

# Red River Watershed Management Board

705 Fifth Street West Ada, MN 56510 Phone: (218)784-4156, Fax: (218)784-2015

## 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

August 22, 2000

Warren City Hall, Warren, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, August 22, 2000, at the Warren City Hall, Warren, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Farrell Erickson Harlan Solberg  
Vernon Johnson Daniel Wilkens  
Robert Wright Curtis Nelson

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director  
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD  
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Rick St. Germain, 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  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering  
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD  
Jim Moench, Executive Director-Red River Basin Board  
Larry Kramka, Regional Hydrologist, DNR-Waters

No additional items were added to the agenda.

The minutes of the July 25, 2000 meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. **Motion** to approve the minutes as written by Manager Solberg, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **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 Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

**Budget for Projecting Expense Allocations**

Ogaard stated that the board should discuss whether a budget should be prepared to assist with projecting expense allocations of tax levy funds. He added that he has received numerous inquiries from various individuals regarding whether an annual budget is prepared by the RRWMB.

Manager Osowski noted that it would be very difficult to develop an accurate budget. Manager Wilkens concurred with Osowski and noted that although the operating expenses would remain relatively constant from year to year, it would be impossible to predict the funds needed to fund projects and/or programs that could arise during the year.

Ogaard suggested that a policy statement could be developed to the effect that the RRWMB has control over funding through authorization conducted at board meetings. He noted that he would prepare a statement for the board to review at the next monthly meeting.

**IFMI Proposal for Basin-wide Water Issue Governance**

Ogaard distributed a handout he developed regarding the flood damage reduction portion of proposals to be considered by the International Flood Mitigation Initiative (IFMI). He explained that the initiative is nearing the end and noted that a position statement was needed in order to outline the issues addressed by the group. He requested board members to review the draft and forward their comments to him.

Manager Osowski inquired whether the position statement would be presented to IFMI. Ogaard responded that he had forwarded copies of the draft to members of IFMI for their review.

Ogaard added that IFMI is addressing the governance sector of the Red River Basin and inquired whether the Red River Basin Board (RRBB) had a position on this issue. Jim Moench-RRBB responded that the board would consider a position at the September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Moench noted that the RRBB has developed a response relative to the governance proposal of IFMI. Moench stated that the RRBB endorses the concept of the IFMI proposal to create a commission that would meet on a periodic basis to address flood mitigation issues along with the development of a steering committee to report to the commission. Moench added that the RRBB is proposing that the RRBB act as the steering committee since they have the knowledge, commitment, diversity, and grassroots support to best represent water issues in the Red River Basin.

Ogaard explained that the RRWMB needs to develop a position regarding the governance proposal of IFMI in order for him to distribute the position statement at the next IFMI meeting.

Manager Wilkens stated that he supports the position of the RRBB. He inquired about the North Dakota Consensus Council (NDCC) not supporting the initiatives of the RRBB. Ogaard noted that the purpose of IFMI was to develop a Red River Basin authority similar to that of the Chesapeake Bay Commission or the Rhine Commission. Moench noted that each of those commissions operates with a "top-down" authority rather than the grassroots strategy of the RRBB.

**Motion** by Manager Erickson to support the RRBB's response to the governance proposal of IFMI, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**.

**Executive Director Report** – Don Ogaard

**A) Flood Damage Reduction Paper**

Ogaard stated that this issue had been discussed earlier during the meeting.

**B) Project Development Interest Charges**

Ogaard distributed a handout regarding member watershed districts' interest charges during project development. He stated that comments were received on the handout distributed at the previous monthly meeting and a few minor changes had been incorporated.

Manager Wilkens noted that he supported Option (C), which requires member watershed districts to utilize their own construction account (1/2 RRWMB Levy) for project development and not allow any reimbursement for interest. Manager Osowski concurred with Wilkens and noted that should Option (C) be adopted that no interest would be charged to watershed districts receiving an advance or by watershed districts carrying deficit accounts.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to adopt Option (C), **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, Discussion followed.

Manager Nelson stated that the BRRWD had reviewed the position paper at their regular monthly meeting and agreed to support Option (A). Manager Johnson noted his opposition to watershed districts receiving advances of funds since they would have the ability to earn interest on these funds. Manager Osowski stated that normally advances are authorized by the RRWMB to watershed districts that would need to immediately expend the funds.

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

**Motion carried.**

**C) Red River Basin Board (RRBB) Flood Damage Reduction Inventory Report (Draft)**

Ogaard explained that the information regarding the Flood Damage Reduction Inventory Report was not available at this time. He stated that he would report on the issue when the information becomes available.

**D) ND/MN Summer Tour**

Ogaard stated that the North Dakota/Minnesota Summer Tour is scheduled for September 15, 2000. He noted that a letter had been forwarded to each watershed district office regarding the tour and requested that all responses regarding the number of attendees be forwarded to him no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that Farrell Erickson-Chairman and Rob Sando-Administrator attended a meeting on August 21<sup>st</sup> in St. Paul with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the status of the Hay Creek Project.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that survey work has been completed through the City of Kennedy and a preliminary plan is being developed by JOR Engineering for the Kennedy #6 Project. The city will move forward with the portion of the work through town once the work plan is complete which will include dirt quantities, bridge replacements, and channel work. The project will be funded by disaster funds received from the DNR and the Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) from the 1997 flood. The

channel work through the city is part of a larger watershed project for which a ditch petition has been received which will route water from upstream Kittson County Ditch #4 through town and outlet into the downstream Kittson County Ditch #27.

- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 Project (Snake River Watershed). The comment period for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) prepared in conjunction with the DNR expired on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The preparation of the appraiser's report continues along with the final plans by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- The Red Lake WD reported that at the board meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> the Board of Managers voted not to do a full repair or spot cleaning of State Ditch #83.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported that the board authorized cattail and brush spraying on all ditches within the jurisdiction of the District. Helicopters will be used where access is limited and the remainder will be contracted with Polk County.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Board of Managers and residents from the Perley area in Norman County heard a "what if" scenario at the August monthly meeting that outlined the affects that a main stem dam would have had on the 2000 summer flood. Information on the flooded area was developed with the assistance of landowners and identified 45,000 acres that were inundated in this area from the recent flood event. The damaged area was greater than that in 1997 when 33,000 acres were flooded.

The computer model developed for the Wild Rice River showed that if a main stem retention project had been in place that held an equal amount of water as the proposed Twin Valley dam project, it would have resulted in a substantially reduced flood event. In the eastern portion of the flooded area, it was estimated that the acres flooded would have been reduced from 10,000 acres to 1,000. Downstream the project would have reduced flooding from 35,000 acres to 20,000 acres. Issues that remain to be addressed include local support, agency approval and funding.

- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that on August 15<sup>th</sup> the Clay County Board of Commissioners transferred Clay County Ditch Nos. 11, 21, 36, 53, and 58 to the District. The week of August 14<sup>th</sup> the District received improvement and lateral establishment petitions for Clay County Ditch No. 59. The filing of these petitions will also transfer jurisdiction from the County to the District.

The pre-construction meeting was conducted on August 18<sup>th</sup> regarding the Deerhorn Creek Levees Project. The contractor is scheduled to begin work the week of August 21<sup>st</sup>. All necessary permits have been obtained.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the North Ottawa Project is moving forward at a fast pace. The District will submit a revised Step I submittal to the RRWMB at the August meeting for consideration. It is anticipated that the project will be constructed in phases as the funds become available.

#### **Financial Coordinator Report** – Dick Nelson

Nelson stated that he attended a meeting conducted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in St. Paul on August 21, 2000. Others in attendance were representatives from the USACE, DNR, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA). Others representing WD's included Don Ogaard, Jon Roeschlein, Farrell

Erickson, Rob Sando, and Ray Bohn. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss funding commitments of the USACE.

Nelson stated that the USACE Challenge 21 Program did not get funded in this year's congressional legislative session, and should it get funded next year the funds would not become available until 2003. He stated that a planning effort should be initiated that would allow for phasing in the construction of projects. He noted that the only expenses that could be included for the local cost share requirement would be lands, easements, right-of-way, and required disposal sites (LERRDS). He suggested that an attempt could be made to pass legislation that would allow the total amount of current funds expended to be included in the local cost share requirement.

Nelson explained that possibly the remaining discretionary funds could be earmarked, however, he had not yet done a "side-by-side" to determine the amount of funds remaining. He cautioned the board that when reviewing the earmarkings on a side-by-side, the Senate and the House could have totally different projects earmarked.

Nelson noted that with regard to lobbying for the remaining discretionary funds, this issue could be discussed in Washington, D.C. He stated that he would be in the capitol on September 11-17, 2000 for issues relating to the City of Warren and added that he could address issues of concern to the RRWMB during that time also.

Nelson stated that he would contact Dave Gwaltney regarding the reconnaissance study. He added that CARA funds to be used for environmental purposes have not passed congress yet. He explained that CARA funds are federal funds divided up among the states based on shoreline and that Minnesota could receive a significant amount of this funding due to the amount of shoreline attributed to Lake Superior. He noted that should CARA funds be passed at the federal level, the funds would be directly allocated to the state through the DNR. He stated that these funds could be used for implementing environmental enhancements to flood damage reduction projects.

Nelson noted that he received notification that Senator Rod Grams would like to schedule a meeting in Anoka with some of the individuals that attended the meeting on August 21<sup>st</sup> with the USACE to receive an update. He added that he also has an appointment scheduled with Rep. Collin Peterson to discuss the outcomes of the meeting.

Nelson referred to a handout outlining the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) priority listing. He explained that the Hay Creek project of the Roseau River WD is ranked as no. 2 on the priority list. He suggested that prior to year-end, the RRWMB should identify the projects that would be eligible to apply for state funding in the upcoming year and requested that information from the individual watershed districts be developed regarding state and federal cost share estimates.

Ogaard added that Lokkesmoe had indicated at the meeting with the USACE that when federal funds are lacking, legislative funds are needed from the state.

Anderson noted the difficulty in estimating federal cost share amounts for projects. Nelson inquired whether the DNR had a process for estimating federal cost share funds. Larry Kramka, DNR Regional Hydrologist, responded that perhaps a USACE coefficient could be obtained from previous federal projects that have been completed.

Bennett referred to the Wild Rice/Marsh River study which involved USACE participation. He stated that often times when the USACE is involved in a project, the WD no longer determines how the project is developed, designed, or constructed. He suggested trying to pursue federal funds through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for the land and structural components of a project.

Ogaard stated that deadlines need to be established for projects in order to determine which ones are progressing. He suggested that projects could be divided into component parts and constructed in phases.

Manager Wilkens suggested establishing the December board meeting as a deadline for submitting Step II applications to the RRWMB. Ogaard added that the FDR work group also has influence regarding the disbursement of state funds. Nelson noted that in order for projects to be eligible for 75/25 cost share, projects must proceed from the project teams, to the watershed districts, to the RRWMB and finally the FDR work group. Ogaard noted that a project development worksheet was prepared by the RRWMB regarding the sequence of events and forwarded to member watershed districts.

Adrian inquired about how individual watershed districts that were approved by the legislature for state funding would apply for the funds. Nelson responded that the individual watershed districts should contact Ed Fick-DNR regarding the documentation necessary to receive state funds.

Anderson inquired about which phase in the Step Process would the project have to receive approval by the RRWMB prior to forwarding it to the FDR work group for approval. Ogaard responded that a project would need to receive Step II approval from the RRWMB before proceeding to the FDR work group.

Anderson inquired whether the FDR work group would fund engineering costs. Ogaard responded that preliminary engineering costs are eligible for reimbursement up to 75% of costs incurred with a \$20,000 maximum allowed.

Manager Osowski inquired whether the Helgeland project could be submitted to the FDR work group for consideration of engineering cost reimbursement after receiving Step I approval from the RRWMB. Ogaard responded that after receiving Step I approval, a project could be forwarded to the FDR work group for engineering reimbursement. Ogaard added that an estimate of engineering costs could be provided to the FDR work group with the actual bills presented at a later date for payment.

Adrian inquired whether the four watershed district projects that received state funding could submit project development expenditures for reimbursement. Ogaard responded that these costs would be eligible for reimbursement.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to establish the December 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting as the deadline to assign the projects that will move forward or reallocation of the legislative funds will occur, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson. Discussion followed.

Roeschlein inquired about the criteria to be included when submitting a project to the RRWMB by the December deadline. Ogaard stated that the Step II submittal includes total project costs, components parts, and a schedule of completion over a time frame which should be included with the information presented to the RRWMB by the December deadline.

St. Germain inquired whether Step II approval must be obtained prior to the December deadline. Ogaard responded that should all the necessary information be provided, Step II approval would not be necessary.

Adrian inquired about how many of the projects approved for legislative funds that would be ready for construction next year. Anderson responded that North Ottawa could be ready for construction, along with one area of Thief River.

Thul stated that the motion would require that a Step II submittal be forwarded by the December board meeting. Ogaard concurred that all of the requirements would be met should a Step II submittal be developed.

Ogaard inquired whether Managers Wilkens and Johnson would agree to modify the original language of the motion to include that a Step II submittal be forwarded to the RRWMB by the December deadline. Managers Wilkens and Johnson agreed with the above-mentioned modification.

As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. **Motion passed.**

Bennett stated that the priority for hazard mitigation funding is for land acquisition. He noted that the WRWD would like to pursue mitigation funding to evaluate a flooded area in Perley. He inquired whether there are any funds remaining for hazard mitigation. Nelson responded that he would check into whether any remaining funds exist for hazard mitigation.

### **Red River Coordinator/TAC Report**

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had met earlier and discussed the STAR value calculation for the PL 566 project. He distributed a copy to the board for review. He noted that the TAC continues to work on expanding a spreadsheet of all the projects constructed utilizing RRWMB funds. Adrian referred to the last sentence in the last paragraph on Page 1 and noted that where it refers to the gated detention time of 24.6 *hours*, the correct time period should be 24.6 *days*.

Thul noted that the preparation of the STAR value calculation is a required procedure for the prioritization worksheet and inquired whether the calculation should be completed for each project as it is presented to the RRWMB. Ogaard responded that the calculation should be completed for each project. Ogaard also requested that the TAC develop a chart outlining the progress of projects through the Step Process of the RRWMB.

Thul noted that the TAC had prepared information for a meeting scheduled for August 24, 2000 with USGS regarding gaging stations. Ogaard added that USGS is attempting to consolidate the Minnesota and North Dakota contracts into one package for the Red River Basin in order to maintain a consistent gaging network. Manager Wilkens stated that, as Treasurer, he would be interested in attending the meeting in order to ensure ease of accountability for future contracts.

Thul introduced Larry Kramka as the new area regional hydrologist for the DNR. Kramka stated his interest in working in the Red River basin. Kramka discussed the contract with the State of Minnesota for a cost share with the RRWMB relative to the renewal of the Red River Coordinator position. The coordinator position is funded by the two agencies as follows: 70% DNR and 30% RRWMB. The RRWMB's 30% cost share is \$24,000 per year.

Manager Wilkens inquired about the benefit of the position to the DNR. Kramka responded that the DNR is committed towards the same goal of managing water issues in the Red River basin as is the RRWMB. Kramka added that the position facilitates communication between the two organizations.

**Motion** to renew the Red River Coordinator position contract for another one-year term by Manager Erickson, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**.

### **District's Funding Requests:**

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

Adrian distributed copies of the Step II submittal to the board. In the absence of John Finney-Vice President, President Osowski turned the meeting over to Farrell Erickson-Secretary who asked for a motion. **Motion** by Manager Osowski to approve the Step II submittal for the PL 566 project, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**. Manager Erickson returned the chair to President Osowski.

2. **Bois de Sioux WD / North Ottawa / Step I Submittal Revision:**

Roeschlein distributed copies of the revision to the Step I submittal to the board for review.

Ogaard inquired whether the BdSWD owns land outside of the project area that could be traded for other land. Roeschlein responded that the district does own excess land that would be used for trade.

Roeschlein stated that the project team has a meeting scheduled on August 28, 2000 to discuss the possibility of constructing the project in phases. A final hearing for the project will be scheduled sometime in November.

**Deerhorn Creek Levees Update**

Manager Nelson stated that the contractor, Doboszinski & Sons, started construction on Monday, August 21, 2000. Ogaard inquired whether the project would be completed during this year. Nelson responded that the project would be constructed this year, with seeding to be completed next spring.

Alternative meeting dates were discussed in order to avoid a scheduling conflict. Dick Nelson suggested that the RRWMB conduct the next monthly meeting in Roseau in order to tour the Hay Creek project area. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to reschedule the regular monthly meeting of the RRWMB for September 26, 2000, at 9:30 a.m. at the Roseau River Watershed District office, Roseau, Minnesota, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Farrell Erickson  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant