RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
AUGUST 13, 2025
9:30 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on August 13, 2025. The meeting was called to order 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; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Michael Wyum, Sargent County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Director, Secretary; Amy Hepper, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Dani Quissell and Jack Dwyer, North Dakota Water Users Association; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.; Robert Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board; Tasha Krueger, Steele County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Luann Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; and Alison Zajac, Richland County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer.

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

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

Public Comment
There were no speaker cards submitted for public comment at this meeting.

Appointment of Treasurer
The Director recommended the Board consider transferring the title of Treasurer of the Red River Joint Water Resource District to the Accountant, Amy Hepper. Ms. Hepper has been in training for and is ready to assume the Treasurer role of her position.

It was moved by Chairman Ihry, seconded by Manager Perdue and unanimously carried to appoint Amy Hepper as Treasurer of the Red River Joint Water Resource District for the remainder of calendar year 2025. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

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

Manager Kemp moved to approve the financial report, as presented. Manager Burvee seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Manager Perdue moved to approve the payment of the wire transfers, as presented. Chairman Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Future of Red River Flood Management meeting summary
Brian Fuder gave an overview of the Future of Red River Flood Management meeting held in conjunction with a Metro Flood Diversion Authority event. Both events were well attended, and conversations were held with congressional delegates, Corps of Engineers staff, and others. At the Future of Red River Flood Management meeting presentations were given by the Red River Basin Commission, RRRA, RRJWRD, and Metro Flood Diversion Authority on progress made and future flood management needs in the Red River Basin.

Discussion was held on the potential federal funding of an additional Corps of Engineers position. Mr. Fuder noted discussions are just beginning on this topic and when more information is known he will share it with the Board.

Red River Retention Authority update
Mr. Fuder updated the Board on the activities of the RRRA. The RRRA is pursuing congressional directed spending for three projects in the Minnesota portion of the Red River Basin that are construction ready. All three projects have moved onto the next step in the process however, it is unknow how many steps are in the process.

Mr. Fuder updated the Board on the activities of Jen Johnson who is representing the RRRA in Washington D.C. Ms. Johnson will be attending the next RRRA meeting and Mr. Fuder inquired if the RRJWRD is interested in inviting Ms. Johnson to the Full Board meeting on September 10th to discuss her activities in Washington D.C. The Board stated they are interested in inviting Ms. Johnson to the September 10th meeting.

Mr. Fuder reported the Chief Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be visiting the Grand Forks area on October 1, 2025, to tour the Red River Basin. Mr. Fuder discussed the tour and stated a panel discussion focused on right of way and the economic analysis process will occur following the tour.

Upcoming North Dakota Department of Water Resources public hearings
Randy Gjestvang updated the Board on upcoming hearings happening at the NDDWR. The NDDWR is hosting hearings in Fargo on August 28th and in Bismarck on September 2nd to discuss proposed changes to the North Dakota Administrative Code. Brief discussion was held on the proposed updates to the Administrative Code. The proposed modifications are favorable to water resource districts.

North Dakota Department of Water Resources Red River office
Mr. Gjestvang reported that his last day working for the NDDWR will be September 12,

2025. Chairman Ihry reported that he has been in communication with the NDDWR regarding this position and the NDDWR intends to hire Yaping Chi for the role. The Board congratulated Ms. Chi and looks forward to working with her in the future. Mr. Gjestvang noted the office will remain in Fargo as it is important for this position to be located within the Red River Basin.

Summary of interview with Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources from West Virginia

Manager Weston discussed an opportunity to meet with the NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources from West Virginia to discuss PL566 program inefficiencies. Manager Weston discussed with her various items the RRRA had brought to the attention of the NRCS previously. Manager Weston also noted the NRCS used to have several employees assigned to the Red River Basin and no longer have any for the Basin.

North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association (NDWRDA) dues

Jack Dwyer discussed increased membership dues starting in 2026 for the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association policy program. Several joint water resource districts fund the program, and the proposal is to increase dues to account for a larger legislative presence and work during the interim. Sean Fredricks highlighted the accomplishments of the NDWRDA and importance of having a legislative presence for water resource districts. The Board appreciates the important work that the NDWRDA does for water resource districts.

A motion was made by Manager Kemp and seconded by Chairman Ihry to recommend the Full Board approve the 2026 dues for the NDWRDA as proposed. Upon roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Summary of meeting with State Legislators in Oakes, North Dakota

Manager Weston and NDWRDA staff met with state legislators in Oakes, North Dakota in July to discuss the economic analysis study, watershed study, and wetland study the legislature is undertaking. Dani Quissell reported on discussions held and background information provided to legislators during the meeting. Manager Weston encouraged the Board to attend upcoming committee meetings on these topics.

Secretary-Treasurer Training

Ms. Quissell stated the NDWRDA is hosting a training in September for water resource district Secretary-Treasurers. The topic for this training is day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. Ms. Quissell stated Melissa Hinkemeyer will be leading this training.

Water Managers Handbook Update

Mr. Dwyer stated that Ms. Quissell is updating the water manager's handbook to include recent legislative changes regarding water resource districts. The handbook will be distributed when it is complete.

Member WRDs project reports

Chairman Ihry reported that Steele County Water Resource District is processing applications for subsurface water management systems, working through complaints,

and is working on a vote on reconstruction of Drain #1.

Manager Kemp reported that Pembina County Water Resource District has completed a mile of reconstruction on one of their smaller drains, working to repair the Renwick Dam spillway, drop structure improvements on Drain #78, and a crossing replacement. Mr. Kemp noted they are hopeful the Renwick Dam repair work will be completed this fall.

Manager Kemp also discussed a potential upcoming project that Pembina County Water Resource District may request cost-share from the RRJWRD for.

Manager Burvee reported that Richland County Water Resource District is processing applications for subsurface water management systems and had a recent successful vote for a project. Richland County Water Resource District has also been working on an economic analysis tool for water resource district projects. The Board asked Manager Burvee to share the tool at a future meeting if the Richland County Water Resource District is willing to share the information. Manager Burvee agreed.

Manager Perdue reported that Grand Forks County Water Resource District has purchased a tree grinder to remove trees on their facilities, and the County Commission approved their preliminary budget. Mr. Perdue also reported that they discovered a water leak that has been going on for some time at one of their facilities.

Manager Wyum reported that Sargent County Water Resource District is processing applications for subsurface water management systems, continues to work on a renovation and extension of Drain #9, and is working to create a maintenance district for the Wild Rice River.

Manager Weston reported Southeast Cass Water Resource District is reconstructing portions of Drain #10 and Drain #27 and is continuing to analyze the cause and repair methods for slope failures in the district. Southeast Cass Water Resource District also continues to work on mitigation of their low head dam on the Wild Rice River and plans to do some snagging and clearing along the Wild Rice River at Highway 46. The district continues to work with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority on legal drain transitions into the Metro Flood Diversion channel.

Education

Mr. Fredricks updated the Board on ongoing work to develop an assessment benefit methodology that water resource districts can adopt for their projects. The methodology is anticipated to be ready for consideration by water resource districts later this year.

Mr. Fredricks also noted he conducted a training for water resource district staff that is available on the NDWRDA website.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2025, at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The next RRJWRD Full Board meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2025, 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 at 10:53 a.m.

APPROVED:

_____
Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary