RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL SPECIAL MEETING
ORIGINATING AT THE TRAILL COUNTY WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT OFFICE
HILLSBORO, NORTH DAKOTA
NOVEMBER 13, 2024
9:30 A.M.

A virtual / conference call special meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on November 13, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele 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; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Andy Neset and Gary Thomspon, Traill County Water Resource District; Robert Thompson, Elm River Joint Water Resource District; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Dani Quissell and Jack Dwyer, North Dakota Water Users Association; Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Lyndon Pease and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co. Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District, was absent.

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

Minutes
It was moved by Manager Kemp, seconded by Manager Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the August 14 and September 30, 2024, meetings, as presented.

Treasurer's report
The Treasurer presented the RRJWRD financial report to the Board. The Board discussed renewal of an expiring RRJWRD Certificate of Deposit and indicated a longer term of 12-24 months with an interest rate around 4% is preferred.

Manager Weston moved to approve the following:
- Financial report, as presented
- Payment of Check #3779 and the wire transfers, as presented

Manager Burvee seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Manager Kemp and seconded by Manager Weston to do the following:

- Authorize the Treasurer to make any minor year-end transfers to balance the RRJWRD 2024 budget;
- Authorize the Treasurer to make transfers to and from obligated funds, if necessary; and
- Authorize the Treasurer to amend the RRJWRD 2024 budget.

Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Cost-share request – USGS *Joint Funding Agreement* for streamflow monitoring for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025)

Discussion was held on the USGS *Joint Funding Agreement* for cost-share on stream gages in the Red River Basin for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025). Randy Gjestvang stated the RRJWRD has partnered with the USGS in the cost-share of stream gages in the Red River Basin for several years. The data gathered by the stream gages is valuable to determine real-time river levels during events and is useful in other applications as well. Mr. Gjestvang recommended approval of the $145,800 cost-share requested.

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Burvee to recommend the RRJWRD Full Board approve the *Joint Funding Agreement* with the USGS for streamflow monitoring for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025) in the amount of $145,800. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Elm River Dams improvement projects – additional rock riprap

Lyndon Pease provided a construction update of the Elm River Dam Nos. 1, 2, and 3 improvement projects. Additional rip rap is needed at Elm River Dam No. 1. Elm River Dam No. 2 is nearly complete, however it also requires the installation of additional rip rap. The additional rip rap will reduce erosion potential in the spring when water begins to rise and have wave action. The Elm River Joint Water Resource District wants to reduce erosion on the newly constructed area by installing the additional rip rap. Additional cost-share may be sought for this additional work in the future, after the final project costs are known.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Burvee to approve the concept of the Traill County and North Cass Water Resource Districts returning to the RRJWRD next summer once final costs are known to seek additional cost-share for the Elm River Dam Nos. 1 and 2 improvement project, if needed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Thompson indicated the Elm River Joint Water Resource District is very appreciative of the cost-share provided by the RRJWRD for the Elm River Dam Nos. 1, 2, and 3 improvement projects.

Lower Red River Regional Detention Study update

Mr. Gjestvang updated the Board on the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study.

There has been a delay in the work since the Corps of Engineers' funding was exhausted and their personnel changed. The State Water Commission recently approved a two-year time extension of the *Agreement for Cost-Share Reimbursement* for the project. Zach Herrmann, Mr. Gjestvang, and Rob Sip will be meeting with the Corps tomorrow to discuss the project including their budget and time estimates to finish the project. The Board directed Mr. Gjestvang and Mr. Herrmann to communicate with the Corps that the RRJWRD strongly advises the study be completed as soon as possible.

Development of 10-year flood inundation tool

Discussion was held on a recent project proposal funded by FEMA to develop methods to identify areas susceptible to inundation from a 10-year flood event in the Red River Basin in Minnesota. Manager Weston inquired if the North Dakota side of the Red River Basin should investigate the feasibility of a similar project. Manager Weston indicated the benefit would be to be able to prioritize subwatersheds that are in need of detention projects, however it is possible that current tools have similar features and the proposed project may not be necessary.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Burvee to direct Mr. Gjestvang, Rob Sip, Brian Fuder, and Chuck Fritz to investigate the feasibility of submitting a proposal to FEMA for a project to develop methods to identify areas susceptible to inundation from a 10-year flood event in the Red River Basin in North Dakota and provide a short report of their findings to the Board at a future meeting. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Lake Traverse Water Control Plan update

Mr. Gjestvang stated the Corps of Engineers received many comments regarding the Lake Traverse Water Control Plan update. The RRJWRD sent a letter concerned about the proposed change in the Water Control Plan regarding the drawdown of Lake Traverse. The RRJWRD supports drawdown of the lake to provide storage for spring runoff. The Corps will be hosting upcoming public meetings to review the draft Plan. Mr. Gjestvang is planning to attend the upcoming meeting on behalf of the RRJWRD. Chairman Ihry encouraged all members of the Board to listen to or attend the meeting.

