

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
DECEMBER 12, 2024
9:30 A.M.

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on December 12, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Jerry Hieb, Barnes County Water Resource District; Tom Purdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Gerald Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District; Robert Thompson, North Cass Water Resource District; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Richard Sundberg, Rush River Water Resource District; Michael Wyum, Sargent County Water Resource District; Andy Neset, Traill County Water Resource District; Larry Tanke, Walsh County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota Department of Water Resources; and those whose names appear on the attached roster. Nelson County and Ransom County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Approval of agenda

It was moved by Manager Burvee, seconded by Manager Wyum, and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as presented.

Minutes

It was moved by Manager Thompson, seconded by Manager Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2024, meeting, as presented.

Financial Report

The Treasurer presented the Financial Report of the RRJWRD.

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

Cost-share request – USGS Joint Funding Agreement for streamflow monitoring for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025)

Steve Fuller discussed the USGS *Joint Funding Agreement* for cost-share on stream gages in the Red River Basin for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025). Randy Gjestvang stated the RRJWRD has partnered with the USGS in the cost-share of stream gages in the Red River Basin for several years. The data gathered by the stream gages is valuable to determine real-time river levels during events

and is useful in other applications as well. Mr. Gjestvang recommended approval of the \$145,800 cost-share requested and stated the RRJWRD Executive Committee also recommended approval of the cost-share request.

It was moved by Manager Burvee and seconded by Manager Purdue to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Joint Funding Agreement* with the USGS for streamflow monitoring for the period of October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 (FY 2025) in the amount of \$145,800. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Updates

Sean Fredricks reported on legislative updates regarding water resource districts including proposed increase in state cost-share for conveyance projects, studying the idea of a water court or how to address dispute resolution regarding water. There will also be a technical group formed to study determining benefits in terms of dollars for water resource district projects.

Introductions

Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Member updates

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

Manager Burvee stated Richland County Water Resource District is conducting standard maintenance of their facilities and discussed an ongoing culvert issue.

Manager Sundberg, Rush River Water Resource District, stated the District is coordinating various transitions to the F-M Diversion Project that is under construction within their district boundaries. The District is also looking into flattening side slopes on the Rush River to help address slope failures and improve facilitation of spring runoff.

Manager Wyum reported Sargent County Water Resource District is conducting studies on legal assessment drains that need improvements, and briefly discussed Drain #11.

Manager Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District, reported on ongoing reconstruction projects of Drains #10 and #27 in the greater Fargo area, as well as upcoming snagging and clearing projects on the Sheyenne and Wild Rice Rivers, legal assessment drain transitions to the F-M Diversion Project, and a study to mitigate a low head dam on the Wild Rice River south of the Fargo area.

Chairman Ihry stated Steele County Water Resource District is working on resolving drainage complaints, processing subsurface water management system permits, and the District recently completed two legal drain improvement projects. The District is also involved in the Elm River Dam Nos. 1, 2, and 3 improvement projects.

Manager Naset, Traill County Water Resource District reported the District is working on legal assessment drain reconstruction projects and processing subsurface water

management system permits.

Manager Tanke, Walsh County Water Resource District, expressed concerns of the rising costs of maintaining legal assessment drains. Discussion was held on what would occur if votes of legal drain assessment districts' maintenance projects fail.

Manager Hieb, Barnes County Water Resource District, updated the Board on the District's activities including processing subsurface water management system permits, upcoming snagging and clearing work, and the Little Dam improvement project that mitigated the safety risks associated with low head dams and also improved fish passage.

Manager Purdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District, reported the District is processing subsurface water management system permits, replacing culverts and working on a blocked culvert issue. The District is also pursuing a legal assessment drain reconstruction project in south Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Manager Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District stated the District is working on legal assessment drain improvement projects, processing subsurface water management system permits, and pursuing a mitigation project for a low head dam on the Maple River.

Manager Thompson, North Cass Water Resource District, updated the board on the Elm River Dam Nos. 1, 2 and 3 improvement projects and noted permits have been a source of delay recently for projects. Manager Thompson also noted the District continues to work on all of their facilities.

Manager Kemp reported Pembina County Water Resource District has an ongoing major drain reconstruction project as well as a legal assessment drain reconstruction project.

2025 meeting schedule

It was moved by Manager Wyum, seconded by Manager Weston and unanimously carried to set the following as the regular meeting dates, times and places for the Red River Joint Water Resource District in 2025:

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Full Board **2025 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 8 (Executive Committee at 11:00 a.m.)

Wednesday, April 9

Wednesday, June 11

Wednesday, September 10

Thursday, December 11 at 12:00 p.m. at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center,
800 South Third Street, Bismarck, North Dakota

Red River Joint Water Resource District – Executive Committee
2025 Regular Meetings

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Wednesday, January 8 at 11:00 a.m. (Full Board at 9:30 a.m.)

Wednesday, March 12

Wednesday, May 14

Wednesday, July 9

Wednesday, August 13

Wednesday, November 12

Thompson-Varnson Steamboat Award

Robert Thompson announced the 2024 Thompson-Varnson Steamboat Award is being presented to Chairman Josh Ihry. Chairman Ihry is a dedicated leader and member of the RRJWRD. His commitment to effective water management and his leadership have been essential to the RRJWRD's success.

Next meeting

The next scheduled Full Board meeting is Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota.

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