

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

March 19, 2002

Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, March 19, 2002, at the Wild Rice Watershed District Office, Ada, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

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

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Naomi Erickson, Associate Director
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Dan Money, Administrator, Two Rivers WD
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD

An additional item was added to the agenda in the *District Reports* section by Manager Osowski regarding the May 15th deadline for the projects approved to receive legislative funding.

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 Nelson to approve the Treasurer's Report, **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 Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

RRBFDRWG/RRWMB March Conference

Ogaard stated that planning for the Fifth Annual Joint Conference begins immediately following this year's conference. He suggested combining the summer bus tour with the annual conference in an effort to obtain increased attendance. He noted the importance of selecting specific dates early in order that attendees can schedule the event on their calendars. Following discussion, the board determined that the conference should be scheduled the second week in June in order to avoid a scheduling conflict with the Minnesota Association of Watershed District's Summer Tour which occurs the third week in June.

Report on March 13-14, 2002 Red River Basin Board, The International Coalition, and Red River Water Resource Council Meeting

Ogaard reported that the Red River Basin Board, the International Coalition, and the Red River Water Resource Council consolidated into a new entity renamed the Red River Basin Commission. He noted that the new entity would request continued assistance from current funding sources.

Manager Finney inquired about the funding assistance received from Canada. Ogaard responded that the funding received from Manitoba is one-third of that received from the United States. Ogaard further added that although the square miles in each jurisdiction in the United States participating in the commission are much greater than that of Canada, the population areas of both countries are similar.

Manager Wilkens added that the structure of the new entity would be very different than that of the Red River Basin Board. He explained that the entire board would meet on a quarterly basis, while the executive board consisting of 10 members would meet monthly. The executive board will be comprised of the following: 3 elected from the entire membership, Manitoba-2, North Dakota-2, Minnesota-2, and South Dakota-1.

Manager Wilkens inquired about addressing the funding commitment of the RRWMB for the new entity. Manager Finney suggested waiting until a full board is in attendance.

Financial Coordinator Report

In the absence of D. Nelson, a handout was distributed on his behalf. The report stated that currently \$5 million is included in the House bonding bill of which the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project, Ross No. 7 Project, and the Hay Creek Project are included. Several attempts have been made to eliminate these projects in the bill, but have been defeated thus far.

The report also stated that \$28.5 million is in the Senate bonding bill which passed on February 18th. The Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management and North Ottawa Projects are included in this bill as well as the cities of Warren and East Grand Forks.

The RRBFDWRWG funding has remained at \$650,000 and ring dikes at \$250,000 in the budget bills. These funds appear to be safe at this time.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) District Court Case

Ogaard distributed a letter received from Dorsey & Whitney regarding the district court case of the RRWMB v. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Manager Deal suggested dismissing the case with prejudice as long as the state participates in mediation in order to protect legislative funding. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to dismiss the lawsuit, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

B) Summer Tour

Ogaard inquired whether there was any interest in participating in a summer bus tour with North Dakota. Following discussion, the board agreed that the bus tour should be conducted in conjunction with next year's Fifth Annual Joint Conference.

C) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Feasibility Study

Ogaard reported that he was in attendance at the last meeting conducted by the USACE regarding the feasibility study. He stated that he inquired at the meeting whether the comprehensive watershed planning initiatives conducted by the watershed districts in Minnesota would satisfy the local cost share portion of the study. The individuals in attendance at the meeting who conducted the study were unable to answer this question. Manager Deal indicated that he believed the current planning processes would satisfy this requirement, however, Jon Roeschlein was researching this issue further.

D) Prioritization of Future Project Funding

Ogaard stated that Section 9 of the Governing Documents includes a Project Prioritization Worksheet which shall be used by the board to determine the priority for funding of each proposed project. He explained that funding requests will become highly competitive in the future and that a guide is needed in order for districts to determine their eligibility. Manager Wilkens suggested that Ogaard develop criteria to be utilized in conjunction with the Project Prioritization Worksheet. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize Don Ogaard to develop a proposal for criteria, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

E) Associate Director Relocation

Ogaard stated that Naomi Erickson is considering a possible relocation of her residence. He noted that since nearly all of her duties are performed via telephone or email, the location of her home office should not be an issue of concern. Following discussion, the board agreed that Erickson would be free to live wherever she chooses in the Red River Basin and still maintain her position with the RRWMB.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting and discussed a draft report regarding flood damage reduction (FDR) strategies prepared by Charlie Anderson in conjunction with the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) of the RRBFDWRWG. The report included different techniques for FDR and their direct impact on the Red River mainstem relative to early, middle, and late flows.

Anderson noted that issue of drainage was included in the report and was justified as far as timing. The amount of acre-feet of storage needed within the Red River basin will be discussed in the report. Thul added that the individual project teams tend to focus on local damages and applying techniques to solve only local problems. Thul noted that the Red River basin as a whole also needs to be considered.

Associate Director Report

N. Erickson reported that a meeting was conducted on Tuesday, March 5, 2002 with Orren Bendickson, Bakke Insurance, Inc. regarding obtaining group health insurance sponsored by the RRWMB as a member of the Minnesota Service Cooperative. Bendickson explained at the meeting that since no employee/employer relationship exists between the member watershed districts and the RRWMB, at least 50 individuals would need to participate in order to recognize a cost savings and suggested that it would be more advantageous for the individual watershed districts that are interested in obtaining health insurance for one or two individuals to inquire about the availability of a Public Employee Insurance Plan (PEIP).

A meeting was conducted on Monday, March 11, 2002 with Richard Bendish, registered representative, Forrest T. Jones Consulting Company regarding the establishment of deferred compensation accounts for the employees. Erickson, Goeken, and Halvorson designated specific accounts to which their pre-tax dollars will be invested.

The 2001 audit was completed and the independent accountant's report has been received. The 2001 Annual Report is in the process of being prepared and will be distributed upon completion.

A letter was received from Jon Schauer, computer consultant, regarding his employment status. He is no longer employed by Cornerstone Development, and will now be working on his own. Erickson stated that since Schauer is very familiar with the accounting system he established in each of the participating watershed districts that the RRWMB continue to retain his services. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to retain the services of Jon Schauer, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is continuing the preliminary study (Section 206) on the Hay Creek Project. A preliminary engineering plan was scheduled to be completed by March 15th. Recently USACE representatives met with the Board of Managers to discuss the progress, costs, and timelines of the project.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that funding is being sought through the Minnesota legislature for the Ross No. 7 project. The project continues to be discussed by the project team. Permits will be submitted during the course of the summer months, with construction to begin in 2003.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 Project. The bid opening scheduled for March 14, 2002 for Phase II of the project was rescheduled to April 1, 2002 due to a late addendum which was issued regarding a change in estimated quantities. The preparation of the contract documents is underway for the installation of the three crossings which will be installed in Phase II. Work on Phase II is expected to begin early this summer and be completed in 2003.
- The Red Lake WD reported that a project has been proposed in the City of Bagley. A meeting was conducted on February 28th with representatives from the Soil & Water Conservation District, City of Bagley, Minnesota Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in attendance. Land acquisition is currently being pursued.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the status of the Dalen Coulee project. At the regular March board meeting, the Board of Managers awarded contracts on Phase I and Phase II of the project. A bid opening on Phase III for the Department of Natural Resources channel restoration is planned for later in the month.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that on March 11, 2002 the District made an Amended Order dismissing the petition to establish a 1-mile lateral on Clay County Ditch No. 12. The original Order to construct the project was made on joint appeal. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was adamantly opposed to installing a ditch along their property. Rather than going to District Court and fighting the appeal, the affected parties reached an “agreement” regarding what work could be done. The Amended Order is subject to another 30-day appeal period. The District will seek reimbursement of the petitioners’ costs in accordance with the \$15,000 bond.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the status of the comprehensive watershed management plan update. The project team is prioritizing and quantifying natural resource enhancement (NRE) goals which have proven more difficult than prioritizing the flood damage reduction (FDR) goals. The NRE goals will be included in the plan, however, the District would not be responsible for initiating the goals. The District will notify the natural resource agencies when an FDR project is planned in an area where NRE’s could be incorporated.

Legislative Funding Deadline

Manager Osowski noted his concern relative to the deadline established by the RRBFDWRWG regarding receiving legislative funds for projects. He explained that part of the criteria in order to be eligible for funding states that the land acquisition needed for the project must be completed by May 15, 2002. Ogaard added that the reason for the deadline is that the legislative funds must be distributed prior to July 1, 2002, and should a reallocation of funding be necessary, sufficient time is needed by the work group in order to do so.

Manager Wilkens suggested extending the deadline to June 15, 2002 in order to give the watershed districts adequate time to acquire the property needed. Thul suggested that each of the four project teams that have projects approved to receive legislative funding be in attendance at the next RRBFDWRWG meeting in order to answer questions relative to extending the deadline.

Minnesota Association of Drainage Inspectors (MADI)

Manager Wilkens stated that he attended the MADI meeting conducted on March 18, 2002 in Willmar, MN. He noted that a presentation was given by a representative from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regarding permitting requirements. He added that Kurt Deter, attorney with Rinke-Noonan, was in attendance and noted that he would be keeping MAWD informed on any pertinent issues. Deter also stated at the meeting that he would be working with the MADI to develop a certification procedure for drainage inspectors.

District’s Funding Requests:

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on April 16, 2002, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wells Fargo Bank, Barnesville, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Associate Director