

MEETING MINUTES
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
VIRTUAL/PHONE CONFERENCE
ORIGINATING AT THE TRAILL COUNTY WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
HILLSBORO, NORTH DAKOTA
JULY 15, 2020 ~ 9:30AM

The Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Thompson on July 15, 2020 at 9:30am in Hillsboro, ND. Those present were: Chairman Gary Thompson; Managers: Ben Varnson, Dan Jacobson, Larry Tanke, and Jim Haugen. Managers absent: Josh Ihry. Also present were: Sean Fredricks, Attorney for the Board; Nettie Johnson, Secretary; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Treasurer; Randy Gjestvang, SWC; Kurt Lysne and Chad Engels, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Keith Weston, Red River Retention Authority; Ted Preister, Red River Basin Commission; Mike Bassingthwaite, Interstate Engineering, Inc.; Attorney Keely Torgerson; Danni Halvorson, IWI; and Bryan Murphy, MN H2Oviewers.

ORDER OF AGENDA

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

MEETING MINUTES

Larry Tanke moved to approve the May 13, 2020 Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Dan Jacobson 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. Ben Varnson moved to approve the report as presented. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Dan Jacobson motioned to approve the wire transfers for bills and electronic transfers, as presented. Larry Tanke seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ben Varnson moved to approve the 2019 Audit Report as presented. Dan Jacobson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Dan Jacobson moved to approve the *Pledges of Assets* as presented below:

Alerus	As per agreement executed April 20, 2012
Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines (Bremer) Letter of Credit dated December 13, 2019	
Dakota Heritage Bank	\$1,085,000.00
Goose River Bank (Bank of North Dakota)	\$4,470,000.00
Sargent County Bank – Forman	\$115,000.00
Choice Bank – Grafton	As per agreement dated April 8, 2020

Jim Haugen seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

BRYON MURPHY, H2OVERVIEWERS – MN VIEWER PROCESS PRESENTATION

Bryon Murphy from H2overviewers met with the Committee this morning to provide a presentation on their viewer process in Minnesota.

Mr. Murphy described who they are, what got them here, and what solutions they can provide.

The Minnesota viewers company is planning to meet with members of the State Water Commission and key legislators to discuss the possibility of utilizing the Minnesota viewer process in North Dakota for assessment projects. In Minnesota, watershed districts must hire viewers to conduct benefit and assessment analysis for each proposed legal drain project. In North Dakota, water resource districts utilize their engineering consultants as well as the expertise of their water managers to make benefit and assessment decisions for new assessment projects and reassessments of existing legal drains.

For example, the Sargent County Water Resource District has been attempting to construct an improvement project to Sargent County Drain No. 11 for a number of years but a small number of landowners in the Drain 11 assessment district have attempted to prevent the project. The landowners sued previously to attempt to stop the project, but the Sargent County Water Resource District prevailed at the North Dakota Supreme Court. Most recently, one of the landowners submitted a petition to force a reassessment of Drain 11. The Sargent County Board planned to conduct a reassessment so the petition has not inhibited the Board or their project. However, the plaintiffs from the lawsuit are insisting that the Sargent County WRD utilize the Minnesota viewers process as opposed to utilizing the Board's own engineering consultant. In light of the pressure from the landowners, the Sargent County WRD invited a Minnesota viewer company to offer a presentation and an estimate regarding their services. The estimate was approximately \$300K to conduct a benefit/assessment analysis for Drain 11 just for a reassessment. The Board's engineering consultant's estimate was closer to \$30K to conduct virtually the same analysis.

Jack Dwyer and Lance Gaebe plan to attend the meeting with the Minnesota viewer company, the SWC members, and legislators. Chad Engels has volunteered to attend on behalf of the Red River Joint Water Resource District; Chad has experience working with ND WRDs and MN watershed districts. Luke Siemieniewski plans to attend on behalf of the Sargent County WRD.

LEGISLATION UPDATES

Gary Thompson provided a Water Coalition sub-committee chart for discussion and how the Coalition brought forth the discussion of the de-obligation of funding or basic delay on the proposed carryover of the 2021-2023 biennium.

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE

Danni Halvorson provided updates on River Watch and River of Dreams program activities.

Recently, a River Watch Scholarship was awarded to a high school student at Red Lake County Central High School who was actively involved in the River Watch Program for several years and was a team captain who led her team to a top reward at the 2019 and 2020 River Watch Forum. Another scholarship, the Water & Natural Resource Scholarship, was awarded to a student at the Larimore High School who is interested in the Biology field.

Mr. Halvorson informed those present that the PTMapp ND Legacy program will be updated with new data. Chuck Fritz will be sending out the updated information. You can also access the information at: <https://nd.ptmapp.iwinst.org/>

RED RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Ted Preister, Executive Director, provided updates on RRBC's activities to include outreach meetings and drainage integrated projects.

Mr. Preister gave updates on the status of the Halstad downstream modeling effort. RRBC is working with the Corps of Engineers on funding options for this project along with agreement issues. The agreement has been drafted and he will be bringing it to the Executive Committee tomorrow to be approved. Work is anticipated to commence in September 2020 and be complete by June 2021.

Mr. Preister described a first meeting that will take place this month or in August with the newly formed Technical Advisory Committee. The Committee will be addressing Long Term Flood Solutions.

RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

Keith Weston circulated updates of the activities he has been involved with since the last RRWJRD meeting on April 8th. Some of those activities included:

Working with representatives from the RRWMB and RRJWRD on determining the need for a Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee to develop quality criteria for evaluating watershed project functions and benefits.

Participation in a Red River Water Management Board meeting and discussed the desire of the RRWMB member watershed districts to submit a RCPP renewal project proposal to continue watershed planning in the basin. The following day he met with the RRRRA who, after some deliberation, decided not to submit a 2021 RCPP renewal proposal.

From July 6 – 9 spent considerable time working with MN and ND NRCS staff to determine WD/WRD eligibility for the COVID19 RCPP Cooperative Agreement 1-year no cost extensions.

Providing a virtual I & E training session to the ND WRD Association. There were approximately 60 participants from around the state.

Participation in a ND Water Coalition meeting discussing ND water resource budget shortfalls and projecting future funding for water projects.

RANDY GJESTVANG REPORTS AND UPDATES

Randy Gjestvang provided a report on meetings and inspections that he has been involved with from June 10, 2020 through July 14, 2020.

Randy provided updates for the Lower Red River Detention Analysis. The RRJWRD submitted a letter in March 2020 requesting SWC cost-share for anticipated cost overrun. The SWC has put a hold on administrative approvals of \$75,000.00 or less due to revenue uncertainty.

Conference calls are ongoing with the Corps of Engineers to discuss the scope of work, federal budget, schedule, and to pursue a signed agreement. The agreement needs to be in place before a consultant's costs can be counted towards in-kind cost-share.

Discussion was held on updating the RRJWRD Water Management Strategy report. It was suggested that it be updated using a list of proposed detention projects that sponsors submitted to the SWC for the 2021-2023 Water Development Plan. An updated report could also include additional detail on flood damages and project benefits. The RRRA is also developing a Strategy Report. Ben Varnson moved to update the RRJWRD Water Management Strategy Report using the latest information for detention development plans. Dan Jacobson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gjestvang gave updates on State Engineer Surface Drainage Permitting Policies that include two new policies regarding surface drainage.

Devils Lake is currently at 1449.7.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to be considered by the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:00p.m. without objection.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Gary Thompson, Chairman

Nettie Johnson, Secretary