

**MEETING MINUTES
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
ORIGINATING AT THE OFFICE OF THE TRAIL COUNTY WRD
HILLSBORO, NORTH DAKOTA
AUGUST 14, 2019 ~ 9:30AM**

The Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Thompson on August 14, 2019 at 9:30am in Hillsboro, ND. Those present were: Chairman Gary Thompson; Managers: Ben Varnson (by phone), Larry Tanke, Robert Rostad, Josh Ihry, and Dan Jacobson. Also present were: Sean Fredricks, Attorney for the Board; Nettie Johnson, Secretary; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Treasurer; Randy Gjestvang, SWC; Curt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Keith Weston, RRRRA; Ted Preister, RRBC; Chuck Fritz, IWI; Christie Fisher, NRCS; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Inc.

ORDER OF AGENDA

Ben Varnson moved to approve the order of the agenda. Robert Rostad seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

MEETING MINUTES

Josh Ihry moved to approve the July 17, 2019 Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Carol Harbeke Lewis presented the RRJWRD financial report for the Committee to review. Josh Ihry moved to approve the report as presented. Robert Rostad seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ben Varnson moved to approve payment of check numbers 3712 - 3718 along with the electronic funds transfers. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

LEGISLATION

Discussion was held on deferred maintenance issues which may affect reconstruction projects and cost-share through the State Water Commission. The RRJWRD recognizes that this may be a major issue with WRD's. Sean Fredricks suggested having representatives work with the State Legislature on this new process. After further discussion, Josh Ihry moved to authorize Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc. to work as a consultant with the Tri-County WRD regarding the economic analysis associated with the Tri-County Drain project in Richland, Sargent, and Ransom counties. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

Keith Weston, Executive Director for the RRRRA, reported on several meetings and activities he has been involved with since July 17th to include the following:

- 1) There has been internal NRCS follow-up communique or teleconference since the NRCS National Headquarters meeting and field trip with the staff on July 8th and 9th,
- 2) The RRRRA still has about \$4,000.00 left in its RCPP cooperative agreement to do outreach education on drainage water management and soil health in the Red River Basin. The remaining funds must be spent by September 30, 2019.
- 3) The RRRRA assisted the ND Water Education Foundation with a summer water resource tour of the Lower Red River Basin on July 18th. Several RCPP watersheds were viewed as well as a diversion around the City of Grafton and NCRS floodplain easements along the Red and Forest Rivers.
- 4) Participated in public meetings for the Matecjek Dam Rehabilitation Project and the Upper Maple River RCPP watershed in Page, ND.

RED RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Ted Preister, Executive Director, was here to provide updates on the Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP), watershed management activities, long term flood solutions and several other issues pertaining to the Red River Basin Watershed.

Mr. Preister has been working with the Corps of Engineers regarding the analysis of potential storage sites for the tributaries in the phase 2 area (downstream of Halstad). This major step was not done, apparently due to federal funds being depleted. This final step was the key to determine the extent of flood water storage required in order to achieve a 20 percent reduction of the peak flow on the Red River. This has been the goal described in the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) Long Term Flood Study and included in the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Randy Gjestvang has drafted a letter to the Corps of Engineers concerning the work not completed through the Red River Watershed Feasibility Study. The executive board had requested that a draft letter be prepared. Mr. Preister is attempting to set up a conference call with the Corps on August 19 so the letter won't be sent until knowing the results of the discussion from that possible call.

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE

Chuck Fritz, Executive Director, was here to give updates on outreach efforts and River Watch and River of Dreams activities that are currently underway with classrooms in N.D.

At the July 17th Executive Committee meeting, funding was approved by the Committee to continue to support the River Watch and River of Dreams programs. Mr. Fritz reiterated that the ND SWC has committed to funding one more year, along with the Department of Environmental Quality contributing some "left over" funds. The number of ND River Watch schools would expand from 5 to 13 through August of 2020. At the July 17th meeting, the Committee approved up to \$53,840.00 to the River Watch Program and up to \$17,200.00 to the River of Dreams Program, for one year. Attorney Fredricks presented the agreements for

both programs for the Committee to review. After further discussion, Josh Ihry moved to approve the agreements for the River Watch and the River of Dreams programs. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NRCS

Christie Fisher, State Conservation Engineer, was here to talk about water quality/restoration issues, flood reduction goals, budget issues, wetland benefits, and wetland valuation methodology.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced \$1.9 million in funding for 15 Soil Science Collaborative Research projects focused on soil science and soil survey research. The information gained from the collaborative research will advance NRCS' ability to provide scientifically based soil and ecosystem information to help address important natural resources issues.

RANDY GJESTVANG REPORTS AND UPDATES

Mr. Randy Gjestvang provided a report on meetings and inspections that he has been involved with from July 17th, 2019 through August 13th, 2019.

Mr. Gjestvang described the items for discussion that were held at the State Water Commission meetings to include cost-share issues relating to snagging and clearing projects and rural flood control. Funding and permitting questions were raised regarding these projects.

A Pilot Watershed Project was described by Mr. Gjestvang which would involve:

- Districts could determine size of basin based on funding request;
- Language states that funds are to be used for implementation of basin plan;
- Includes water conveyance, flood control, and other water projects;
- Language indicates the funds may be used to provide grants and also applicable cost-share requirements;
- There may be a request for plans to be submitted by a deadline, then select the plan(s) to develop based on funding needs.

Mr. Gjestvang reported that Garland Erbele, met with Representative Jim Schmidt, Jack Dwyer, and Lance Gaebe regarding available funding. Mr. Erbele stated that \$48 million mentioned in SB2020 is not targeted toward particular projects and all is available for cost-share requests. If a proposed project is not included in the 2019-21 project plan, it is unlikely to be cost-shared in the first part of the biennium.

More updates were provided concerning the Red River Watershed Feasibility Study and the involvement of the Corps of Engineers.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to be considered by the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:15a.m.without objection.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Gary Thompson, Chairman

Nettie Johnson, Secretary