

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
AUGUST 10, 2022

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Executive Committee was held on August 10, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Dan Jacobson, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District (alternate for Larry Tanke); Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District (alternate); Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Nina Stone, Accountant; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; William A. Hejl, Rush River Water Resource District; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Keith Weston, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Executive Director; Danni Halvorson, International Water Institute (IWI); Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Co. Larry Tanke, Walsh County Water Resource District, was absent.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Ihry, seconded by Manager Jacobson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2022, meeting.

Treasurer's report

Manager Jacobson moved to approve the Financial Report, as presented. Manager Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Bills

Manager Perdue moved to approve the payment of wire transfers, as presented. Manager Varnson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Matching compensation for water managers to legislative compensation per HB 1216

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Legislature approved HB 1216, a bill that increased the maximum compensation for water managers to match compensation for legislators. In accordance with N.D. Cent. Code § 54-03-20, commencing on July 1, 2022, legislative compensation increased to \$193 per day. The Board agreed to set compensation at the amount permissible for legislators under North Dakota law, currently

and as modified in the future by the Legislature, as opposed to requiring approvals each time the legislature modifies or increases legislative compensation.

Manager Jacobson moved to match legislative compensation for Red River Joint Water Resource District Executive Committee Managers in accordance with HB 1216 and applicable North Dakota law. Manager Ihry seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the following Managers voted in favor: Thompson, Varnson, Ihry and Jacobson; Manager Perdue voted against. The motion passed.

Legislative updates

Discussion was held on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Sean Fredricks updated the Board on the SB 2208 interim study.

Mr. Fredricks and Kurt Lysne discussed the proposed changes to the NDDWR cost-share policy. The North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association has provided comments on the proposed changes and a meeting has been scheduled with NDDWR Director Andrea Travnicek regarding the matter.

IWI River Watch and River of Dreams programs – Letter Agreement extension request

Danni Halvorson discussed the IWI request to extend the previously approved *Letter Agreement* with the RRJWRD to match the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) grant that runs through December 31, 2022, to utilize the remaining funds regarding the River Watch and River of Dreams programs.

It was moved by Manager Varnson and seconded by Manager Ihry to approve the extension of the *Letter Agreement* with IWI to December 31, 2022, regarding the River Watch and River of Dreams programs, and to combine the River Watch and River of Dreams programs into one line item for accounting purposes. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Bills (continued)

Manager Ihry moved to amend the motion to approve the payment of wire transfers to include payment of invoices received regarding the IWI River of Dreams program. Manager Jacobson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Red River Basinwide Plan

Kurt Lysne updated the Board on the Red River Basinwide Plan through the RRJWRD. Data from the surveys returned identifying upcoming water conveyance projects in the Red River Basin and the associated costs and schedules is now being compiled to develop the Basin Wide Funding Plan. Zach Herrmann will reach out to Water Resource Districts that have not yet returned the survey. Once the project inventory is complete, a benefit analysis of the plan will be started. Next month a governance model will be drafted, then the Board can begin development of policies for administration of the program.

MFDA report

Manager Jacobson reported the Metro Flood Diversion Authority and the Public-Private Partnership developer held the groundbreaking of the Diversion Channel and Associated Infrastructure yesterday. The event was well attended, many public officials from North Dakota and Minnesota were present. Manager Jacobson indicated the project will generate hundreds of jobs during construction and is anticipated to be complete in 2027.

IWI report

Danni Halvorsen offered to have IWI education staff give a presentation at the September 21, 2022, RRJWRD Full Board meeting on their work that is funded in part by the RRJWRD. The Board agreed and invited Mr. Halvorsen to do so.

RRRA report

Keith Weston discussed the 2022 Red River Basin tour on August 24, 2022. The tour begins in Grand Forks and will include various stops in the Red River Basin such as the Drayton Dam and the City of Warren diversion. The tour will be approximately 7 hours in length and will be a tremendous opportunity for education and outreach. Also included in the events are meetings and presentations on August 23, 2022, and a workshop on August 25, 2022. Registration for the tour is open and is available on the Red River Watershed Management Board website.

Mr. Weston reported he is planning to retire from the Executive Director position of the RRRA next year. The RRRA will be considering various possibilities regarding the Executive Director position at future RRRA meetings.

The next meeting of the RRRA has been rescheduled to September 7, 2022.

Mr. Weston attended the NDDWR Commissioner-hosted meeting recently held in Grand Forks, ND and he provided comments on behalf of the RRRA. The comments pertained to NDDWR approval, cost-share, and economic analysis requirements of locally sponsored projects that have received federal approval.

Mr. Weston also commented on the Bourbanis Dam partial decommissioning project sponsored by the Pembina County Water Resource District. The RRRA wishes to retain as much storage in the watershed as currently exists, however the RRRA supports the project and hopes storage can be maintained or increased at other facilities in the watershed.

NDDWR / State Water Commission report

Randy Gjestvang reported on recent meetings, activities he has participated in and provided project updates.

NDDWR LiDAR data is now available on the NDDWR website for the entire Red River watershed. IWI will be using the NDDWR LiDAR data to update the LiDAR tools. Mr. Gjestvang indicated he will also discuss the IWI LiDAR tools project with Cavalier County Water Resource District as the project may need to include the entire Red River watershed for the tools to be fully functional.

Mr. Gjestvang also reported the NDDWR 2023 Water Development Plan has been posted to the NDDWR website for comments. Member water resource districts should view the Plan by August 15, 2022, to ensure information related to their sponsored projects is correct. Mr. Gjestvang noted a hearing on NDDWR proposed changes to the North Dakota Administrative Code will be held tomorrow morning. The next meeting of the State Water Commission will be held tomorrow, August 11, 2022.

Discussion was held on NDDWR PRESENS sensors that measure the water elevation at dams. The sensors are useful tools that could be implemented on all dams. Chris Bader from the NDDWR plans to be present at the September 21, 2022, RRJWRD Full Board meeting to give a presentation with more information on the PRESENS sensors.

Mr. Gjestvang also discussed updating the RRJWRD Watershed Management Strategy Report to include projects submitted to the NDDWR for the 2023 Water Development Plan.

Barnes County WRD – Sheyenne River Bank Stabilization Study

Mike Opat provided a brief update on the Sheyenne River Bank Stabilization Study downstream of Baldhill Dam to the confluence of the Red River. Barnes County WRD has submitted a cost-share request to the NDDWR for the study. Barnes County WRD also applied for cost-share through the Devils Lake Outlet Mitigation program; however, the project was deemed ineligible for the program. Mr. Opat said the study will begin once funding is fully secured for the project.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the RRJWRD Executive Committee will be held on November 9, 2022, at 9:30 a.m., originating at the Cass County Highway Department.

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