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These are DRAFT minutes, subject to amendment before final approval by the Red River Joint Water Resource District Executive Committee.

RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
AUGUST 12, 2026
9:30 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on August 12, 2026. 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.; Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users Association; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Zach Herrmann and Jacob Wognum, Houston Engineering, Inc.; LuAnn Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Lori Christianson, Grand Forks County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; and Sarah Johnston, Walsh 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 amended.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Weston, seconded by Manager Perdue to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2026, meeting, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

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

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer presented the financial report to the Board. Brief discussion was held on current Certificate of Deposit rates.

Manager Weston moved to approve the following:

- Financial report, as presented

- Payment of the wire transfers, as presented

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

Legislative update

Dani Quissell updated the Board on interim legislative activities that impact water resource districts. Ms. Quissell stated a special legislative session has been proposed but water topics are not anticipated during the special session. Ms. Quissell continues to work on bill drafts for the upcoming legislative session, and the North Dakota Water Users Association joined a coalition to investigate drain tile setbacks for US Fish and Wildlife Service easement areas. The North Dakota Water Users Association is hosting regional meetings. There will be a meeting in Grand Forks at 1:00 p.m. and West Fargo at 7:00 p.m. on August 19, 2026. Ms. Quissell continues to meet with agricultural groups to discuss proposed bills for the upcoming legislative session.

Sean Fredricks discussed proposed bill drafts for the next legislative session.

Cost-share request – Walsh County Water Resource District – Soukup Dam Rehabilitation

Sarah Johnston stated Walsh County Water Resource District is requesting cost-share for the Soukup Dam Rehabilitation. Ms. Johnston noted they considered both decommissioning and rehabilitating the Dam and the Water Resource District decided to rehabilitate the Dam. The total cost of the Soukup Dam Rehabilitation is $246,000, with a request to the RRJWRD of 90% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed $110,700. Ms. Johnston briefly reviewed the project plans and noted the NDDWR is constructing the project and providing 50% cost-share. Chairman Ihry inquired about the status of the Soukup Dam spillway. Ms. Johnston indicated the dam does not frequently experience high water levels, so the spillway is not frequently used.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Perdue to recommend approval of the Walsh County Water Resource District cost-share request regarding the Soukup Dam Rehabilitation for up to 90% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed $110,700 to the RRJWRD Full Board. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Cost-share request – Pembina County Water Resource District – Senator Young Dam and Olson Dam Watershed Rehabilitation Plan

Manager Kemp stated Pembina County Water Resource District is requesting cost-share for the Senator Young Dam and Olson Dam Watershed Rehabilitation Plan. It was noted that the current request is an amendment in scope and cost to a previously approved cost-share request for the Senator Young Dam Rehabilitation on May 12, 2021. Manager Kemp and Zach Herrmann described the project and need for rehabilitation of the two dams. The project is part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) dam rehab program. The dams are near the end of the NRCS planning process. The total cost of the Senator Young Dam and Olson Dam Watershed Rehabilitation Plan is $2,129,589, with a request to the RRJWRD of 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of

the project, not to exceed an additional $196,300 for a total RRJWRD commitment of $280,268.50. Mr. Herrmann noted the goal is to complete the rehabilitation plan by September 30, 2026.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Perdue to recommend approval to the Full Board of the Pembina County Water Resource District cost-share request regarding the Senator Young Dam and Olson Dam Watershed Rehabilitation Plan for up to 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed an additional $196,300 for a total RRJWRD commitment of $280,268.50. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Dam ownership

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. A federal assessment district can be created to generate maintenance funding for these facilities. Mr. Fredricks discussed the process to create federal maintenance districts and noted he has also drafted a deed to convey ownership of dams to private landowners that are interested in owning the dams, such as small stock dams. The draft document is currently in review by real estate professionals. Discussion on this matter will continue at a future meeting. The Board briefly discussed federal maintenance districts.

Strategic planning for restoration and reconstruction of flood retention dams in the Red River Basin

Yaping Chi and Manager Weston updated the Board on the draft strategic plan for restoration and reconstruction of flood retention dams in the Red River Basin. Manager Weston noted a meeting was held with the member districts' engineering firms to review expectations for and organize the site inspections prior to beginning the inspections.

Ms. Chi noted she has been reviewing the available dam inspection reports from the NDDWR utilizing the information in the reports to populate the dam rankings. The remaining dams that do not have available or recent NDDWR inspection reports will be inspected soon. Ms. Chi also noted she has requested the NDDWR's inspection report template to utilize during the upcoming dam inspections to ensure consistency in the ranking process. Ms. Chi will continue to reach out to Water Resource Districts contracted engineering firms to schedule the dam inspections. Water Resource District Managers are also welcome to attend the inspections. Ms. Chi indicated she will present the available data at the September RRJWRD Full Board meeting. The Board then briefly discussed livestock grazing damages to dam facilities.

Lower Red River Regional Detention Study – Cost-Share extension request

The Secretary noted that the RRJWRD is a sponsor of the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study and the cost-share from the State Water Commission for the project is expiring in October. The RRJWRD can request an extension to the *Agreement for Cost-Share Reimbursement* at this time.

Mr. Herrmann indicated the Corps of Engineers delayed the project significantly and recently a path forward was determined so the study can continue. It is anticipated the cost-share funding will be expended by its expiration in October 2026, however, because of the federal involvement there are items outside of the RRJWRD's control which could delay the study.

A motion was made by Manager Kemp and seconded by Manager Perdue to authorize the Secretary to work with Houston Engineering, Inc. to submit an extension request to the State Water Commission cost-share for the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Red River Retention Authority update

Brian Fuder reported the water management advisory committee held a meeting with representatives from North Dakota and Minnesota to gather suggestions, set goals, and determine next steps. Mr. Fuder stated the next water management advisory committee meeting will be August 21, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red River Basin Commission office.

Mr. Fuder also reported he is preparing for the Big Iron Farm and Construction Show in September. Mr. Fuder noted the next RRRA meeting is currently scheduled for September 16th at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department during this event.

Mr. Fuder also briefly discussed Minnesota Farmfest and upcoming delegate changes in Minnesota's 2026 election.

Member WRDs project reports

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

Manager Burvee indicated that Richland County Water Resource District is conducting regular summer drain maintenance and projects as the weather allows.

On behalf of the Grand Forks County Water Resource District Manager Perdue thanked the RRJWRD staff for meeting with the Grand Forks County Commission regarding the RRJWRD requested budget. Manager Perdue also reported he attended the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association and North Dakota Water Users Association Joint Summer Water Meeting in Watford City and enjoyed the event.

Manager Kemp indicated that Pembina County Water Resource District recently had two NRCS representatives inspect Renwick Dam and they were pleased with the status of the Renwick Dam following the recent repairs. Manager Kemp also reported they are also completing other facility repairs and are planning for upcoming projects. Manager Kemp also reported that Morrison dam trash rack was blocked this spring and thus the event almost engaged the emergency spillway. Pembina County Water Resource District will be pursuing a project to remedy the trash rack.

Manager Weston reported that Southeast Cass Water Resource District has reached substantial completion on the reconstruction of segments of two urban drains. Southeast

Cass Water Resource District is also working on the Wild Rice River Low Head Dam hazard mitigation project and recently found out that State Water Commission funding for these types of projects has been exhausted so this will likely be delayed until next year, the Metro Flood Diversion Authority is also looking at adding fish passage to the project at their cost. Manager Weston also noted the Sheyenne River aqueduct was recently opened to flows as part of the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Manager Wyum reported that Sargent County Water Resource District conducted their annual drain inspections tour and Ms. Chi and a North Dakota State Senator joined them for the tour. Sargent County Water Resource District is also managing livestock on their dams and has found that mob grazing has been successful.

Chairman Ihry indicated that Steele County Water Resource District is working on a drain reassessment of Drains #4 and #13 and improvements to Drain #1 will start soon. Steele County Water Resource District is also conducting regular operation and maintenance on various legal assessment drains as well as tree removal on their facilities. Chairman Ihry also noted a unique situation regarding a drainage complaint in their district.

Education

Mr. Fredricks discussed complaints and the process of recovering costs incurred by the Water Resource District during the complaint process. Mr. Fredricks discussed various scenarios where it may or may not be permissible in North Dakota Century Code to recover costs incurred regarding a complaint.

RRJWRD Joint Conference

Ms. Chi updated the Board on planning for the joint conference with the Red River Watershed Management Board, Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (MNFDRWG), and RRRA. The conference planning committee is currently looking for topics to discuss during the conference and input on the name of the event. The conference topics will be applicable to North Dakota and Minnesota for a united event.

Border Township Associative Group (BTAG)

Ms. Chi stated the NDDOT and MNDOT are pursuing a study on the northern Red River flooding from Oslo, Minnesota to the Canadian border. There is some disagreement between the parties and BTAG on the study. The NDDWR is bringing this item to the next legislative session to propose a comprehensive study from Grand Forks to the Canadian border.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on November 18, 2026, at the Cass County Highway Department.

Adjournment
There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection at 11:07 a.m.

APPROVED:

_____
Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary

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