RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
MAY 14, 2025
9:30 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on May 14, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary-Treasurer; Amy Hepper, Accountant; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Duane Breitling, Cass County Commissioner; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Jon Petersen, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users Association; Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Mike Opat and Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Chuck Fritz and Danni Halvorson, International Water Institute (IWI); and Tasha Krueger, Steele County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer.

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

Minutes
It was moved by Manager Kemp, seconded by Manager Perdue, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2025, meeting, as presented.

Treasurer's report
The Treasurer presented the RRJWRD financial report to the Board.

Manager Burvee moved to approve the following:
- Financial report, as presented
- Payment of the wire transfers, as presented

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

Cost-share request – International Water Institute – River Watch and River of Dreams

Danni Halvorson reported the IWI was notified that the River Watch and River of Dreams programs were approved for a NDDEQ Section 319 grant. The grant requires 40% local cost-share for the programs, which the RRJWRD has previously funded. The 40% local match covers 18 months of the River Watch and River of Dreams programs at a total cost of $132,466. Manager Perdue recommended approval of the cost-share request from IWI for the programs and stated the programs are beneficial to area youth.

It was moved by Manager Perdue and seconded by Manager Kemp to recommend the RRJWRD Full Board approve the cost-share request from IWI for the River Watch and River of Dreams Programs in the total amount of $132,466 commencing July 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2026. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NRCS Update – Red River Basin projects

Jon Petersen updated the Board on projects in the Red River Basin. Mr. Petersen noted there is currently reduced staff at the NRCS and the State Engineer has retired. Mr. Petersen is currently the Acting State Engineer for North Dakota NRCS.

Discussion was held on the Tongue River Channel Stabilization Project sponsored by Pembina County Water Resource District. The Board encouraged the project sponsor to revisit the project with the property owner where right of way is needed for the project to see if they are willing to reconsider granting the right of way needed.

Mr. Petersen next updated the Board on the Rush River Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project, the Bylin Dam rehabilitation project, North Branch Park River RCPP project, Shortfoot Creek RCPP project, North Branch Antelope Creek RCPP project, and Upper Maple River Watershed RCPP project.

Then Mr. Petersen updated the Board on the status of watershed rehabilitation plans in progress including Fordville Dam, Matejcek Dam, Senator Young and Olson Dams, Larimore Dam, and Bourbanis and Herzog Dams.

Project land acquisition and cost-share discussion

Manager Weston stated land acquisition for projects continues to be a hurdle for Water Resource Districts. Manager Weston suggested the Board consider assisting with additional cost share funding for land acquisition for projects that are otherwise ready for construction. The Board will continue discussions on this matter at future meetings.

Baldhill Dam – Water Control Manual update

Randy Gjestvang updated the Board on the Water Control Manual update for Baldhill Dam. The updated draft manual includes drawdown of the permanent pool up to 11 feet for flood control benefits. There is also a drought contingency plan included in the update. Responses to the Water Control Manual update are being accepted until June 6, 2025.

A motion was made by Manager Kemp and seconded by Perdue to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a letter to the Corps of Engineers regarding the Baldhill Dam Water Control Manual update with input from the RRJWRD Engineer. Upon roll call vote, the

motion carried unanimously.

Legislative update

Dani Quissell reported on legislative items impacting Water Resource Districts, including HB 1020, HB 1218, SB 2180, SB 2276, and SB 2379. Ms. Quissell encouraged everyone to attend the North Dakota Water legislative recap webinar tomorrow morning.

North Dakota Department of Water Resources Red River office

Mr. Gjestvang discussed the *Red River Valley Office Agreement* with the NDDWR for a shared engineer located in Fargo and associated office space. The Agreement expires June 30, 2025. Mr. Gjestvang stated he will be retiring from his current position and the NDDWR is inquiring if the RRJWRD is still interested in renewing the agreement and therefore filling the position. The Board indicated they are still interested in renewing the Agreement for a shared engineer and wish to be involved in the process of filling the position as the RRJWRD funds half of the cost of the position and office space. Brief discussion was held on the cost associated with the Agreement. The Board thanked Mr. Gjestvang for his work and dedication throughout his time with the NDDWR and the RRJWRD.

A motion was made by Manager Perdue and seconded by Manager Kemp to approve moving forward with renewing the *Red River Valley Office Agreement* with the NDDWR for a shared engineer located in Fargo and associated office space and participating in the candidate selection process. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Ihry noted he will reach out to the NDDWR regarding the matter.

Red River Retention Authority update

Brian Fuder discussed a recent trip to Washington DC to meet with North Dakota and Minnesota congressional delegates and NRCS staff. While in DC, Mr. Fuder discussed the 2025 RRRA priority projects, PL566 program modifications, funding for dam rehabilitation projects, and other water related topics. The RRRA is also seeking congressionally directed spending for flood mitigation projects in the Red River Basin.

Mr. Fuder indicated the RRRA is also looking at ways to use flood mitigation storage facilities to store water for use during drought conditions. Mr. Fuder also discussed the idea of the Red River Basin becoming a special district of the Corps of Engineers to be able to work seamlessly in the Red River Basin across states. Brief discussion was held on the reauthorization of the Dakota Water Resources Act of 2000.

Manager Burvee left the meeting at this time.

Member WRDs project reports

Manager Kemp reported Pembina County Water Resource District is working to improve and extend one of their smaller drains, is working to repair erosion at Renwick Dam, and are potentially establishing a new legal assessment drain.

Manager Perdue reported Grand Forks County Water Resource District is working on a project on the south end of Grand Forks, and the project is moving forward despite delays.

Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District has begun drain reconstruction projects in the Cities of Horace and Fargo along with standard maintenance activities.

Education

Mr. Fredricks informed the Board that Water Resource Districts are not included in the 3% increase property tax cap legislation.

Next meeting

Discussion was held on potentially changing the RRJWRD Executive Committee July meeting date due to the North Dakota Water Summer Meeting conflict. After discussion the Board decided to keep the original meeting date.

The next RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2025, at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The next RRJWRD Full Board meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2025, at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

2026 Budget

The Secretary noted work has begun on the 2026 budget. A draft budget will be presented at a future meeting for review.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, Manager Perdue moved, and Manager Kemp seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

_____
Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary