District is working on plans for rehabilitation and improvements with assistance from the NRCS. Discussion was also held on the Bourbanis Dam 2022 disaster event and resulting partial decommissioning project. An optional tour of Bourbanis Dam will be held following the meeting.

State Water Commissioner-hosted meetings

Managers are encouraged to attend the upcoming State Water Commissioner-hosted meetings as follows:

- Upper Red River Basin – June 17, 2024, 3:00 p.m., Dr. James Carlson Library, Fargo
- Lower Red River Basin – June 18, 2024, 9:00 a.m., Grand Forks City Council Chambers, Grand Forks

Next meeting

The Secretary will send out a poll suggesting dates for a special meeting to conduct the business that was unable to be completed because a quorum was not met.

The next scheduled Full Board meeting is September 18, 2024, at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo.

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:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary