

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

October 16, 2001

Wild Rice Watershed District , Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, October 16, 2001, 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 Robert Wright
Curtis Nelson Jerome Deal

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator
Naomi Jagol, Associate Director
Ron Adrian, Administrator, Middle River-Snake River WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
April Swenby, Sand Hill River WD
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD
Dale M. Nelson, Red Lake WD

An additional item was added to the agenda to be included after item no. 10 regarding a bus tour of the Roseau River International Watershed (RRIW).

Motion by Manager Finney to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the September 18, 2001 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**. **Motion** by Manager Finney to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. Manager Wilkens discussed the procedures utilized relative to administering the grant for the Water Quality Monitoring project. He stated that the board agreed to act as the fiscal agent for the project and, in doing so, is responsible for disbursing payroll checks and reimbursements to the employees hired in conjunction with the grant. He noted that the pay periods end on the 15th and 31st of each month. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to authorize salaries to be paid twice a month, with expenses to be submitted at the regular monthly meetings for authorization, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **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 Erickson, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Financial Coordinator Report

D. Nelson reported that the groundbreaking ceremony for the Public Law 566 project in Warren has been scheduled for October 26, 2001.

D. Nelson explained that the Governor's budget has approximately \$14.5 million for flood damage reduction at this time. A problem has arisen due to the significant federal match dollars needed by both the cities of East Grand Forks and Warren. The city of East Grand Forks requires approximately \$12 million, while Warren requires just under \$5 million which leaves the state budget approximately \$2.5 million short. However, the Governor's budget does have \$15 million in flood damage reduction in the subsequent bonding years so the cash flow problem appears to be short term.

D. Nelson stated that he has been meeting with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Director Division of Waters regarding the designation of funds for RRBFDWRWG projects. Currently, no funds have been designated for a line item.

D. Nelson reported on the bus tour conducted by the RRBFDWRWG on October 3, 2001. The work group toured the PL 566 project, and also the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management project in Warren. The tour was scheduled to coincide with Deputy Commissioner Morse's visit to the City of Warren, as well as to compensate for the cancellation of the LCMR tour due to the statewide strike.

D. Nelson noted the significance of the proposed changes to the DNR rules regarding the 25-year drainage issue. He stated that the DNR is moving forward with the proposed change despite objections from MAWD, Minnesota Counties, and Minnesota Townships. The change involves an extension of the BWSR Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) rules which would make the DNR rules applicable to public waters and drains.

Manager Deal noted that the 25-year rule is currently being considered in the appellate court. He suggested that D. Nelson should be involved at the legislature by supporting the position of MAWD. D. Nelson stated that the official position of MAWD would be discussed at the annual meeting scheduled for November 29-30, 2001.

Motion by Manager Deal to authorize D. Nelson to support the position of MAWD, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

Report on Red River Basin Board (RRBB) October 4th Meeting

Manager Wilkens distributed a handout which included highlights of the previous monthly meeting of the RRBB. He discussed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which was being developed that involves incorporating the employees of the International Coalition with the staff of the RRBB. He noted that separate boards would be maintained for each organization, but all staff would be considered employees of the RRBB.

Report on RRBFDWRWG October 3rd Meeting

Ogaard stated that due to the cancellation of the LCMR tour scheduled for October 3rd, D. Nelson arranged for a bus tour with Deputy Commissioner Steve Morse which included a tour of PL 566 project, and the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management project. Following the tour, the work group met in the City Council chambers in Warren. The agenda included consideration of the Middle River-Snake River WD's final engineering reimbursement request of \$20,000 for the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management project. Following a lengthy discussion, the engineering grant was finally authorized. The work group then returned to Crookston to conclude the meeting.

Ogaard reported that a progress report was presented by Jody Horntvedt on the individual project teams. An analysis has been completed on the project teams of the Two Rivers, Middle River-Snake River, and Wild Rice watershed districts. The analysis identified the importance of active discussion during the project team meetings, rather than small group discussions following the meetings.

Ogaard stated that a presentation was conducted on the Felton Ditch and Felton Water Retention projects. Preliminary funding requests were submitted for both projects, however, the work group determined that essentially the two projects should be considered as one and granted only one preliminary engineering grant of \$20,000.

Bennett explained that the Wild Rice WD project team was trying to conduct an exercise relative to planning a flood damage reduction project and natural resource enhancement project simultaneously. He stated that often when natural resource enhancements are incorporated into projects established primarily for flood damage reduction, neither goal is adequately accomplished.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) hasn't met for the previous two months due to the time constraints of the members. He added that a meeting would be scheduled once an issue has been directed to the TAC for consideration by the RRWMB.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) Review Previous Financial Projection

Ogaard distributed a summary of the committed and pending funding requests submitted to the board for projects and programs. He stated that an update is needed in order to determine available funds.

B) Board of Managers Participation in Project Teams

Ogaard encouraged more of an active role of managers on the individual project teams. However, he suggested that members of RRBFDWG should be ineligible for project team membership. He noted that the manager appointed by the board of managers to the project team must represent the watershed district as a whole, rather than focusing only on local interests.

C) Request WD's to Voluntarily Rescind Non-progressing Step I Applications

Ogaard reported that he reviewed pending Step I applications with Dan Thul. A list of pending applications was obtained from the annual report. He suggested that a letter should be written to all the watershed districts listed with pending applications to determine the status of the projects.

Motion by Manager Deal to authorize Ogaard to forward a letter to all the watershed districts requesting them to rescind non-progressing Step I submittals, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**.

D) Distribute RRBFDWRWG Authorized “Natural Resource Efforts” Document

Ogaard distributed 2 copies per watershed district of the Natural Resource Efforts document prepared by the RRBFDWRWG.

Associate Director Report

Jagol reported that on October 2, 2001 she assisted Dan Wilkens and Gale Mayer in reviewing the FY00 and FY01 TSAC funds for the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (RRBFDWRWG). The current approval process for authorizing payment of TSAC expenses has proved to be cumbersome and, therefore, clarification was needed in order to determine whether expenses were categorized in the appropriate accounts.

On October 3, 2001 she attended the RRBFDWRWG meeting conducted at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN, which also included a bus tour of the PL 566 project and Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management project in Warren.

Jagol added that she and Dan Wilkens allocated the project team reimbursement expenses for FY01 and disbursed them to the individual watershed districts. Each project team was eligible to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred up to \$20,000, with \$10,000 maximum available for administrative costs and the remainder available for alternatives analysis.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that a bus tour has been scheduled for Friday, October 26, 2001 of the Roseau River Basin in Manitoba. The tour will begin in Rosa Hall (approximately 35 miles north of Lancaster) at 9:00 a.m.
- The Red Lake WD reported that Ryan Odenbach, Water Quality Coordinator, was accepted to participate in the River Watch program. Temporary assistance has been hired to assist Odenbach in this effort.

The District is proceeding with preliminary survey information for the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) Flood Storage Pilot Program. A proposed site has been identified with an aerial survey performed. Landowners have indicated acceptance for the project. Details concerning the structure and embankments have not yet been designed.

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that April Swenby accepted the position of Administrative Assistant. She assumed her new duties on October 1st. She and her husband, Aaron, are expecting their first child on October 30th.

The Lake Improvement District (LID) shut off the pump on Union Lake on August 21st at 2:00 p.m. Approximately 3.25 tenths were remaining in order to reach OHW. Lake Sarah was approximately 20 inches higher than Union Lake when the pump was shut off. The mitigation acres required to be purchased by the LID has been nearly completed.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the status of the Felton Ditch Off-Channel Storage project. A preliminary engineering grant request was approved by the RRBFDWRWG in October to assist with the development of the project. The project is designed to work in concert with future FDR projects identified as part of the WRWD overall plan to reduce flooding within the Lower Wild Rice River area. This area was identified as

a high priority area as part of the District's Systems Approach Planning Process (SAPP). The Lower Wild Rice River (LWRR) involves approximately 85,000 acres that have a high probability of flooding and consists of cultivated land in agricultural production.

The project is located in Felton Township northeast of the City of Felton. The project is intended to reduce flooding by the construction of a gated impoundment covering up to six sections of land. A bus tour of the project area will be conducted by the District following the conclusion of the RRWMB meeting on October 16th.

- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District is currently finalizing work with FEMA regarding the 2001 spring flood. It appears that the District will receive approximately 50% of the estimated damages. FEMA representatives indicated that ditch systems may no longer qualify for assistance due to the way the Drainage Law is written regarding apportionment of repair costs. This issue should be monitored by all watershed districts. Should FEMA be successful in exempting ditch systems from eligible disaster sites, the result could have a large economic impact to the Red River Basin.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the overall planning process continues to progress. Issues regarding the sub-watersheds of the District will be discussed at the next planning meeting scheduled for October 23rd. Dave Johnson, plan writer, will be submitting draft portions of the plan for review. A final draft of the plan will be presented to the Board of Managers in April 2002 and completed in June 2002.

District's Funding Requests:

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

Roseau River International Watershed (RRIW) Tour

Manager Erickson stated that a bus tour has been scheduled for Friday, October 26, 2001 of the Roseau River Basin in Manitoba. The tour will begin in Rosa Hall (approximately 35 miles north of Lancaster) at 9:00 a.m.

Erickson noted that the RRIW has been working diligently on a combined effort between Canada and the United States on promoting and conducting an international alliance between Manitoba and Minnesota, which would work towards the proper management of the resources of the watershed.

The next meeting will be on November 20, 2001, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District office, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Associate Director