

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE RAMKOTA HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 9, 2021

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on December 9, 2021, at 12:00 p.m.

Present were Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Rodger Olson, Maple River Water Resource District; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Robert Thompson, North Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; William A. Hejl, Rush River Water Resource District; Michael Wyum, Sargent County Water Resource District; Dan Jacobson, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Nina Stone, Accountant; Melissa Maertens, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; April Walker and Michael Anderson, North Dakota State Water Commissioners; Randy Gjestvang and Kelsey Huber, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Keith Weston, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Executive Director; John Suter, North Dakota Water Users Association; Joel Galloway, United States Geological Survey (USGS); Blake Carlson, Widseth, Smith, Nolting; Ted Preister, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) Executive Director; Zach Herrmann, Mike Opat and Gabe Bladow, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Chad Engels, Lyndon Pease, Josh Hassell, Nathan Trosen and Pat Downs, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.; and those whose names appear on the attached roster. Ransom and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Agenda

It was moved by Ben Varnson, seconded by Dan Jacobson and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as presented.

Minutes

It was moved by Rich Axvig seconded by Bruce Anderson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2021, meeting.

Proposed revisions to the By-Laws

Sean Fredricks reviewed changes to the RRJWRD By-Laws which will allow the Board to designate an official office location for the Red River Joint Water Resource District on an annual basis.

It was moved by Arv Burvee and seconded by Michael Wyum to approve the change to the Red River Joint Water Resource District By-Laws as proposed. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's report

It was moved by Dan Jacobson and seconded by Michael Wyum to approve the Financial Report, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative updates

Dani Hanson and Sean Fredricks reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Discussion was held on the SB 2208 interim study. John Suter briefly reported on the North Dakota special legislative session in regard to water topics. The legislative session included discussion on distribution of ARPA funding and creating a stabilization fund for water projects.

Pilot projects

Kurt Lysne and Zach Herrmann updated the Board on a potential pilot project for funding water conveyance projects in the Red River Basin through the RRJWRD. The pilot project concept was presented to the North Dakota Water Topics Overview Committee at their meeting on December 7, 2021. The feedback on the presentation was positive and the Committee requested the RRJWRD develop a watershed plan that would be utilized during the pilot project. Mr. Lysne suggested forming a subcommittee to develop the plan and include the NDDWR in the planning efforts. The subcommittee would also solicit input from member Water Resource Districts regarding the plan and the pilot project. Discussion was held on the concept of watershed planning in the Red River Basin.

It was moved by Ben Varnson and seconded by Michael Wyum to form a subcommittee including Gary Thompson, Keith Weston, Sean Fredricks, Mr. Herrmann, Mr. Lysne and Randy Gjestvang to develop a Red River watershed plan regarding a potential pilot project for funding water conveyance projects in the Red River Basin through the RRJWRD. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

LiDAR products update

Randy Gjestvang updated the Board on a cost estimate from the International Water Institute (IWI) to develop LiDAR-derived products for the North Dakota Red River watershed using the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data. The cost estimate for the project is approximately \$20 per square mile. The full Red River watershed is approximately 20,000 square miles and of that, the member counties of the Red River Joint Water Resource District comprise approximately 12,680 square miles. Mr. Gjestvang noted LiDAR-derived tools for the Red River watershed are not currently available from other government entities.

A motion was made by Josh Ihry and seconded by Arv Burvee to table the discussion on pursuing LiDAR derived tools using the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data until the January 2021 Full Board meeting when Chuck Fritz, Executive Director of the IWI, can be available to further discuss the proposal. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

State funding available for crossings

Jason Benson reported there is funding available for road crossing projects across the state of North Dakota. Mr. Benson encouraged water resource districts to communicate frequently with their local county highway departments regarding water projects that include crossings.

USGS Presentation

Joel Galloway reported on recent USGS activities in the Red River watershed. The USGS continues to operate the stream gaging network through partnership with the RRJWRD and is also conducting a drought risk study in the region. Mr. Galloway noted with the dry weather this year, the USGS was able to conduct needed maintenance on various equipment as well as define lower stream flow measurements. Other activities of the USGS in the Red River Basin include water quality studying related to the Metro Flood Diversion Project and a sulfate study that is a follow-up to a recent USGS study regarding trends in water quality in the basin.

RRJWRD request for increased federal funding for USGS stream gage network located in the Red River Basin in North Dakota

Mr. Gjestvang discussed sending a letter to the North Dakota U.S. Congressional Delegation requesting additional funding for the USGS stream gage network in the Red River Basin. The stream gage network provides valuable data for the Red River Basin and costs for the program are increasing. Mr. Galloway thanked the Board for their efforts and recognizing the importance of the data collected.

A motion was made by Josh Ihry and seconded by Jason Siegert to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to send a letter to the North Dakota U.S. Congressional Delegation requesting additional funding for the USGS stream gage network in the Red River Basin. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Red River Basin Commission report

Ted Preister reported on recent activities and projects of the RRBC. The RRBC International Summit is scheduled for January 11–13, 2022, in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The RRBC is currently assembling funds to complete bathymetry of the Red River mainstem from the South Dakota border to the Canadian border. The data is being collected by the Corps of Engineers at a greatly reduced rate and is very valuable information.

Metro Flood Diversion Project report

Dan Jacobson stated Joel Paulsen, Executive Director of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, will be presenting on recent activities regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project this afternoon. Mr. Jacobson encouraged everyone to attend the presentation.

North Dakota Department of Water Resources / State Water Commission report

Mr. Gjestvang reported on recent meetings and activities he has participated in. The NDDWR will be soliciting projects to include in the 2023-2025 Water Development Plan. Mr. Gjestvang stated there is a new process for requesting cost-share from the NDDWR. A virtual tutorial on the new process will be held on December 15, 2021.

Red River Watershed Management Board report

A brief report was given on recent activities of the RRWMB. The RRWMB is currently conducting LiDAR collection and development of LiDAR-derived products. The RRWMB is hosting a meeting on December 14, 2021, with legislators to discuss upcoming water projects. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting.

2022 meeting schedule

It was moved by Josh Ihry, seconded by Bruce Anderson and unanimously carried to set the following as the regular meeting dates, times and places for the Red River Joint Water Resource District in 2022:

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Full Board
2022 Regular Meetings

All meetings start at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, 1201 West Main Avenue, West Fargo, North Dakota, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 12 (Executive Committee at 11:00 a.m.)

Wednesday, April 13

Wednesday, June 8

Wednesday, September 21

Thursday, December 8 at 12:00 p.m. at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel, 800 South Third Street, Bismarck, North Dakota

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Executive Committee
2022 Regular Meetings

All meetings start at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, 1201 West Main Avenue, West Fargo, North Dakota, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 12 at 11:00 a.m. (Full Board at 9:30 a.m.)

Wednesday, March 9

Wednesday, May 11

Wednesday, July 13

Wednesday, August 10

Wednesday, November 9

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

Gary Thompson
Chairman

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer