

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

April 11, 2001

Houston Engineering, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota

The RRWMB met on Wednesday, April 11, 2001, at Houston Engineering, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

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

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Ron Adrian, Administrator, Middle River-Snake River WD
Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office

No additional items were added to the agenda.

Motion by Manager Deal to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the March 20, 2001 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**. **Motion** by Manager Deal to approve the minutes as written, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

Manager Wilkens distributed a financial report. He explained that since the bank statements did not arrive in time for Jagol to prepare the Treasurer's Report prior to her vacation, a complete report will be presented at the next monthly meeting.

Motion to approve and pay bills by Manager Finney, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

Report on Red River Basin Board (RRBB) Retreat

Don Ogaard and Dan Wilkens reported on the RRBB retreat conducted on April 5-6, 2001 in Morris, MB. The majority of the retreat was utilized to develop and prioritize the mission and direction of activity for the organization. A summary of the extensive discussion will be published and made available to interested parties. It was determined that final decisions would be made by the Executive Committee. Information on goals and objectives regarding reduction of flows on the Red River was discussed. It was agreed that the board would proceed with the hiring of an Executive Director. A study of the Red River Valley which would include North Dakota, Canada, and Minnesota was discussed as well as the importance of all participants to proceed in a similar direction.

RRWMB Office/Executive Director Transition

The Board discussed information on employee hiring requirements. Ogaard distributed a letter from Doug Thomas, Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), which stated that the RRWMB would be under no obligation to advertise for the position. The different types of status for employees were discussed including “at will” versus “regular” employee. The issue of compensation was discussed and was a concern to some board managers. It was agreed that in order to address questions from the individual watershed districts, a breakdown of costs from the current arrangement with the Sand Hill River WD office should be developed, and compared to the costs associated with the new employee position and forwarded to each WD for review.

Financial Coordinator Report

There was no progress report available on legislative funding initiatives.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had met earlier and reviewed a list of TSAC study proposals and cost estimates. The TAC discussed concerns with the RRWMB as to how technical studies are being proposed for funding by the work group. Some of the individual TSAC members promote studies with little or no direction from the work group.

Ogaard noted that he would like to see FDR project performance criteria developed and incorporated into all monitoring plans developed by the TSAC. The TAC discussed the need for this type of monitoring. Ogaard added that there is significant pressure from outside interests to document the value and flood damage reduction effectiveness of these projects. St. Germain and Anderson, as members of TSAC, offered their assistance along with Johnson in an attempt to incorporate these concerns into any monitoring plans developed by the TSAC.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) Report on trip to “National Watershed Conference”

Ogaard stated that he agreed to attend the conference and speak on “Flooding – a Red River Basin Heritage.” The total cost for the trip is estimated to be approximately \$1,150 - \$1,200 including airfare and motel.

B) Report on the March 29th RRBFDROWG Meeting

Ogaard explained that the work group approved \$20,000 for final engineering to the Wild Rice WD for the Dalen Coulee project. Proposals for project monitoring were received and discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2001 at the Holiday Inn, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Manager Wilkens noted that each project team should prepare cost estimates for the work group for their next meeting in order to receive up to \$20,000 in reimbursement.

C) Annual Report Distribution

Ogaard distributed copies of the 2000 Annual Report. Board managers of the individual watershed districts were requested to obtain the desired number of copies and distribute them to the district offices.

D) Report on Third Annual Joint Conference

Ogaard stated that several positive comments were received regarding the conference. He added that recommendations for next year's conference included additional manager participation and county commissioner attendance.

E) USGS Letter

Ogaard distributed a letter received from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) regarding the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP). The letter stated that additional services could be provided by NSIP such as more intensive data collection and analysis during major floods and droughts, periodic regional assessments of streamflow characteristics, enhanced delivery of streamflow information, and methods development and research on the acquisition and understanding of streamflow information.

District Reports

- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that the development of the Public Law 566 project continues. The appraiser's report is being prepared and should be completed this month. The preparation of the plan for Phase II by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has been completed. The second hearing for the project will be conducted sometime in May of 2001 with a Step III submittal forwarded to the RRWMB at their regular May meeting.
- The Red Lake WD reported that due to recent rainfall and the subsequent runoff, the staff has been extremely busy monitoring river gages and impoundment levels. Some flooding did occur on the Red Lake River and the river levels in Crookston got dangerously high due to an ice jam. Voluntary evacuation was recommended and additional sandbags were provided. Rivers were monitored daily, either manually or on the Internet, where there were automated gages. Most of the tributaries crested on April 8, 2001 and are slowly receding.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on flooding for the spring of 2001. Flooding has reached levels equal to the flood of 1997 in some areas of the watershed. Compared to floods over the past century, flows on the Wild Rice River put the flood of 2001 on the list of the top 5 floods of record. Emergency flood procedures for the operation of flood control projects were put in place during the week of April 2nd. Much of the damage is being mitigated due to flood protection efforts put in place since the 1997 flood. The District will begin the work of assessing the damages on projects and ditches once the floodwaters recede.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District received their first report regarding spring flooding on March 21, 2001. The majority of the problems are with county ditch systems that are not opening. Given the fact that average snowfall occurred during the winter, these problems were not expected. Part of the

problems could be caused by ditches that froze last winter with standing water. The 1.5 inches of rainfall that occurred on 4/07/01 exacerbated the problems. As of 4/09/01, most of the county ditch systems were open. The majority of the runoff is going down in the eastern 2/3 of the District. Additional rains or runoff will create more problems along the major outlets such as the Buffalo and Red Rivers. Depending on what happens along the Red River in Moorhead, the District has enough damages on their projects and county ditch systems that a FEMA disaster claim could be warranted.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the first funding was received from the State of Minnesota for the North Ottawa Project. The District will be moving forward with appraisals and negotiations on the land and doing additional surveys, working towards the final design.

District's Funding Requests:

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on May 15, 2001, at 9:30 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, Warren, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant