

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

John Finney, Vice Pres.-Humboldt Farrell Erickson, Secretary-Badger Harlan Solberg-Greenbush Ron Osowski, President-Oslo Vernon Johnson-Clearbrook Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Robert Wright-Felton Curtis Nelson-Barnesville Jerome Deal-Wheaton Don Ogaard, Executive Director-Ada

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

July 25, 2000

Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, July 25, 2000, at the Wild Rice Watershed District Office, Ada, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: John Finney Farrell Erickson
Harlan Solberg Vernon Johnson
Daniel Wilkens Curtis Nelson
Jerome Deal

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD
Brian Dwight, BWSR
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Ron Adrian, Administrator, Middle River-Snake River WD
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD
Curt Jacobson, Wild Rice WD
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD

Ogaard stated that the tour of the Wild Rice WD Lockhart Township Runoff Storage Project would occur following lunch.

The minutes of the June 20, 2000 meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. **Motion** to approve the minutes as written by Manager Finney, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Finney, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

2001 RRWMB Tax Levy Rate

Manager Nelson stated that the Buffalo-Red River WD had forwarded letters to all the board members of the RRWMB stating their position of maintaining the current levy rate at 75%. Osowski added that the BRRWD position was discussed at the board meeting he attended when the governing documents were distributed.

Motion by Manager Nelson to adopt the current rate of .0003627 (75%) for the 2001 levy, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson. Discussion followed.

Manager Erickson noted his concern relative to legislators indicating that in order to receive state funds in the future the RRWMB needs to be collecting the maximum funds allowable under the current legislation.

Manager Wilkens requested that board members discuss the current status of funds available for construction in each of the watershed districts.

Manager Johnson responded that the RLWD has sufficient funds on hand for their upcoming projects. Manager Deal noted that the BdSWD is in need of funding for the North Ottawa Project. Manager Solberg added that additional funding would be needed by the TRWD for the Nereson Subimpoundment Project.

Manager Osowski noted that due to the poor economy, no one wants to increase taxes. He added that the RRWMB could justify raising taxes if results could be shown for the tax increases.

Manager Wilkens stated that the RRWMB should plan for the long term and added that it takes time to raise sufficient funding.

Manager Nelson noted that a state representative had attended the BRRWD monthly board meeting and inquired about the RRWMB wanting to raise taxes while the state is trying to lower taxes.

Manager Finney added that he doesn't believe any legislator would hold it against the RRWMB should the levy remain the same since the board is doing the most with their available funds. He noted that the economy offsets the need to generate more funds.

Manager Nelson felt that if an individual watershed district had a project that is in dire need of funding, it could be obtained on an individual basis from the legislature.

Manager Nelson called for a poll vote. As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. Those voting in favor of the motion included: Johnson, Nelson, and Finney. Those opposing the motion included: Deal, Solberg, Wilkens, Osowski, and Erickson. **Motion defeated.**

Manager Finney suggested that discussion of the levy be tabled until a full board was in attendance. Manager Erickson added that a vote would not be fair since the WRWD representative was not in attendance.

Roeschlein added that should an increase for the RRWMB levy be proposed, certification of the proposed levy is needed by September 15, 2000.

Manager Deal inquired whether Jerry Bennett, Administrator-WRWD, could convey the position of their District. Bennett responded that the WRWD agreed to support increasing the RRWMB levy to 100% for the upcoming year.

Motion by Manager Deal to increase the levy to 100% for FY 2001, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson. As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. Those voting in favor of the motion included: Deal, Solberg,

Wilkins, Osowski, and Erickson. Those opposing the motion included: Johnson, Nelson, and Finney. **Motion carried.**

Ogaard explained that since the previous levy was at 75%, increasing it to 100% would be equivalent to an additional 1/3 in tax revenue. Manager Finney noted that the RRWMB levy for FY 2001 would also include paying for the Minnesota local government share for the Red River Basin Board (RRBB).

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that the project team met on July 12, 2000 and discussed the timelines for the Hay Creek Project and progress on the Stafford Project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- The Two Rivers WD reported that repair of Kittson County Ditch #10 is underway. The activity is funded by a hazard mitigation grant from FEMA and the Minnesota Department of Emergency Management and includes installation of five grade stabilization structures in the ditch. The structures are designed to reduce high velocities within the ditch which have caused repeated erosion, bank sloughing, and downstream sedimentation. The project will stabilize the ditch side slopes and hopefully prevent further erosion and sedimentation. The project is scheduled to be completed by mid August.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that there has been no change in the status of the Snake River Flood Damage Reduction (Helgeland) site. The District still plans to develop a proposal for the work that can be done using the funds which were approved for Flood Damage Reduction.
- The Red Lake WD reported that Chuck Fritz, Administrator, resigned to accept a position with the Red River Basin Board. The District will be hiring the services of Brent Johnson, Houston Engineering, as a part-time interim administrator.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported that Dan Wilkins has been in contact with Brian Dwight and Bruce Sandstrom of the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) regarding the Vesledahl Mitigation Project. An easement is being developed to address the maintenance issues on the community ditch that travels through the middle of the project. The local landowners are concerned about future ditch maintenance. The District is trying to develop an easement that would require the future owner of the property (MnDNR) to address ditch maintenance issues.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that a public hearing has been scheduled for August 11, 2000 with landowners on the Lockhart Flood Storage Project. The proposed project involves the construction of a floodwater retention structure to reduce flows into Ditch 53, Main and the Marsh River.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the northern half of the District was blanketed with a 6-8 inch rainfall on June 20th. Starting with the Red River, the coverage extended east into the Callaway area. An all time record was set on the Buffalo River at the Hawley gage. The flooding has overloaded the district office with phone calls regarding drainage problems. Several petitions are being circulated for drainage improvements and the transfer of the county ditch systems to the BRRWD. Several landowners have expressed an interest in off-channel retention sites on their property.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that repair of Traverse County Ditch #27 is underway. The contractor began work on July 17th and it is anticipated that the repair will be completed in approximately six to eight

weeks. Traverse County, in conjunction with the City of Wheaton, is considering using up to 20,000 cubic yards for the purposes of covering demolition debris at the local demolition site. This would be a welcome addition to the project if it can be collected at the locations of the side inlets to the ditch.

Financial Coordinator Report – Dick Nelson

Dick Nelson stated that he had been in contact with Tom Raster-USACE regarding federal funding. He noted that Raster had indicated that funds could be carried over to the next year, however, a self-imposed deadline of January 2001 has been imposed. He cautioned the RRWMB that should previous funds not be expended, it would be difficult to obtain additional funding in the future.

Nelson stated that he is trying to facilitate coordination in St. Paul between the USACE and NRCS. He noted that no new starts for projects are occurring with the USACE since the Challenge 21 Program did not get funded in this year's legislation. He added that the funds associated with the 206 program have been expended also. He stated that the only cities that obtained funding from the USACE during this year's congressional legislative session included: Ada – \$450,000; Breckenridge - \$900,000; and Montevideo – \$100,000.

Nelson explained that he is trying to schedule a meeting in August with Chuck Christ-USACE in order to discuss re-prioritization within the USACE. Maynard Pick noted that such a meeting could be very beneficial.

Nelson suggested that some watershed districts should consider phasing projects in order to ensure that state funds would be expended. Ogaard noted that the extra funding needed for the environmental enhancements to projects are not available.

Manager Wilkens stated that approximately \$5.575 million in state funding is available and inquired about the actual funds needed by various projects. Ogaard agreed that projects should be separated into phases. Nelson added that projects should be divided into phases by next spring in order to plan for construction to begin next summer.

Nelson stated that he has met with the BdSWD project team regarding the North Ottawa Project and added that he needs to meet with the other watershed districts that received legislative funding. He noted that he would try to schedule a meeting with the USACE sometime in late August and added that he would meet with the other project teams prior to that date.

Manager Wilkens stated that checks were prepared for the BRRWD for \$400,000 for the Deerhorn Creek Project and for the WRWD for \$200,000 for the Dalen Coulee Project. Manager Nelson stated that the contracts had been signed for the Deerhorn Creek Project and that construction is scheduled to begin on August 30, 2000. Bennett noted that he had discussed extending the timeline for the Dalen Coulee Project with the Flood Damage Reduction work group. Bennett added that the WRWD is short approximately \$300,000 in order to construct the entire project. Wilkens noted that the funds for the Dalen Coulee Project would need to be held by the RRWMB until the contract is awarded by the WRWD.

Allocation of RRWMB Funds to Legislative Funded Projects

Ogaard stated that a process to develop a timeline for projects that obtained legislative funds has begun. He noted that the projects to be monitored include North Ottawa, Hay Creek, Thief River WD, and Helgeland.

Roseau River WD Work Plan – Brian Dwight

Dwight stated that the work plan for the update of the comprehensive watershed management plan for the Roseau River WD (RRWD) has begun. He noted that the plan identifies problem areas and discusses

alternatives. He added that a hydrologic model is also being prepared and that funds have been secured through the USACE Section 22 program for approximately \$27,500. He stated that the modeling effort would also address the Canadian portion. He noted that the USACE funds of \$27,500 require a match and added that this amount has been included in the budget.

Dwight discussed the development of the Roseau River International WD and explained that this group will identify issues outside of the RRWD.

Dwight noted that the RRWD will utilize a facilitator provided by the Flood Damage Reduction work group and funded by BWSR and the Extension Service. He added that the estimated cost of plan development is approximately \$202,800. He reviewed the payment schedule and submitted a funding request to the RRWMB in the amount of \$22,815 which represents 50% completion of the plan. **Motion** by Manager Johnson to authorize \$22,815, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Dwight stated that the next watershed districts scheduled for comprehensive watershed management plan updates are the Joe River WD, Two Rivers WD, and the Red Lake WD.

Dwight discussed the Helgeland project of the Middle River-Snake River WD relative to the temporary storage of water issue on CRP. He stated that following the previous Flood Damage Reduction work group meeting, he contacted NRCS regarding this issue. He noted that temporary storage of water would be considered a change in the management plan. He added that a similar issue relates to the Lockhart project of the Wild Rice WD. He requested Maynard Pick to follow up on the Lockhart site.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had met earlier and discussed continuing the funding for USGS gages within the Red River Basin. He explained that the USACE is the major federal contributor for stream gages but they are cutting back due to budget cuts. He noted that the average cost is \$10,000 per year to operate a gage and the cost increases approximately 3% per year per gage. The TAC determined that the primary interest in maintaining these gages should be federal or state. He added that gages are also important for monitoring water quality and indicated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) could be contacted as a potential funding source.

Ogaard added that a meeting has been scheduled with USGS on August 24, 2000 regarding this issue. He stated that the RRWMB has both Minnesota and North Dakota contracts with the USGS for gaging stations. He noted that USGS is attempting to consolidate the contracts into one package for the Red River Basin in order to maintain a consistent gaging network.

Thul stated that the TAC also reviewed the Step II submittal for the Lockhart project of the WRWD. He explained that the TAC determined that a formal operating plan should be developed for the project. He added that previous discussions regarding project operation have been to open the gate 50% and set it there for spring operation and then open it up completely for summer operation. He explained that the reason would be to minimize bounce on the wetlands during the summer months. He noted that the TAC determined that as a project the gate could be operated to maximize flood benefits, however, the current structure is considered non-gated. He added that the TAC recommends that the WRWD develop a formal operating plan to maximize operation to coincide with the mediation agreement which would maximize flood control benefits.

Adrian added that the Lockhart project is very expensive relative to comparing detention time with the cost of the project. Thul noted that the benefits are primarily local since the project is non-gated.

Anderson recommended that should the WRWD not plan to operate a gate, then a device should not be installed that is considered a gate. He noted that the project could be operated as a fixed outlet. St. Germain added that the current structure should not be considered a gate.

Thul stated that Adrian has developed a spreadsheet to calculate the STAR value method. He explained that eventually all projects constructed with RRWMB funding will be included on a spreadsheet for comparative purposes.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) Joint Conference on Engineering and Planning

Ogaard stated that he had been invited to participate in a Joint Conference on Engineering and Planning on July 30th to August 2nd. A presentation on the mediation process is on the program with a panel consisting of himself, Miller, Harnack, and Eppich.

B) Governing Documents Distribution to Board Members

Ogaard stated that the governing documents publication has been completed and he is in the process of distributing copies to each watershed district office. He added that he would schedule meetings with each individual watershed district and attend board meetings along with two other representatives from the RRWMB to discuss the publication and answer questions.

C) ND/MN Summer Tour

Ogaard stated that he had contacted individuals from North Dakota regarding a summer tour and it was agreed to schedule the tour for September 15, 2000. He noted that arrangements had been made for buses and a tour brochure had been developed. He added that the tour would begin in East Grand Forks and include the following sites: Parnell Impoundment, Shirrick Dam, Angus-Oslo, Proposed Helgeland, Proposed PL 566, and ring dikes in Alvarado.

Ogaard stated that a letter would be forwarded to each watershed district regarding the tour and inquired whether additional individuals should be invited to attend. Manager Osowski suggested inviting county commissioners. Manager Johnson concurred with Osowski.

D) Draft Paper on Member WD's Interest Charges on FDR Projects

Ogaard distributed a handout regarding member watershed districts' interest charges during project development. Two options were considered. Option A stated that interest may be charged for deficit expenditures and added to project costs equal to the weighted average annual interest rate received on the districts' investment accounts. Option B stated that reimbursement for interest would not be allowed for project development. He noted that the original legislation regarding the RRWMB levy allows the individual watershed district collecting the levy to keep half of the funds received for the development of projects.

E) Annual Reports

Ogaard explained that an additional 100 copies are needed of the annual reports recently published. Manager Wilkens noted that the cost to publish an additional 100 copies would be \$375.00.

Motion by Manager Nelson to authorize the publishing of an additional 100 copies of the annual report, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

District's Funding Requests:

1. **Middle River-Snake River WD / Public Law 566 Project, Step II Submittal:**

Adrian distributed a Step II submittal to the board for consideration. He stated that the District is continuing to establish the Snake River PL 566 Project. The first hearing has been conducted and the environmental review process has begun. Appraisers have been appointed and are in the process of determining the benefits and damages. The final hearing is expected to be conducted early this fall. The project consists of two portions which includes a floodway and an impoundment. Funding was requested for a portion of the impoundment only. The project is being considered as a package and either both portions will be constructed or neither will be constructed.

2. **Wild Rice River WD / Lockhart Township Runoff Storage Project / Step II Submittal:**

A tour of the Wild Rice WD Lockhart Township Runoff Storage Project was conducted following lunch.

Bennett stated that the Step I and Step II submittals were combined for the project. He explained that a public hearing is scheduled for August.

Motion by Manager Erickson to approve the Step I and Step II submittals and funding request of \$100,000, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, Discussion followed.

Manager Finney referred to the TAC's recommendation that an operating plan be developed prior to project approval. Ogaard noted that the recommendation from the TAC was a suggestion for the WRWD to consider.

Jacobson noted that the project team had disagreed about the size of culverts to install and also the two-foot bounce criteria for the project. Bennett noted that the storage component of the project is a local issue and added that this is the first project designed utilizing the criteria established in the mediation agreement.

Manager Finney suggested that the project include a gated structure with an operating plan. He noted that the addition of a gate could significantly increase the benefits of the project and would incorporate the recommendations of the TAC.

Ogaard stated that the issue of gated vs. non-gated is a major issue for the RRWMB. Jacobson stated that by utilizing a gated structure, the efficiency of the project would increase by approximately 15%.

Thul noted that the local share of the project includes \$50,000 to be paid through assessments and inquired about the District's portion. Bennett agreed that the local costs would be paid through assessments and added that the District's portion would try to be funded through the RIM program.

Bennett stated that the project was initiated using ditch law under the repair statute. Adrian inquired about how the repair procedure was initiated. Bennett responded that new language was adopted for the legislation that allowed for using funds from outside sources.

As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. Those voting in favor of the motion included: Erickson, Solberg, Osowski, Johnson, Wilkens, Nelson, and Deal. Those opposing the motion included: Finney. **Motion carried**.

Alternative meeting dates were discussed in order to schedule the meeting following a meeting in St. Paul with the USACE. **Motion** by Manager Finney to reschedule the regular monthly meeting of the RRWMB for August 22, 2000, at 9:30 a.m. at the Warren City Hall, Warren, Minnesota, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant