

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
NOVEMBER 18, 2020 ~ 9:30AM

The Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Thompson on November 18, 2020 at 9:30am in Hillsboro, ND. Those present were Chairman Gary Thompson and Managers Ben Varnson, Josh Ihry, Dan Jacobson, and Jim Haugen. Larry Tanke was absent. Also present were Sean Fredricks, Attorney for the Board; Nettie Johnson, Secretary; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Treasurer; Randy Gjestvang, SWC; Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Keith Weston, Red River Retention Authority; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering.

ORDER OF AGENDA

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

MEETING MINUTES

Jim Haugen moved to approve the August 12, 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 financial report as presented. Dan Jacobson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Dan Jacobson moved to approve the wire transfers for the bills as presented. Josh Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Jim Haugen moved to authorize the Treasurer to make any minor year-end transfers to balance the RRJWRD 2020 budget; to authorize Treasurer to make transfers to/from obligated funds if necessary; and to amend the RRJWRD 2020 budget. Josh Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

COST SHARE REQUESTS

Rich Axvig, Grand Forks WRD, described a cost-share request he is bringing forth for a Watershed Plan/EA for the Upper Turtle River Dam No. 10 located in Grand Forks County. The NRCS has agreed to provide funding to the Grand Forks WRD under the Watershed Flood Prevention Operations Program (WFPO). The estimated cost for technical services is \$251,264.00. NRCS will pay 90% of the costs up to a maximum of \$201,011.00. The estimated share by the Grand Forks WRD is \$50,253.00. After further discussion, Ben Varnson moved to recommend to the RRJWRD full Board to approve 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state

share up to and not to exceed \$32,664.45 with costs that have incurred for the project since September 23, 2020 when the discussion originated. Dan Jacobson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

LEGISLATION UPDATES

Sean Fredricks reported on current legislative issues that have been occurring recently.

Mr. Fredricks described the AG and supreme court opinions regarding the ability to use maintenance funds to construct legal drains. He and Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc. are working together to provide bullet points to present to the State Water Commission which will define the difference between regular maintenance projects compared to extraordinary projects. They are also putting together handouts that will be provided to water managers when ready. Attaching pictures to the bullet points is also being considered. Mr. Fredricks said that water project opponents are motivated and pushing the SWC to deny any future funding for drain projects and strongly suggests water managers call SWC Commissioners to help in influencing their policy making which will in turn help them understand these issues more clearly. Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc., suggested adding another category called “New drain establishments”.

Mr. Fredricks said he is working with the Richland County WRD on a new tile bill which will help simplify the permitting process of the installation of drain tile even more. He will keep us updated on this plan.

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE

Chuck Fritz, Executive Director, provided a handout which provided background for the Online Watershed Delineation and Hydrology Report. Mr. Fritz will have a presentation on this Report at the RRJWRD full Board meeting on December 9th.

RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

Keith Weston circulated updates of the meetings and activities he has been involved with since October 1st to include:

- 1) Provided a RRRR report at the RRWMB October 20th Board of Managers meeting. Discussed the RRRR’s efforts in development of a strategic plan.
- 2) Met with Upper Sheyenne River JWRD at their October 21st meeting. The USRJWRD continues to work on securing ND State Water Commission funding to do stream and streambank restoration along several stretches of the Sheyenne River. EPA-319 funds are available as well.
- 3) The Cass County JWRD continues to complete the RCPP watershed plan for the Upper Maple River watershed. They are completing watershed plan document and will be sending to National Water Management Center. They have also signed a new agreement with USDA NRCS to complete the final design for the Rush River RCPP watershed. This design is for 100-year flood protection around the City of Amenia.

- 4) On Friday October 23rd, participated in the ND Water Coalition meeting. The Coalition reviewed the Resources Trust Fund (RTF) and 2021 Water Development Plan Project Summary. The plan includes over 300 water development projects and studies. Revenue forecasts are still down approximately 32 percent from the RTF.
- 5) October 29th the RRRA's Strategic Plan sub-committee met to start drafting a strategic plan for the Authority. Another sub-committee meeting is planned for Monday November 23rd to continue working on the plan's goals and strategic initiatives and action items to complete these goals and initiatives.
- 6) The RRRA Board of managers will conduct its next regular meeting on December 10, 2020 at 2:00 pm. Due to the continuing COVID19 pandemic this meeting will be held virtually. If any RRWMB Board managers, members WDs or RRWMB staff have any agenda items for this meeting that you provide them to Keith by November 30, 2020.

RANDY GJESTVANG REPORTS AND UPDATES

Randy Gjestvang provided a report on meetings and inspections that he has been involved with from September 23 through November 17, 2020.

Mr. Gjestvang stated that the State Water Commission has approved cost-share for the anticipated cost overrun for the Lower Red River Detention Study, increasing the SWC share from \$45,000.00 to \$77,905.00. After further discussion, Dan Jacobson moved to approve the amendment to the agreement for the Study. Josh Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Ted Priester, RRBC, has obtained a signed agreement between the RRBC and the Corps of Engineers for this Section 22 study and the agreement has been signed. All local engineering costs, starting today, incurred for the project will be eligible for in-kind costs needed to match the federal cost for the project.

Mr. Gjestvang provided updates on the RRJWRD Water Management Strategy to include a Proposed Project list and Summary of Needs for detention sites and dam (rehab) improvements.

At the next RRJWRD full Board meeting on December 9th Rochelle Nustad, USGS, will be providing a presentation of the completed Trends Analysis Study for sulfates and total dissolved solids (TDS) as well as to describe the proposed phase 1 and phase 2 study to determine the source of why levels of these chemicals has been increasing.

Devils Lake level is currently at 1448.5.

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