

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
APRIL 13, 2022

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on April 13, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Rodger Olson, Maple River Water Resource District; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Wes Ecker, North Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; William A. Hejl and Richard Sundberg, 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.; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Keith Weston, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Executive Director; North Dakota Senator Mark Weber, Casselton; Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users Association; Ted Preister, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) Executive Director; Chuck Fritz and Asher Kingery, International Water Institute (IWI); Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Lyndon Pease and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co. Grand Forks, Ransom and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Varnson seconded by Manager Burvee and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2022, meeting.

Treasurer's report

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

Letter of engagement to the Office of the State Auditor for 2021 audit services

A motion was made by Manager Wyum and seconded by Manager Burvee to approve the letter of engagement to the Office of the State Auditor for 2021 audit service for Red River Joint Water Resource District. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Rodger Olson joined the meeting at this time.

2023 budget

A motion was made by Manager Varnson and seconded by Manager Jacobson to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Red River Joint Water Resource District Resolution Approving 2023 Budget*. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund – proxy for annual meeting

A motion was made by Manager Ihry and seconded by Manager Anderson to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to sign and return the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund proxy for RRJWRD. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Sublease Agreement with the Red River Basin Commission for the NDDWR space

Ted Preister discussed a two-year *Sublease Agreement* pertaining to the NDDWR Red River office space.

It was moved by Manager Varnson and seconded by Manager Wyum to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Sublease Agreement* with the RRBC regarding the NDDWR Red River office space. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Cost-share request – Elm River Dam No. 1 and No. 2 Improvements

Lyndon Pease reviewed the proposed Elm River Dam No. 1 and Elm River Dam No. 2 Improvements Project. The project would address deficiencies and update the dams to bring them into compliance with the state's current design standards. Traill County Water Resource District is requesting the RRJWRD provide 90% cost-share on the non-federal, non-state share of the project. Mr. Pease indicated if the project does not go forward, the dams are more susceptible to major damage or failure during medium to large floods. The emergency spillways could experience severe erosion because of the frequency of use and depth of flow. If the project is funded as requested, construction will begin next year. Sean Fredricks noted Section X of the RRJWRD *Cost-Share Policies and Procedures* states the RRJWRD may vary from its cost-share policies and procedures on an individual or case-by-case basis if deemed necessary by the RRJWRD. Randy Gjestvang stated this project is an extraordinary circumstance and he recommends approval of the cost-share request from Traill County Water Resource District. The RRJWRD Executive Committee also recommended approval of the cost-share request.

It was moved by Manager Ecker and seconded by Manager Varnson to approve the request from the Traill County Water Resource District for 90% cost-share on the non-federal, non-state share regarding the Elm River Dam No. 1 and Elm River Dam No. 2 Improvements Project, not to exceed \$1,286,100. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative updates

Mr. Fredricks and Dani Quissell reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Discussion was held on the SB 2208 interim study and benefit-cost analysis related to water conveyance projects.

Chairman Thompson thanked Senator Mark Weber for his legislative support for water resource districts.

Basinwide Funding Plan

Mike Opat and Kurt Lysne updated the Board on a potential pilot project for funding water conveyance projects in the Red River Basin through the RRJWRD. Mr. Opat outlined the proposed steps to continue development of the Basinwide Funding Plan. The first step is to survey member water resource districts to identify upcoming water conveyance projects in the Red River Basin and associated project costs and schedules. The information requested will be similar in nature to information requested by the NDDWR for the 2023 Water Development Plan. Mr. Opat stated the project surveys regarding the Basinwide Funding Plan will be due May 20, with a completed Plan estimated for 2023 prior to the next North Dakota legislative session.

Barnes County Water Resource District – proposed bank stabilization pilot project study along Sheyenne River

Mr. Fredricks and Bruce Anderson inquired if the RRJWRD would consider sponsoring an erosion control pilot project study along the lower portion of the Sheyenne River within member water resource districts. The Board briefly discussed the topic and indicated they had no objection to Barnes County Water Resource District pursuing the study or to the possibility of considering cost-share for the project when more information is available. Mr. Opat indicated more information on the study will be brought to a future meeting for discussion.

LiDAR products update

Asher Kingery provided an update on the development of LiDAR derived tools using the 2018/2019 NDDWR LiDAR data. All available NDDWR LiDAR data has been downloaded and the remaining data should be available this summer. IW1 will use the data to develop the LiDAR derived tools for the Red River Watershed in North Dakota, including the entire area of RRJWRD member counties.

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

Randy Gjestvang reported Congressman Armstrong's office requested feedback for the appropriations budget for the USGS in response to the letter sent requesting additional funding for the USGS stream gage network in the Red River Basin in North Dakota. Mr. Gjestvang indicated he has provided the requested information to Congressman Armstrong's office.

RRRA report

Keith Weston reviewed the RRRA meeting on March 16, 2022, and various activities of the RRRA. The RRRA has contracted with Midwest Radio and Digital of Fargo-Moorhead to highlight projects in the Red River Basin through commercials during the rest of the year. Mr. Weston discussed the RRRA 2022 Retention Project Priorities List and noted the list was sent to legislators in the Red River Basin for their information. The list is also available on the RRRA website. The RRRA also continues to support Regional

Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Plans in the Red River Basin and will be providing a letter of support to the National Watershed Management Center for the RCPP – Upper Maple River Watershed Plan exception request to the benefit-cost ratio for the Plan.

IWI report

Mr. Kingery reported the updated LiDAR derived tools for the Red River Watershed in North Dakota are anticipated to be available later this summer. The IWI is also working on water quality projects in Minnesota and are pursuing funding for the River of Dreams and River Watch programs. The annual IWI River Watch Forum was held on March 30, 2022, and over 200 students participated in the event. Manager Ihry presented the Managers' Choice award to Cavalier High School on behalf of the RRJWRD at the event. Mr. Kingery stated the River of Dreams program is nearly complete and approximately 1,500 students participated in the program this year. There are additional schools that have inquired about the program, including a class at the University of North Dakota.

RRBC report

Mr. Preister reported on recent RRBC activities and projects. The RRBC has secured the funds necessary to complete bathymetry of the Red River mainstem from the South Dakota border to the Canadian border. Mr. Preister also briefly reported on other RRBC ongoing projects and scheduled tours of projects. The next RRBC meeting will be held on May 26, 2022, in Manitoba, Canada.

Metro Flood Diversion Project report

Rodger Olson stated work is ongoing regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project and there will be a significant amount of construction activity in 2022 related to the project.

NDDWR / State Water Commission report

Mr. Gjestvang reported on recent meetings and activities he has participated in. The NDDWR will be hosting meetings this summer to discuss and solicit feedback on potential updates to the State Water Commission cost-share policy. Mr. Gjestvang also noted the NDDWR and USGS are proceeding with upgrading from the 1929 datum to the 1988 datum for stream gages. The upgrade would not change the way the information is presented to the public online. Many of the stream gages in the Red River Basin are already using the 1988 datum.

Next meeting

The next Full Board meeting of the RRJWRD will be held on June 8, 2022.

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