

MEETING MINUTES
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
FULL BOARD MEETING
PHONE CONFERENCE
ORIGINATING AT THE OFFICE OF THE CASS COUNTY HWY DEPT.
WEST FARGO, ND
APRIL 8, 2020 ~ 9:30AM

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

ROLL CALL

Water Resource Districts present by phone were Richland, Pembina, Sargent, Maple River, Grand Forks, Traill, Barnes, North Cass, Rush River, Southeast Cass, Nelson, and Steele. Member counties absent: Ransom and Walsh. Also present were: Attorney Sean Fredricks; Treasurer Carol Harbeke Lewis; Secretary Nettie Johnson; Randy Gjestvang, State Water Commission; and those whose name appears on the attached roster.

AGENDA

Rodger Olson moved to approve the order of the agenda as amended. Michael Wyum seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

MEETING MINUTES

Ben Varnson moved to approve the January 8, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Tom Perdue seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Carol Harbeke Lewis presented the RRJWRD financial report. Josh Ihry moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Don Kemp seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

2021 BUDGET

Sean Fredricks presented a Resolution for the proposed budget for 2021 which include funds necessary for the Joint Board's operations and cost-share to member districts and other projects. The Joint Board's member districts may annually levy (via their respective county commissioners) up to two 2 mills as payment of their membership fees to the Joint Board, separate from and in addition to the four maximum mills members districts may levy for purposes of operating their own water resource districts. Upon a recommendation by the RRJWRD Executive Committee on March 11, 2020, Rodger Olson moved to have the Joint Board adopt a 2021 budget equivalent to 1.5 mills (or the pro rata equivalent of 1.5 mills for those member districts where the contributing watershed into the Red River Basin is less than 100 percent) from each member district, and that the Joint Board sets 2021 membership fees at the rate of 1.5 mills or equivalent pro rata share. Ben Varnson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

COST-SHARE REQUESTS

The Richland County WRD has requested additional funding from the RRJWRD in the amount of \$32,500.00 for the North Branch Antelope Creek NRCS Small Watershed Study for the

purpose of covering overrun costs. Upon a recommendation by the Executive Committee on March 11th, 2020 Ben Varnson moved to approve cost-share up to and not to exceed \$32,500.00 (an increase from \$136,890.00 to \$169,390). Michael Wyum seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Pembina County WRD has requested cost-share from the RRJWRD for the Weiler Dam gate improvements. During their annual inspection, it was discovered that the gate system on the dam is nearing the end of its lifespan and will need replacement in the very near future to ensure safe operation of the dam. The existing catwalk system needed to properly access and maintain the gate system also needs to be replaced and improved for safety. Total cost for the repairs is \$198,207.00. The SWC may modify the cost-share policy on April 9, and may only provide 60% cost-share (instead of 75%); Dan Jacobson moved to approve up to \$51,533.82 if the SWC only provides cost-share at 60% or, up to \$32,208.64 if the SWC approves it at 75%, on April 9th. Josh Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD UPDATES

Rob Sip, Executive Director, provided a short summary of activities the RRWMB has been involved with recently. Mr. Sip will have a presentation available at the full Board meeting scheduled for June 10th in West Fargo (provided the Board can meet in person) which will comprise of the RRWMB 2019 Year in Review along with additional information pertaining to water quality issues, projecting implementation, the protection of farmland, legislative matter, flood damage reduction, and a variety of other topics.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Sean Fredricks provided updates on the status of the Economic Analysis process for the State Water Commission's cost-share policies, limited to flood control and water conveyance projects. At the March 11th Executive Committee meeting, discussion was held on the SWC's unreasonable economic analysis process for flood control and 'water conveyance' projects. The Committee directed Mr. Fredricks to draft a letter to the SWC Commissioners regarding these inequities. The Board reviewed the letter and after further discussion, Ben Varnson moved to send the letter to all Water Commissioners, the Governor, the Ag Commissioner, and the Lt. Governor on behalf of the RRJWRD. Michael Wyum seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

FARGO-MOORHEAD DIVERSION PROJECT

Rodger Olson described a few of the current events transpiring with the FM Diversion Project.

Mr. Olson said that they are waiting for the Horace construction to commence once the weather permits.

The Project began advancing in March with the installation of the Inlet Control Structure Sheet Pile.

The U.S Army Corps of Engineers FY2020 Work Plan includes a \$100 million appropriation for the FM Diversion Project. The funds will be used to complete the Wild Rice River control structure.

Purchase of land carries on and they continue to correspond with the landowners involved in the process.

RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

Keith Weston, Executive Director for the RRRRA, gave a brief update on meetings and activities he has been involved with since our last meeting.

Mr. Weston said he met with the NRCS representatives in early April regarding watershed planning and funding issues. He explained that educational resource investigations now have to be done before Plans can be approved. He added that the NRCS has funds available for RCPP watershed projects and he anticipates more projects forming in the future with alternative funding being available.

Keith described conversations he has had with state conservationists and state management members regarding programs that provide assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices based on identified natural resource concerns, such as soil quality, water quantity, air quality, habitat, and energy.

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE

Danni Halvorson, was present by phone to give updates on outreach efforts and River Watch and River of Dreams activities that are currently underway with classrooms in N.D.

Mr. Halvorson presented a request to the RRJWRD for their continued support to fund the River Watch and River of Dreams programs. The programs would engage 600 4th and 5th graders in sub-watershed, basin, and continental activities. After further discussion, Ben Varnson moved to approve up to \$59,600.00 per year for 2 years (July 2020-July 2022) for both the River Watch and River of Dreams Programs for a total of \$119,200.00. Josh Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

RANDY GJESTVANG REPORTS & UPDATES

Mr. Randy Gjestvang provided a report on meetings and inspections that he has been involved with January 8 through April 7, 2020.

Lower Red River Regional Detention Analysis:

- The remaining tasks are proposed to be added to the contract between the RRBC and the Corps for Planning Assistance to the States. Analysis of the 200-year and 500-year events are being added to the study. Local costs are estimated to exceed the amount originally estimated.
- On December 6th, the SWC extended their contract to provide cost-share up to \$45,000 for the Study. The Study must be completed by June 30, 2021 to obtain cost-share. The RRJWRD submitted a letter on March 16th requesting the SWC cost-share for anticipated cost overrun.

RRJWRD Water Management Strategy:

- Randy suggests the Boards provide the RRJWRD with a list of detention projects submitted for the SWC 2021 Development Plan.

SWC Cost-Share Policy:

- Cost-share for cost overruns on a project that had been previously approved must be approved before incurring costs. It appears the SWC Commissioners may set policy to be able to approve cost-share at a reduced percentage, based on b/c ratio (if less than 1).

Ongoing Tasks:

- A conference call is being scheduled with the Corps of Engineers to discuss budget and scope of work for amended Section 22 Study. An agreement will need to be in place before a consultant's costs can be counted towards in-kind cost-share.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next RRJWRD full Board meeting will be held in West Fargo on June 10th, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:00am without objection.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Gary Thompson, Chair

Nettie Johnson, Secretary