NDAWN all-season gauges

Mr. Gjestvang reported all of the NDAWN all-season gauges the RRJWRD funded are now installed and operable.

Text message meeting reminders

The Secretary presented various options to implement text message reminders for RRJWRD meetings. The preferred option is currently Microsoft Teams Premium, as it is the most affordable and will integrate into existing Microsoft Teams software. The Secretary noted it is not yet known if Microsoft Teams Premium will be available as the software is contracted through Cass County. The Board directed the Secretary to pursue Microsoft Teams Premium, if available and report back to the Board at a future meeting.

RRRA updates

Brian Fuder updated the Board on activities of the RRRA. Mr. Fuder has been conversing

with Riverview Dairy to see if there is a possibility of adding retention to their future projects. Riverview Dairy currently has a rainwater retention site that provides for about 50% of their water usage. There may be a possibility of increasing retention at their site. Riverview Dairy could then utilize that water in their daily operations. Mr. Fuder will be continuing discussions with Riverview Dairy to determine the feasibility of additional retention at their site and will bring updates to a future meeting.

Mr. Fuder indicated he is traveling to Washington, D.C. next week with the Midwest Council on Agriculture to discuss retention and the Farm Bill. Mr. Fuder will be meeting with various local legislators while in D.C.

The RRRA is also preparing their priority projects list for 2025. Mr. Fuder will be reaching out to individual water resource districts and watershed districts to gather information for the 2025 priority projects list.

Legislative updates

Jack Dwyer and Dani Quissell reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Mr. Dwyer discussed draft bills for the upcoming North Dakota legislative session on topics such as maintenance levies, borrowing capacity of water resource districts, water court, benefit analyses, permit deadlines and requirements, watercourse determinations, stream crossing – design discharge determinations, and joint water resource districts. Ms. Quissell discussed changes in the North Dakota legislature from the recent elections, including changes in priorities of the legislature.

Member Water Resource Districts project reports

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

Manager Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District, discussed a channel reconstruction project on Drain #27, and noted there are several drain improvement projects the District is working on. The District will also be conducting annual snagging and clearing work on the Sheyenne and Wild Rice Rivers this winter.

Manager Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District, indicated the District recently completed a legal assessment drain reconstruction project which included three miles of a drain lateral. The District is also finishing an improvement project of another legal assessment drain. The District has also been in discussion with the NDDWR regarding installation of PRESENS sensors to better monitor the dams in the District. The sensors have been installed and will begin operating in the spring when water levels rise.

Manager Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District, reported that maintenance continues on their facilities. The District is also processing subsurface water management system permits and have started discussions on potentially adding storage on some of the main waterways in Richland County.

Andy Neset reported Traill County Water Resource District recently completed a legal assessment drain reconstruction project and the District is pursuing a vote of the

assessment district for two other legal assessment drain projects. Regular maintenance is also occurring as well as replacement of bridges with box culverts in coordination with Traill County.

Chairman Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District, reported they are processing subsurface water management system applications, are working on reconstruction projects on two legal assessment drains, and stated the construction on Elm River Dams Nos. 1, 2 and 3 is nearly complete.

Education

Mr. Fredricks discussed the importance of pursuing mitigation and proper safety signage of low head dams within member water resource districts, as they are a liability concern for water resource districts. The NDDWR currently has a cost-share program to cost-share up to 75% of the costs to mitigate low head dams in North Dakota.

2025 meeting schedule

It was moved by Manager Weston, seconded by Manager Burvee and unanimously carried to set the following as the regular meeting dates, times and places for the Red River Joint Water Resource District in 2025:

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Full Board
2025 Regular Meetings

All meetings start at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, 1201 West Main Avenue, West Fargo, North Dakota, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 8 (Executive Committee at 11:00 a.m.)
Wednesday, April 9
Wednesday, June 11
Wednesday, September 10
Thursday, December 11 at 12:00 p.m. at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center, 800 South Third Street, Bismarck, North Dakota

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Executive Committee
2025 Regular Meetings

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Wednesday, January 8 at 11:00 a.m. (Full Board at 9:30 a.m.)
Wednesday, March 12
Wednesday, May 14
Wednesday, July 9
Wednesday, August 13
Wednesday, November 12

Recognition of former Board member Gary Thompson

The Board recognized former Board member Gary Thompson for his service on the RRJWRD, dedication to water resources management, and mentorship to Chairman Ihry. Chairman Ihry presented Mr. Thompson with a commemorative plaque and stated Mr. Thompson has been an instrumental member of the RRJWRD for many years.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024, at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Adjournment

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

APPROVED:

_____
Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary