MINUTES OF RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1201 MAIN AVENUE WEST
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JANUARY 14, 2026
9:30 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on January 14, 2026. The meeting was called to order 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; Gerald Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District; Jay Colwell, North Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Richard Sundberg, Rush River Water Resource District; Andy Neset, Traill 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.; Duane Breitling, Cass County Commissioner; Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users Association; Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority Executive Director; Mike Opat, and Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; LuAnn Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Sarah Johnston, Walsh County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; James Bergman, Craig Jones, and Curtis Haugen, Border Township Associative Group (BTAG). Walsh County, Ransom County, Richland County, Southeast Cass, and Nelson County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Approval of agenda
It was moved by Manager Perdue, seconded by Manager Sundberg, and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as amended.

Minutes
It was moved by Manager Sundberg, seconded by Manager Kemp, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2025, meeting, as presented.

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

2026 Executive Committee elections
Sean Fredricks stated the RRJWRD Executive Committee positions currently held by Keith Weston, Arv Burvee, and Michael Wyum are up for election this year.

Mr. Fredricks opened nominations for the position held by Keith Weston on the RRJWRD Executive Committee. Manager Perdue nominated Keith Weston for the position. There were no other nominations, nominations were then closed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fredricks opened nominations for the position held by Arv Burvee on the RRJWRD Executive Committee. Manager Melvin nominated Arv Burvee for the position. There were no other nominations, nominations were then closed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fredricks opened nominations for the alternate position held by Michael Wyum on the RRJWRD Executive Committee. Manager Anderson nominated Michael Wyum for the position. There were no other nominations, nominations were then closed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

The Treasurer gave a brief overview of the Financial Report and the obligated funding report for the RRJWRD.

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

Cost-share request – Walsh County Water Resource District – Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Updates for ten dams (Amendment)

Yaping Chi and Zach Herrmann stated Walsh County Water Resource District is requesting a cost-share amendment for their EAP updates for ten dams due to additional modeling that is needed to meet the new state dam safety requirements. The cost-share request for EAP updates was originally approved by the RRJWRD in 2024. Sarah Johnston noted the State Water Commission recently approved additional cost-share funding for the project.

Walsh County Water Resource District is requesting 65% of the non-federal, non-state share of the project to update the EAPs for ten dams in the district not to exceed an additional $10,270. The Executive Committee recommended the RRJWRD approve the request.

A motion was made by Manager Neset to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *First Amendment to Cost-Share Agreement* with the Walsh County Water Resource District to update the EAPs for ten dams in the district for 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed an additional $10,270, for a total cost-share not to exceed $39,975. Manager Sundberg seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Border Township Associative Group (BTAG) resolution

James Bergman, Craig Jones, and Curtis Haugen reviewed the letter of resolution regarding RRJWRD support of BTAG and their approach to remove obstructions from the

Red River and keep the water in the Red River as close to the center of the river as possible to eliminate or minimize overall damage to the area. The Board discussed the language in the proposed resolution. The Board noted the RRJWRD is not committing any funding to BTAG by considering this resolution. BTAG agreed there is no funding being requested at this time. The Board had concerns that the resolution language was too broad regarding obstructions on the Red River.

A motion was made by Manager Neset and seconded by Manager Melvin to direct Ms. Chi to work with BTAG to amend the language in the proposed resolution of support to align with the RRJWRDs objectives. Upon roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

The Board will continue discussion on the resolution of support at a future meeting.

Ownership of Dams

Mr. Fredricks noted under North Dakota Century Code 16-16.1-40, if a federal agency constructs a dam but no longer maintains it the local Water Resource District assumes responsibility and ownership of the dam. Mr. Fredricks noted a federal assessment district can be created to generate maintenance funding for these facilities. Discussion was held on the possibility of conveying ownership of dams to private landowners that are interested in owning the dams. Mr. Fredricks encouraged Water Resource Districts to inventory dams they own. The Board then discussed potentially seeking an opinion of the North Dakota Attorney General regarding conveyance of ownership of dams to private landowners.

A motion was made by Manager Anderson and seconded by Manager Sundberg to authorize the Chairman to sign a letter to the North Dakota Attorney General's office regarding conveyance of federally constructed dams from Water Resource Districts to private landowners. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Update

Brian Fuder updated the Board on the activities of the RRRA. Mr. Fuder then reported on the status of the requests for congressionally directed spending for three projects in the Minnesota portion of the Red River Basin that are construction ready. Mr. Fuder stated the Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration project received a committal of $50,000 in funding through a federal bill that is in process. The other two projects that were seeking congressionally directed spending did not move forward through appropriations. The RRRA continues to seek avenues for federal funding of retention projects in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Mr. Fuder updated the Board on potential reauthorizations of the Water Resources Development Act and Environmental Protection Agency initiatives.

The RRRA continues to coordinate a visit of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Conservationist.

Mr. Fuder also noted flood outlooks will be available soon from the National Weather Service.

Legislative Update

Dani Quissell updated the Board on interim legislative activities that impact Water Resource Districts. Ms. Quissell discussed interim legislative studies regarding joint water resource districts and economic analyses. Ms. Quissell also encouraged Water Resource Districts to utilize available state cost-share funding for conveyance projects.

The North Dakota Water Users Association summer meeting will be held in Watford City this year. The Association is also hosting an online training for water Managers on January 26, 2026.

Member WRDs project reports

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

Manager Anderson reported that Barnes County Water Resource District is making improvements to assessment drains and are looking into their ownership of dams in Barnes County.

Manager Perdue reported that Grand Forks County Water Resource District is working to improve Drain #4 in south Grand Forks. The drain was determined to have state-wide significance by the NDDWR so they will be working through that process.

Manager Melvin reported that Maple River Water Resource District is working to modify and improve assessment drains and have submitted cost-share applications for these improvements.

Manager Colwell reported that the North Cass Water Resource District have submitted cost-share applications for upcoming projects and studies.

Manager Kemp indicated that Pembina County Water Resource District has completed the Renwick Dam spillway reconstruction project and the final cost of the project was lower than the estimated cost. Mr. Kemp briefly discussed the dams in their District and indicated they are also planning to complete an inspection of all Pembina County Water Resource District dams this summer.

Manager Sundberg reported that Rush River Water Resource District has been working with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority on drain transitions into the Metro Flood Diversion Channel. The Rush River is connected to the Diversion Channel and the Lower Rush River will be connected this spring. The Rush River Water Resource District is also working with Cass County to replace bridges and flatten the side slopes on the Rush River.

Manager Wyum reported that Sargent County Water Resource District has been working on projects that can move forward when the assessment benefit methodology is

complete. Mr. Wyum also noted the Silver Lake Dam Project will continue work in the Spring.

Chairman Ihry indicated that Steele County Water Resource District is working on drain reassessments and improvements to Drain #1.

Manager Neset reported that Traill County Water Resource District is replacing crossings and considering reconstructing a legal assessment drain.

Education
Mr. Fredricks reminded Water Resource Districts to apply for required bonding fund coverage through the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund. The coverage protects the Districts from financial malfeasance.

LaVerne Koenig Lawsuit
Mr. Fredricks updated the Board on the status of the lawsuit filed by LaVerne Koenig. Mr. Fredricks noted North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund has appointed an individual to represent all the public entities and individuals associated with public entities that have been named in the lawsuit. There are pending motions in federal District Court.

RRJWRD Manager Nametags
The Secretary noted an order will be placed for RRJWRD nametags. Please contact the Secretary if you are in need of a nametag.

Soukop Dam
Ms. Chi stated the NDDWR is preparing cost estimates for options to improve or decommission Soukop Dam. The cost estimates will be sent to Walsh County Water Resource District when completed.

Next meeting
The next scheduled Full Board meeting is April 8, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. 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 11:04 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____

Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary