MINUTES OF RED RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT FULL BOARD
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1201 MAIN AVENUE WEST
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 10, 2026
9:30 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) Full Board was held on June 10, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Present were Josh Ihry, Steele County Water Resource District; Keith Weston, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; Gerald Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District; Arv Burvee, Richland County Water Resource District; Michael Wyum, Sargent County Water Resource District; Andy Neset, Traill County Water Resource District; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Director, Secretary; Amy Hepper, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Sean M. Fredricks, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; Duane Breitling, Cass County Commissioner; Matthew Lindsay, Amy Winkelman and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Jon Petersen, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) Executive Director; Mike Opat and Jacob Wognum, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Kurt Lysne and Nathan Trosen, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Chuck Fritz and Danni Halvorson, International Water Institute (IWI); Robert Sip, Red River Water Management Board (RRWMB); Bethany Bethke, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR); and Tasha Krueger, Steele County Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer. Nelson County, North Cass, Pembina County, Ransom County, Rush River, and Walsh County Water Resource Districts were absent.

Approval of agenda
It was moved by Manager Melvin, seconded by Manager Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as amended.

Minutes
It was moved by Manager Wyum, seconded by Manager Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026, meeting, as presented.

Public Comment
There were no speaker cards submitted for public comment at this meeting.

Financial Report
The Treasurer gave a brief overview of the Financial Report and the obligated funding report for the RRJWRD.

It was moved by Manager Neset and seconded by Manager Melvin to approve the Financial Report as presented. Upon roll call vote the following Districts voted in favor of

the motion: Barnes County, Maple River, Richland County, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, Steele County, and Traill County. Grand Forks County did not vote. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

2027 Budget

A motion was made by Manager Burvee and seconded by Manager Melvin to approve the 2027 RRJWRD Budget as presented. Upon roll call vote the following Districts voted in favor of the motion: Barnes County, Maple River, Richland County, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, Steele County, and Traill County. Grand Forks County did not vote. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

Cost-share request – International Water Institute – Red River Basin River Watch and River of Dreams

Danni Halvorson gave an overview of the River Watch and River of Dreams programs. Mr. Halvorson reported the IWI was notified that the River Watch and River of Dreams programs were approved for a NDDEQ Section 319 grant. The grant requires 40% local cost-share for the programs, which the RRJWRD has previously funded. The 40% local match covers 12 months of the River Watch and River of Dreams programs at a total cost of $90,327.

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Anderson to approve the cost-share request from IWI for the River Watch and River of Dreams Programs in the total amount of $90,327 commencing January 1, 2027, and ending December 31, 2027, and authorize the Chairman to sign the *Letter Agreement*. Upon roll call vote the following Districts voted in favor of the motion: Barnes County, Maple River, Richland County, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, Steele County, and Traill County. Grand Forks County did not vote. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

Cost-share request – Grand Forks County Water Resource District – Grand Forks County Dams Emergency Action Plans (EAP)

Chairman Ihry briefly reviewed the Grand Forks County Water Resource District cost-share request for Emergency Action Plan updates for eight dams. The Executive Committee recommended approval of the request at their recent meeting.

A motion was made by Manager Neset and seconded by Manager Weston to approve the Grand Forks County Water Resource District cost-share request regarding the Emergency Action Plan updates for eight dams for up to 65% cost-share of the non-federal, non-state share of the project, not to exceed $33,150. Upon roll call vote the following Districts voted in favor of the motion: Barnes County, Maple River, Richland County, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, Steele County, and Traill County. Grand Forks County did not vote. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

NRCS update

Jon Petersen provided an update on the projects the NRCS is pursuing with local sponsors in the Red River Basin. Four watershed plans have been completed and seven are in progress. Mr. Petersen proceeded to provide updates on the plans and projects in

progress including dam rehabilitation projects. Brief discussion was held on biomass harvesting included in a few of the plans in progress.

NDDWR Sovereign Lands presentation

Amy Winkelman presented on sovereign lands in North Dakota. She discussed the history of sovereign lands, what constitutes a sovereign land, and the boundary line of sovereign lands in North Dakota. Ms. Winkelman noted the ordinary high water mark is the boundary line and moves as water bodies move. The ordinary high water mark and the water's edge are not the same. The navigable water bodies were given to the state when it entered statehood. There are currently 17 navigable waterways in the state and more are being evaluated. Sovereign lands are public property and activities within a sovereign land below the ordinary high water mark require a permit from the NDDWR. Ms. Winkelman reviewed the permit process and associated timeline. The Board thanked Ms. Winkelman for the presentation.

Legislative Update

Sean Fredricks updated the Board on interim legislative activities that impact Water Resource Districts. The NDDWR is currently evaluating changes to their cost-share policy based on revenue forecasts.

Mr. Fredricks noted the upcoming Agriculture and Water Management Committee meeting and topics that may be discussed that may impact Water Resource Districts including discussion on the economic analysis study. Kurt Lysne discussed a new economic analysis tool for the next biennium.

Mr. Fredricks also updated the Board on bill drafts relating to Water Resource District maintenance levy assessments.

Surface drain permit forms and process

Mr. Fredricks discussed changes to the administrative code regarding surface drain permitting and complaints. The NDDWR has a new process for processing surface drain permits and complaints. Mr. Fredricks discussed the new process in more detail and indicated the NDDWR will no longer supply permit forms. Mr. Fredricks then reviewed sample surface drain permit documents that Water Resource Districts can use to ensure all requirements are met.

Proposed annual conference with the Minnesota Red River Watershed Management Board

Rob Sip reported that the Red River Watershed Management Board hosts a joint conference with the Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (MNFDRWG) annually and they are interested in inviting the RRJWRD and RRRA to join in hosting this conference. The conference typically entails a day and a half of speakers, training, and this year also included a facilitated discussion regarding water supply and management. The conference is held in March with planning beginning prior. A joint conference with all four entities would allow for more all-encompassing topics and issues and create a closer working relationship between staff. The current cost of the conference is approximately $30,000-40,000, not including sponsorships and the registration fee.

Bethany Bethke highlighted the importance of collaboration between entities and discussed previous conference attendee information. The Board supported the concept of a joint conference. Ms. Bethke stated the conference will be held March 16 and 17, 2027 in Moorhead Minnesota. Mr. Sip invited Yaping Chi to represent the RRJWRD on the conference planning committee.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Melvin to participate in a joint conference annually with the RRWMB, MNFDRWG, and the RRRA and appoint Yaping Chi to represent the RRJWRD on the planning committee. Upon roll call vote the following Districts voted in favor of the motion: Barnes County, Maple River, Sargent County, Southeast Cass, Steele County, and Traill County. Richland County voted against the motion. Grand Forks County did not vote. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

Invitation to summer event and tour in Minnesota

Mr. Sip indicated several Minnesota entities are partnering to host an event and tour in Detroit Lakes on August 25 and 26, 2026. Mr. Sip briefly discussed the schedule of events and topics for the event and tour. Mr. Sip invited the RRJWRD to attend this event and tour.

Next meeting

The next scheduled Full Board meeting is September 9, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection at 12:00 p.m.

APPROVED:

_____
Josh Ihry
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary