

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
SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on September 21, 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; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Richard Sundberg and William A. Hejl, Rush River 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 Hinkemeyer, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Sindhuja S. Pillai-Grinolds, Randy Gjestvang and Chris Bader, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users; Rochelle Nustad and Daniel Thomas, United States Geological Survey (USGS); Ted Preister, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) Executive Director; Zach Herrmann and Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.; Blake Carlson, Widseth, Smith, Nolting; and Taylor Lemieux, International Water Institute (IWI). Grand Forks County, Pembina County, Ransom County, Sargent County and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Varnson seconded by Manager Thompson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the June 8 and July 15, 2022, meetings.

Treasurer's report

The Board reviewed and accepted the Financial Report, as presented by the Secretary-Treasurer.

PRESENS sensors presentation

Chris Bader presented on NDDWR PRESENS sensors that measure water elevation at dams. The sensors are useful tools that could be implemented on all dams and other water resource facilities. Mr. Bader said the sensors are designed and built by the NDDWR and can measure attributes other than water levels such as soil moisture, soil temperature and precipitation. The sensors are solar powered and generally use cellular communications to send collected data back to the NDDWR. Mr. Bader discussed the installation of sensors on surface water facilities to ensure they do not freeze during cold

weather and can therefore record events year-round. Mr. Bader indicated the NDDWR is interested in partnering with Water Resource Districts regarding installation of PRESENS sensors on dams and other water resource facilities. He noted the cost of the device and cellular coverage is minimal. If Water Resource Districts are interested in learning more or installing a PRESENS sensor at their facility, they can contact Mr. Bader or Randy Gjestvang. Mr. Bader said PRESENS sensors are a new technology that the NDDWR is continually improving and evolving.

USGS Red River Drought Risk Analysis Project / low flow study investigations – deadline extension and additional cost-share request

Rochelle Nustad updated the Board on the USGS Red River Drought Risk Analysis Project / low flow study investigations. Ms. Nustad stated two major issues have delayed completion of the project. Difficulties with model calibration and personnel changes. The USGS is requesting to extend the deadline for completion of the study from December 31, 2022, to September 30, 2023, and additional cost-share in the amount of \$18,800 from the RRJWRD to complete the study. Daniel Thomas noted the USGS has split the additional costs of the study evenly between all partners, including the USGS. Mr. Gjestvang indicated the RRJWRD approved a *Joint Funding Agreement* with the USGS regarding the project in the amount of \$25,000 at the June 9, 2021, Full Board meeting. The remaining funds from that agreement will be depleted by September 30, 2022.

It was moved by Manager Varnson and seconded by Manager Olson to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Addendum to Reimbursable Agreement 21NTJFA0073 – Amendment No. 1* with the USGS in the amount of \$18,800 regarding the USGS Red River Drought Risk Analysis Project / low flow study investigations. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Cost-share request – North Dakota Water magazine articles

Dani Quissell stated Dr. Jay Leitch is interested in writing articles on water-related topics for the North Dakota Water magazine and inquired if the Red River Joint Water Resource District would be interested in sponsoring the articles. The articles would be 2 pages in length for 5 issues of the 2023 North Dakota Water magazine, at a total cost of \$5,000.

A motion was made by Manager Burvee and seconded by Manager Varnson to approve the sponsorship of magazine articles written by Dr. Jay Leitch in 5 issues of the 2023 North Dakota Water magazine, at a cost not to exceed \$5,000. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative updates

Sean Fredricks and Ms. Quissell reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts. Discussion was held on the SB 2208 interim study and a proposed bill that would establish a new, required, economic analysis process for establishing costs and benefits of any assessment project.

Red River Basinwide Plan

Zach Herrmann updated the Board on the Red River Basinwide Plan through the RRJWRD. Mr. Herrmann continues to work on the project inventory for the Plan. Discussion was held about the process during the upcoming legislative session. Further discussion on the matter will be held at a future meeting.

IWI presentation from education staff

Taylor Lemieux presented on the River of Dreams and River Watch programs conducted by IWI staff.

The River of Dreams program is for 4th through 6th grade students and provides an overview of the students' basin and their subwatershed. The students in the River of Dreams program also get the opportunity to design and launch a canoe in their local river. The canoes have a tracking number on them that when found, can be logged on a website. This demonstrates to students how far their canoes have traveled and provides continuous outreach to students, their families and those who find the canoes downstream.

The River Watch program is for high school students and provides hands-on information on rivers in the students' communities. Ms. Lemieux also discussed the annual River Watch Forum which connects all students in the River Watch program and provides an opportunity for the students to meet and learn from professionals in natural resources fields. The River Watch program also includes a challenge for the students in the program to work on throughout the school year.

Ms. Lemieux said River of Dreams and River Watch also aid in collection of water quality data. The programs continue to grow and are fun, customizable, educational and transferable to all watersheds. Ms. Lemieux thanked the Red River Joint Water Resource District for their support of the River of Dreams and River Watch programs.

RRBC report

Ted Preister reported on recent RRBC activities and projects. The RRBC is currently upgrading their cyber security and working on the 2023 budget. RRBC projects continue to move forward. Mr. Preister thanked everyone who attended the tour with the RRRA on August 24, 2022. The 40th Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference will be held January 17-19, 2023, at The Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Registration for the conference is now available on the Red River Basin Commission website.

NDDWR / State Water Commission report

Mr. Gjestvang reported on recent meetings and activities he has participated in. Mr. Gjestvang updated the Board on the status of the Lower Red River Regional Detention Analysis Study and IWI LiDAR tools development update. The NDDWR will be discussing feedback regarding potential updates to the State Water Commission cost-share policy at the next State Water Commission meeting. Mr. Gjestvang also discussed updates to the RRJWRD Water Management Strategy report.

Metro Flood Diversion Project report

Manager Olson updated the Board on the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Cass County Joint Water Resource District continues to work on land acquisition as well as acquisition of Flowage Easements for the project. Construction is progressing on the Diversion Inlet Structure, Wild Rice River Control Structure, Red River Control Structure and I-29 Road Raise components of the project. The Diversion Authority continues to work with agricultural producers in the Upstream Mitigation Area on finalizing supplemental crop insurance programs. Manager Olson said the groundbreaking for the Diversion Channel and Associated Infrastructure component of the Metro Flood Diversion Project was held recently and was well attended.

Next meeting

The next RRJWRD Full Board meeting will be held on December 8, 2022, at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, it was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Burvee and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

Gary Thompson
Chairman

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer