



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

John Finney, President-Humboldt LeRoy Carriere-Roseau Dan Money-Hallock Ben Kleinwachter, Vice President-Strandquist
LeRoy Ose-Thief River Falls Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Greg Holmviik-Ada Jerome Deal, Secretary-Wheaton
Naomi Goral, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING
December 20, 2016
Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, December 20, 2016 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were: LeRoy Carriere Dan Money
 Ben Kleinwachter LeRoy Ose
 Daniel Wilkens Greg Holmviik
 Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Goral, Administrator
Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
Henry Van Offelen, Red River Coordinator
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator – USDA-NRCS
Chuck Fritz, Director – International Water Institute
Jerry Bents, Engineer – Houston Engineering, Inc.
Nate Dalager, Engineer – HDR Engineering, Inc.
Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Inc.
Tracy Halstensgard, Administrator – Roseau River WD
Myron Jesme, Administrator – Red Lake WD
Jim Ziegler, Regional Manager – MPCA
Jeff Lewis, Executive Director – RRBC
Kevin Ruud, Administrator – Wild Rice WD
Blake Carlson, Engineer – WSN Engineering, Inc.
Tony Nordby, Engineer – Houston Engineering, Inc.
April Swenby, Administrative Assistant – Sand Hill River WD
Allen Wold, Manager – Bois de Sioux WD
Roger Hanson, Manager – Sand Hill River WD
Heidi Hughes
Jason Braaten, Manager – Roseau River WD
Dave Jones, Area Engineer – USDA-NRCS

Motion by Manager Ose to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Kleinwachter to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Ose, **Carried**.

The bills to be approved as of December 20, 2016 were as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Num</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Memo</u>	<u>Amount</u>
12/20/2016	8213	ACS	Phone line, Fax/Internet	\$132.22
12/20/2016	8214	Adv. Engineering & Environmental Services	Public Information Consulting Services	\$1,135.50
12/20/2016	8215	International Water Institute	CWL River Watch - MPCA Pay Req. No. 2 (IWI No. 705)	\$26,293.36
12/20/2016	8216	Jon Schauer/Consulting Unlimited Inc.	Invoice No. 3508	\$1,170.00
12/20/2016	8217	Marco Technologies LLC	Photocopier Maintenance - Invoice No. INV3848102	\$369.74
12/20/2016	8218	MCI	Long distance service	\$36.35
12/20/2016	8219	Naomi Goral	Reimbursed Expenses	\$906.11
12/20/2016	8220	Ronald D. Harnack	Project Coordinator Exp. - December 2016	\$1,823.92
12/20/2016	8221	Roseau River Watershed District	Webpage Maintenance - 2016	\$429.00
12/20/2016	8222	Roseau River Watershed District	Roseau River Wildlife Management Area Proj. - Pay Req. No. 4	\$109,423.37
12/20/2016	8223	Smith Partners PLLP	Invoice No. 38415, Runoff Based Drainage Assess. - 11/16	\$8,102.02
12/20/2016	8224	Smith Partners PLLP	Invoice No. 38416, Runoff Based Drainage Assess. - 11/16	\$1,018.83
12/20/2016	8225	Smith Partners PLLP	Invoice No. 38414, November 2016	\$102.50
				\$150,942.92

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

Manager Finney congratulated Myron Jesme, Administrator – Red Lake WD, on receiving the 2016 Outstanding Watershed Employee of the Year. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recognized Jesme at this year's Minnesota Association of Watershed District's Annual Meeting on December 1-3, 2016, at the Arrowwood Conference Center, Alexandria, MN.

Red River Retention Authority

Manager Finney reported that the RRRRA met on November 22, 2016 and discussed the Executive Director position. The RRRRA agreed to advertise for the part-time position of Executive Director to serve as a liaison to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to advance the development of floodwater retention projects throughout the basin and promote initiatives endorsed by the RRRRA. A presentation was also given on the Benefit-Cost Analysis Template by J. Leitch and C. Fritz.

K. Weston stated that he plans to retire from his position as Red River Basin Coordinator on January 3, 2017. He introduced Dave Jones, Area Engineer – USDA-NRCS of Thief River Falls, who plans to assist NRCS in the interim until the vacated position is filled. D. Jones indicated that he will be available at either the Watershed Center in Fargo, ND or his current office in Thief River Falls, MN.

Water Quality Project Monitoring

C. Fritz distributed the IWI Monitoring and Education Activity Report. Staff are working with H. Van Offelen with the organization/planning for the 2016 monitoring project reports as well as wetland plant community monitoring. IWI staff plans to develop a draft wetland community monitoring schedule and review with H. Van Offelen and TSAC as needed.

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IWI staff are also developing a work plan for FDR condition reporting. Work will begin in the next month on database conceptualization and organization. Conservation Corps worker, Danielle Yaste, will assist in data procurement and condition/story map development when she starts her assignment in January of 2017.

Manager Ose inquired about the difference between high and low functioning wetlands. C. Fritz responded that a broad scale wetland assessment approach evaluates wetlands on a range of function such as high, medium or low categories based on their function or values.

The wetland plant community monitoring has utilized the Floristic Quality Assessment (FQA) method which generates a list of observed plant species in the wetland areas. The FQA method assigns to plant species a rating that reflects the fundamental conservatism that the species exhibits for natural habitats. A native species that exhibits specific adaptations to a narrow spectrum of the environment is given a high rating. Conversely, an introduced, abundant species that exhibits adaptation to a broad spectrum of environmental variables is given a low rating.

Manager Money questioned whether the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group had requested project monitoring information. C. Fritz responded that due to mitigation-related discussions at Work Group meetings, it was determined that monitoring should be conducted on projects to provide data for wetland banking credits as well as water quality. Manager Money noted that monitoring efforts should be coordinated with the project sponsor.

R. Harnack stated that evaluating the pre- and post-project condition of a particular wetland is often part of the regulatory process. The Minnesota Routine Assessment Method (MnRAM) for Evaluating Wetland Functions originally was devised soon after the passage of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The MnRAM is typically not sensitive enough to show changes in the functional ratings that are commensurate with the differences between pre- and post-project conditions. Determining general compensatory mitigation needs based on a MnRAM analysis of a wetland that is proposed to be impacted is appropriate for regulatory purposes.

N. Dalager inquired about the timeline for completing the work plan for FDR project condition reporting. C. Fritz stated that some project work plans have been completed while others should be completed by March of 2017.

Human Resource Committee Report

Manager Finney stated that at the November RRWMB board meeting it was reported that the Human Resource Committee (HRC) had conducted interviews with six candidates for the position of Project and/or Financial Coordination Consultant. These candidates either applied for the position of Project Coordinator, Lobbyist, or the combined position thereof.

Upon further review, the HRC agreed to recommend to the board that Frenette Legislative Advisors be retained as board lobbyist. Ms. Frenette has been involved with the Minnesota Legislature since 1993. She fully understands the political process in St. Paul and is willing to work with R. Harnack during the upcoming legislative session at a reduced rate. She is available to begin her full-time association with the RRWMB for the 2018 legislative session.

Motion by Manager Deal to retain Frenette Legislative Advisors as board lobbyist to work with R. Harnack during the upcoming legislative session and for a two-year term thereafter, **Seconded** by Manager Kleinwachter, **Carried**.

Manager Finney stated that on December 9, 2016 the HRC, with participation from N. Goral and R. Harnack met with organizations that receive annual funding from the board at the Watershed Center in Fargo, ND. The goal of the meeting was to understand each organizations history, mission and objectives, as well as current operations, and how proceed in the future by working together.

The organizations that participated in the discussion included the International Water Institute (IWI), the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC), the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA), and the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Items on the agenda for discussion were as follows:

- 1) Tasks and roles/individuals and affiliated organizations can do with existing (RRWMB) funding to achieve the RRWMB objectives.
- 2) Tasks and roles/individuals and affiliated organizations can do with additional (RRWMB) funding to achieve the RRWMB objectives.
- 3) Obtain an outside perspective as to how the RRWMB can improve its delivery of services to the region.

Manager Finney reported that following considerable discussion, the organizations that participated concluded that they are willing to work with the RRWMB to assist in achieving board goals and objectives. A recurring topic highlighted during the meeting was outreach and education. The importance of conveying the RRWMB message to not only member districts and their managers, but to the public as well, was a priority among attendees.

Manager Finney added that although the board's main objective is to keep water out of the Red River and its tributaries during a flood event, with coordination from basin partners the board can achieve our goal it can be a win for all.

Manager Deal noted that the HRC determined that retaining a lobbyist for the upcoming session was imperative. For the current legislative session, R. Harnack would continue to provide Project Coordination services, however, the board should continue pursuing various options to address these duties following his retirement.

Manager Money concurred with Manager Deal and added that the full board should discuss filling the position of Project Coordinator. Manager Finney inquired whether this item could be addressed at a regular board meeting or if a special meeting be scheduled. Following discussion, it was agreed to schedule a board retreat in conjunction with the January board meeting.

Motion by Manager Money to schedule a board retreat on Monday, January 16th from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Manager Finney requested N. Goral to distribute the minutes of the December 9th meeting to board members as well as meeting attendees upon their completion. He also requested the organizations that attended the meeting to review the Request for Proposals (RFP) that was circulated by the board for the position of Project and/or Financial Coordination Consultant and indicate whether their organization could assist the board with completing the tasks included in the Scope of Project Coordination Services.

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Motion by Manager Wilkens to direct N. Goral to distribute the 12/09/16 meeting minutes and the RFP for Project and/or Financial Coordination Consulting Services to the board and those organizations attending the above-referenced meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**.

Public Information Committee Report

N. Goral distributed the Public Information Report prepared by D. Selvig of AE2S. She explained that the agreement between AE2S and the board was for a term of one-year and is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2016.

Manager Deal, Chair of the Public Information Committee (PIC), reported that the committee met following the October board meeting and discussed the board's contract with AE2S. Although the committee was satisfied with the services performed by AE2S and they had not exceeded the allocated budget, they agreed the board should pursue retaining another consultant.

Manager Deal reported that the PIC directed N. Goral to inquire whether Heidi Hughes, who previously performed public information services for the board, would consider filling this position for the board. N. Goral stated that, following discussion with Manager Finney, she contacted H. Hughes who indicated she would be interested in the position.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to discontinue the service agreement between AE2S and the board for public information services by allowing it to expire on December 31, 2016, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Manager Finney stated that since the board is currently reviewing administrative expenditures in an effort to economize and maximize efficiencies, additional discussion should occur prior to proceeding with public information initiatives. He requested April Swenby of Dot.Com Connection to provide website maintenance services directly to the board and bill at an hourly rate.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack distributed the Project Coordinator Report. It should be announced by tomorrow whether there will be a special session to address healthcare, taxes, and bonding. Should a bonding bill pass in special session, FDR funding should be sufficient to provide for the top two priorities in the Red River Valley; \$2.3M for Halstad; and, \$1M for Redpath.

R. Harnack explained that should there be no special session with the passage of a bonding bill, the unmet needs statewide will create significant competition for what would require a large bonding bill appropriation. Otherwise, bonding in the biennial year budget is limited to funding those projects with critical needs that are ready to be bid and constructed in 2017. Work will continue with District Administrators to identify critical funding needs.

R. Harnack referred to the original BWSR grant awarded through the Clean Water Fund (CWF) in the amount of \$94,182. The purpose of the grant was to conduct a conservation drainage program in consultation with the Drainage Work Group (DWG) that consisted of projects where existing drainage systems could be retrofitted with water quality improvement practices, outcomes could be evaluated, and outreach provided to landowners, public drainage authorities, drainage engineers, contractors and others.

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At the October board meeting, the current work plan of the original grant agreement was amended in the amount of \$22,905.00 to include the additional costs associated with the development of the Buffer Model Enforcement Rule & Guidance for Watershed Districts. Another amendment of \$7,000.00 is needed to address public comments related to the model rule.

Motion by Manager Deal to authorize a second amendment of \$7,000.00 to the work plan of the revised grant agreement of \$117,087.00 for a total revised grant awarded of \$124,087.00, **Seconded** by Manager Ose, **Carried**.

Red River Basin Commission

J. Lewis, Executive Director – RRBC, reported that the 34th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference, *Passport to Progress: Thinking Beyond Our Boundaries*, is scheduled for January 17-19, 2017 in Fargo, ND. An update on the *North Ottawa Nutrient Capture and Biomass Harvesting* was distributed. The *Implementation Plan for the Red River Basin Nutrient Runoff Reduction Strategy* was also circulated.

Administrator Report

A) 19th Joint Annual Conference

N. Goral stated that the 19th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference) co-sponsored by the RRWMB and the Work Group is scheduled for March 22 and 23, 2017, (Wednesday and Thursday) at the Courtyard by Marriott, 1080 28th Avenue South, Moorhead, MN. The Planning Committee is scheduled to meet following today's board meeting.

The regular board meeting in March is scheduled for the day prior to the conference on Tuesday, March 21, 2017.

B) Vacation Accrual

N. Goral reported that her unused vacation days for calendar year 2016 have been calculated. She elected to carry forward one week to 2017 and to be paid for the remaining unused portion.

C) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Wild Rice Watershed District Board Meeting**, January 11, 2017, Ada, MN. N. Goral is on the agenda to update the board on RRWMB activities.
2. **Red River Watershed Management Board**, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., January 17, 2017, Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN. (Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
3. **Red River Basin Commission's 34th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference**, 1:00 p.m., January 17-19, 2017, at the Ramada Plaza & Suites, Fargo, ND.
 - a. ***Red River Basin Women's Initiative "Breakfast Social,"*** 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 18, 2017, at the 34th Annual Conference.
4. **19th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference)**, Wednesday, March 22, 2017 - Thursday, March 23, 2017, Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

H. Van Offelen distributed a handout of TAC purpose and responsibilities. Current TAC membership includes: J. Bents – Houston Engineering, N. Dalager – HDR Engineering, C. Engels – Moore Engineering, Blake Carlson – WSN Engineering, and himself.

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H. Van Offelen stated that he updated roles and responsibilities of TAC, established 2017 TAC objectives, and developed a draft January meeting agenda.

H. Van Offelen added that in preparation for completing the board's annual report, he's reviewed previous year's reports, the board's Project Catalog, and developed a draft table of contents for board review. Following discussion, the board requested that H. Van Offelen distribute a draft annual report to the PIC for review prior to distributing it to the full board.

District Reports

- The Two Rivers WD reported on the status of the Klondike Clean Water Retention Project No. 11. The District met with representatives of the MDNR to discuss the NRCS PL566 Plan, various natural resource enhancement concerns and opportunities, project designs, the State EAW, monitoring and data collection needs, and permitting requirements. Three transects of monitoring wells have been established and groundwater data will be collected. Surface flow and water quality will also be monitored in the future.

A special meeting was conducted by the Board of Managers on December 14th to discuss project features, including inlet diversion ditches, main diked inlet, control structures, operations, main dikes, outlet structures, outlet channels, and various permitting issues. It's estimated that an engineer's report may be ready in six months.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the outlet of the Lockhart Project. Preliminary investigation information regarding improvements to the ditch capacity from the outlet to JD 53 main was discussed with landowners at the regular December board meeting. The District is awaiting a petition to determine whether to proceed with possible improvements.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on January 17, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN. The Red River Basin Commission's 34th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference is scheduled for January 17-19, 2017 and begins at 1:00 p.m. on January 17th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:15 p.m. following lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Goral
Administrator