

RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1201 MAIN AVENUE WEST, WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
MAY 8, 2024
9:30 A.M.

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District Executive Committee was held on May 8, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Ben Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Gary Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary-Treasurer; Leilei Bao, Accountant; Carolyn Fiechtner, Administrative Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Dani Quissell, North Dakota Water Users Association; Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Mike Opat and Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Manager Varnson, seconded by Manager Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda, as amended.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Kemp, seconded by Manager Thompson, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2024, meeting, as presented.

Treasurer's Report and Bills

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

Manager Thompson moved to approve payment of Check #3777, and the payment of the wire transfers, as presented. Manager Varnson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

After discussing the CD Report, Manager Thompson moved to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer and Accountant to negotiate expiring CDs at an interest rate minimum of 5%. Manager Varnson seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Randy Gjestvang discussed the Obligated Funding Report and stated that several projects have exceeded the two-year completion time frame as stated in the RRJWRD

Cost-Share Policies and Procedures. Extensions will be needed for the following projects:

- Shortfoot Creek Watershed NRCS / RCPP
- Tongue River NRCS Watershed Plan
- Forest River Dam No. 1 (Matejcek Dam) Rehabilitation
- Middle South Branch Forest River Dam No. 4 (Fordville Dam) Rehabilitation
- North Branch Forest River Dam #1 (Bylin Dam) Rehabilitation
- Tongue River Dam No. M-3 (Senator Young Dam) Rehabilitation
- Upper Turtle River Dam No. 9 (Larimore Dam) Rehabilitation
- Upper Turtle River Dam No. 10 Watershed Study
- IWI – LiDAR Update and Hydro-conditioning

Following discussion, Manager Varson moved to extend the *Cost-Share Agreements* for the following projects for two additional years from today's date, expiring May 8, 2026:

- Shortfoot Creek Watershed NRCS / RCPP
- Tongue River NRCS Watershed Plan
- Forest River Dam No. 1 (Matejcek Dam) Rehabilitation
- Middle South Branch Forest River Dam No. 4 (Fordville Dam) Rehabilitation
- North Branch Forest River Dam #1 (Bylin Dam) Rehabilitation
- Tongue River Dam No. M-3 (Senator Young Dam) Rehabilitation
- Upper Turtle River Dam No. 9 (Larimore Dam) Rehabilitation
- Upper Turtle River Dam No. 10 Watershed Study
- IWI – LiDAR Update and Hydro-conditioning

Manager Kemp seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Manager Varnson moved to direct the Water Resource District Attorney to draft an amendment to the *Cost-Share Policies and Procedures* to amend project completion requirements from two years to four years. Manager Weston seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

RRJWRD logo update

Manager Thompson moved to approve and authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to order name tags for all RRJWRD Full Board members and office staff with the new RRJWRD logo. Manager Kemp seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board will discuss potentially ordering apparel with the new RRJWRD logo at the next Full Board meeting.

RRJWRD, RRWMB and RRRRA joint meeting

Brian Fuder provided an update on the upcoming RRJWRD, RRWMB and RRRRA joint meeting scheduled for July 31, 2024. The venue has not yet been decided. Mr. Fuder indicated the meeting will be a platform for all partners to conduct strategic planning and discuss topics including various projects across the Red River Basin.

RRRA report

Mr. Fuder discussed an advertising opportunity the RRRA is partaking in, the Here We Grow Program through WDAY. The program will follow the planting of a 20-acre crop of corn and the work involved with planting and harvesting the crop. The RRRA will be featured in various ways such as featured videos, interviews, commercial airtime, and more throughout the project which runs April through October. Mr. Fuder said one of the topics being discussed through the program is the construction on Elm River Dams #1, #2 and #3 that the RRJWRD is a cost-share funding partner for.

Baldhill Dam Water Control Manual update

A public meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Valley City Eagles Club and an agency meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. regarding the update of the Baldhill Dam Water Control Manual. The Corps of Engineers last updated the manual in 2007. A study of alternatives based on feedback will occur later this year.

Legislative updates

Dani Quissell and Sean Fredricks reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts.

Ms. Quissell noted the 2024 State Water Commissioner-hosted basin meeting schedule has been finalized. Ms. Quissell will share the schedule with the Secretary for distribution to the Board. The schedule is also available on the NDDWR website.

Manager Weston left the meeting at this time.

Member Water Resource Districts project reports

Member Water Resource Districts reported on current activities in their districts.

Manager Thompson, Traill County Water Resource District, reported the reconstruction of the Blanchard-Norman drain is continuing and the facility has been updated to current standards. Traill County Water Resource District is also proceeding with obtaining permits for a drain project and continuing snagging and clearing projects and other routine maintenance.

Manager Varnson, Nelson County Water Resource District, reported they are meeting on a regular basis, completing maintenance of legal assessment drains, and conducting inspections.

Manager Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District, reported the Tongue River Watershed project that was approved for cost-share funding from the RRJWRD is likely not moving forward due to a right of way issue. Pembina County Water Resource District's recent activities include cleaning out wind-blown silt from drains, continuing other projects, and preparing to host the RRJWRD Full Board Meeting in June.

Manager Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District, indicated they are evaluating proposals received for rebuilding a drain south of Grand Forks, and are in the process of purchasing mosquito control equipment for use in campgrounds they operate.

Chairman Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District, reported they are processing subsurface water management system applications, have received FEMA funding for past damages, are reassessing various legal assessment drains, and stated that construction on the Elm River Dams is progressing.

Education

Mr. Fredricks discussed SB 2036 regarding water resource districts. Mr. Fredricks also noted that Managers should be aware of and build in the timing necessary to engage railroad and road authorities as required in the revised process to create legal assessment districts.

Treasurer

The Secretary recommended the Board consider transferring the title of Treasurer of the Red River Joint Water Resource District to the Accountant, Leilei Bao, as Ms. Bao has completed training and is excelling in her role.

Manager Thompson moved to appoint Leilei Bao as the Treasurer of the Red River Joint Water Resource District. Manager Kemp seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

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

APPROVED:

Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary-Treasurer