

MEETING MINUTES
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
FULL BOARD MEETING
VIDEO/PHONE CONFERENCE
ORIGINATING AT THE OFFICE OF THE CASS COUNTY HWY DEPT.
WEST FARGO, ND
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 ~ 9:30AM

Vice-Chairman Varnson called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

ROLL CALL

Water Resource Districts present by phone were Richland, Sargent, Maple River, Grand Forks, Barnes, North Cass, Rush River, Southeast Cass, Nelson, and Steele. Member counties absent: Ransom, Traill, Pembina 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

Dan Jacobson moved to approve the order of the agenda as presented. Jim Haugen seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

MEETING MINUTES

Rodger Olson moved to approve the June 10, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Bruce Anderson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Carol Harbeke Lewis presented the RRJWRD financial report. Tom Purdue moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Michael Wyum seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

COST-SHARE REQUESTS

Chris Laveau, Hydrologist with the USGS, described the 2020-2021 Cooperative Monitoring Program. Upon the recommendation by the Executive Committee to approve the Joint Funding Agreement for the continued USGS cooperative streamflow monitoring programs with the RRJWRD for the period October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021, Rodger Olson moved to approve payment up to and not to exceed \$140,595.00 for FY 2020-2021. Tom Purdue seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Sean Fredricks reminded the full Board that a decision was made by the Executive Committee at their May meeting that all non-member entity cost-share requests must be approved by the full Board as well as the Executive Committee from now on, regardless of the amount of the request.

The Grand Forks County Water Resource District recently submitted a cost-share request regarding the Upper Turtle River Dam #10 watershed plan; the request from RRJWRD is \$32,664.45. Tom Purdue, a manager from the Grand Forks County WRD, noted they understand the Joint Board cannot approve cost-share until the Executive Committee reviews and recommends approval to the full Joint Board. The Executive Committee does not meet until November, and the full Joint Board will not meet until early December, in conjunction with the water convention. However, due to time constraints, the Grand Forks County WRD plans to

proceed prior to cost-share approval by the RRJWRD. Under the RRJWRD's cost-share policies, expenses incurred prior to cost-share approval is not eligible for cost-share. In this case, however, the Joint Board recognized the Grand Forks County WRD has time constraints; the consensus was that the Joint Board should approve cost-share for costs incurred prior to full Joint Board approval at the December meeting in this case due to the unique circumstances and the time-sensitivity involved. Tom Perdue understood that RRJWRD cost-share approval is contingent upon compliance with RRJWRD's other cost-share policies.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Attorney Fredricks updated the full Board on tile issues and stated that Senator Larry Luick and ND SWC Commissioner Michael Anderson have agreed to meet with the Richland County WRD on several issues relating to drain tile. Mr. Fredricks added that they have also been invited to attend the full Board meeting today to discuss the current drain tile law as well as assessment district matters. He also indicated that Commissioner Anderson and Senator Luick have been working on a new tile bill along with the potential of changing the roles and responsibility of water resource districts.

Lance Gaebe spoke about funding issues and said the legislators and senators are working on bonding scenarios due to all the projected drainage improvements projects. He added that he will continue to work closely with Attorney Fredricks and others on this and other issues.

The Board next discussed the legislative proposal from the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association dated August 19, 2020. The WRD Association has requested cost-share from the Red River Joint Water Resource District in the amount of \$10,000.00 for 2020, and \$23,000.00 for 2021 (a legislative year). The WRD Association will provide Legislative education, tracking, and monitoring for the Red River Joint WRD. Manager Haugen moved to approve cost-share with the ND Water Resource District Association in the amount of \$10,000.00 for 2020, and \$23,000.00 for 2021. Manager Olson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD UPDATES

Rob Sip, Executive Director, provided a summary of activities the RRWMB has been involved with over the last several months.

Mr. Sip described a meeting with the USGS who gave a presentation on water quality and the Story Map which gives viewers an overview of the US topographic map program.

Nationwide permit issues were explained, and Mr. Sip stated that the State of Minnesota Water Plan includes an entire chapter on water storage. For more information, please visit www.rrwmb.org

T-180 DAM REPAIR UPDATE

Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc., met with the full Board today and provided a presentation on the T-180 Dam. Mr. Lysne gave background and history of the creation of the Dam. He pointed out that this Dam was constructed in 1985 and was the 5th Project funded by the RRJWRD. He then explained the reasons why the Project was needed which included the deterioration of the trash rack on the spillway along with cracking and seepage in the spillway which resulting in a poor rating and thus designating it a high hazard dam.

RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

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

Mr. Weston asked for several members of the RRJWRD to participate in the RRRA Strategic Plan to help in the restructuring and development of flood damage reduction and water quality projects. Bill Hejl, Rush River WRD, offered his participation with this Plan. Mr. Weston is hoping for one more participant by October 1st.

Discussion was held on evaluating the benefits for flood damage reduction projects. Mr. Weston stated that this plan is moving forward and he is planning the next step to bring to the Retention Authority.

Mr. Weston said that he is putting together a priority list on retention projects based on which entity is next to be “shovel” ready.

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE

Chuck Fritz, Executive Director, provided updates focusing on watershed research, flood damage reduction, watershed pollutant load monitoring, and watershed education.

Mr. Fritz said that the River Watch staff continues to struggle with planning activities due to the COVID pandemic.

Mr. Fritz described the Center for Applied Research and Decision Support (CARDS) which interprets and applies research results from academic and research institutions to develop cost-effective solutions to the complex water problems faced by our communities.

Updates were given on IWI’s current status relating to data collection and analysis through the PTMapp.

RED RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

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

Strides with the Halstad downstream modeling continues to be made. RRBC is working with the Corps of Engineers on funding options for this project along with agreement issues.

Mr. Preister provided a progress report for the Drainage Integration Scoping Red River Comprehensive Sub Watershed Plan.

The RRBC Annual Conference will take place on January 21, 2021 via video/phone. More details are forthcoming.

FARGO-MOORHEAD DIVERSION PROJECT

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

Mr. Olson stated that the FM Area Diversion has received a FEMA conditional letter of map revision. This outlines how the FM Area Diversion Project, if built as proposed, will meet the minimum National Flood Insurance program requirements.

Mr. Olson provided updates on the diversion inlet and control structure, the Wild Rice control structure, property acquisition and the property rights acquisition plan, and agricultural impacts and mitigation.

RANDY GJESTVANG REPORTS & UPDATES

Mr. Randy Gjestvang provided a report on meetings and inspections that he has been involved with July 15 through September 22, 2020.

Lower Red River Regional Detention Analysis.

- The Study extends the HUR study to include the lower portion of the watershed. Local consultants, representing RRJWRD districts, will provide information on proposed detention sites to the Corps of Engineers. The Corps will then determine the reduction on flood hydrographs on the Red River mainstem due to the proposed detention. A portion of the Study was completed through the Red River Feasibility Study until federal funds were depleted. The remaining tasks are proposed to be added to the contract between the RRBC and the Corps. 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. The contract between the RRBC and the Corps is closed to being signed.

RRJWRD Water Management Strategy:

- Sponsors had until August 11th to change or add proposed projects to the SWC for the 2021-23 Water Development Plan. The draft proposed list includes 11 detention sites and 12 dam improvements.

Mr. Gjestvang also provided updates on current levels of Devils Lake and the Operation Plan for the Baldhill and Homme Dams.

A Water Topics Committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, September 24th to discuss drainage issues and the resource trust fund.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next RRJWRD full Board meeting will be held in December, 2020. ND Water Users are working together to have this conference held via video/phone .

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:20pm without objection.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Ben Varnson, Vice-Chair

Nettie Johnson, Secretary

