



## Red River Watershed Management Board

### ***Board of Managers***

**John Finney, President** - Humboldt  
**Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer** - Fertile  
**Roger Mischel** - Warren

**Greg Holmvik - Vice President** - Ada  
**LeRoy Carriere** - Roseau  
**LeRoy Ose** - Thief River Falls

**Jerome Deal, Secretary** - Wheaton  
**Dan Money** - Hallock

**Robert L. Sip, Executive Director**

## **RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING December 19, 2017 Approved Meeting Minutes Sand Hill River Watershed District | Fertile, Minnesota**

- 1. Call to Order:** The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) met on Tuesday, December 18, 2017 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota. President John Finney called the meeting to order. Managers present were: LeRoy Carriere, Dan Money, Roger Mischel, LeRoy Ose, Daniel Wilkens, Greg Holmvik, and Jerome Deal.

Others present included:

- Naomi Goral, RRWMB Administrative Consultant
- Jim Ziegler, Regional Director MPCA
- Asher Kingery, International Water Institute
- Lisa Frenette, RRWMB Legislative Liaison
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Leroy Stumpf, Representative for Congressman Collin Peterson
- Rodger Hemphill, DNR Red River Coordinator
- Theresa Ebbenga, DNR, Bemidji
- Dr. Jay Leitch, Facilitator, Strategic Planning Team
- Joel Praska, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District
- Allen Wold, Manager, Bois de Sioux Watershed District
- Tony Nordby, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Jason Braaten, Manager, Roseau River Watershed District
- Blake Carlson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
- Morrie Lanning, Consultant, Barr Engineering, Inc.
- Keith Weston, Executive Director, RRRRA
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake Watershed District
- Nathan Kestner, Northwest Regional Manager, EWR, DNR
- Roger Hanson, Manager, Sand Hill River Watershed District
- April Swenby, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River Watershed District



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Executive Director Sip informed the members that Naomi Goral asked to refrain from taking meeting minutes. To honor Goral's request, Sip asked Sand Hill River Watershed District Administrator Dan Wilkens for approval to authorize April Swenby to substitute for this meeting. Sip also noted he will be recording the meeting.

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes/Agenda:** President Finney asked for additions to the meeting agenda. Executive Director Sip indicated that the USGS had presented a contract for continued stream gauge monitoring and that it should be included on the agenda. **Motion** by Manager Carriere to approve the agenda as presented adding the topic of USGS Stream Gaging Contract, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

**Motion** by Manager Money to dispense with the reading of the minutes and, **Seconded** by Manager Mischel, **Carried**.

President Finney called for comments on the November 2017 RRWMB meeting minutes. Manager Money suggested on Page 6 that the funding request motion was incorrect and asked for corrections. He clarified that the RRWMB share is \$7,250,000 and the Two River Watershed District share is \$3,625,000. He indicated that the dollar amounts reflected in the original set of minutes were for Phase 1. **Motion** by Manager Money to approve as written the November meeting minutes with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**.

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

The bills to be approved as of December 19, 2017, were as follows:

Date	Number	Name	Memo	Amount
12/19/2017	8564	Dot.com Connection	Website Maintenance	\$90.00
12/19/2017	8565	HDR Engineering, Inc.	Invoice No. 1200089837	\$3,187.49
12/19/2017	8566	Henry Van Offelen	Meeting Expense - TAC 11/3-/2017	\$20.66
12/19/2017	8567	Jon Schauer/Consulting Unlimited	Invoice No. 3522	\$1,657.50
12/19/2017	8568	Lisa A. Frennete	Financial/Lobbying Consultant - November 2017	\$646.15
12/19/2017	8569	Marco Technologies LLC	Photocopier Maintenance - Invoice No. INV 4800699	\$424.39
12/19/2017	8570	MCI	Long Distance Service	\$41.45
12/19/2017	8571	MN PEIP	Invoice Dated 12-10-17	\$1,479.36
12/19/2017	8572	Moore Engineering, Inc.	Invoice No. 17395	\$1,080.00
12/19/2017	8574	Naomi Goral	Reimbursed Expenses	\$657.40
12/19/2017	8577	Robert Sip	Reimbursed Expenses	\$2,497.53
12/19/2017	8578	Ronald D. Harnack	Project Coordinator Exp. - December 2017	\$634.73
12/19/2017	8579	Smith Partners PLLP	Invoice No. 39293, November 2017	<u>\$2,469.15</u>
				<u><b>\$14,885.81</b></u>



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

**4. Funding Requests:** There were no additional project step process reports and applications presented.

**5. Reports:**

**a. Internal RRWMB Committees:** Executive Director Sip presented a current committee and membership list and he asked that board members review the list and provide him with updates to the list. The committee list will be discussed again at the January 16, 2018 meeting to revise as new members will be on the board.

**b. External Committees:**

i. **Drainage Work Group (DWG):** The DWG met on December 14, 2017 in St. Paul. Manager Wilkens presented the agenda and various materials from the meeting. The DWG is considering changes to several areas of MS 103E and discussion ensued about proposed draft legislative language. The Managers discussed the benefits and drawbacks for the presented changes.

The Draft BWSR document titled "Recommendations for Accelerating Public Drainage System Acquisition of Buffer Strips and Alternative Practices and Associated Landowner Compensation" (dated December 14, 2017) was presented and the Managers were asked to review it and report their thoughts to Legislative Liaison Lisa Frenette or Executive Director Sip by December 31, 2017. Frenette reiterated the importance of feedback regarding the draft report.

Manager Wilkens informed the board that he spoke with John Jaschke, Executive Director of BWSR and discussed funds being received by watershed districts and counties for the buffer program administration. He pointed out the process is really a redistribution of taxpayer dollars from BWSR. Manager Money suggested a better process for the buffer law at the state level would have been to include those involved in drainage issues and drainage law as it was being developed.

ii. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA):** President Finney stated he would report when RRRA Executive Director Keith Weston presents his report.

**c. Executive Director Report:**

i. Executive Director Sip presented a draft letter to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture encouraging their continued involvement within the Red River Basin. Sip will finalize the letter for President Finney to sign.



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- ii. Executive Director Sip discussed current insurance coverages for the RRWMB and indicated that the bond insurance through Ohio Casualty was due in December 2017. He also stated that a review would be done of all insurances to determine if the RRWMB is appropriately insured. Manager Money indicated that the MN Counties Insurance Trust or League of Minnesota Cities may have coverage options.
  - a. The RRWMB Workers' Comp insurance coverage renewed in June of 2017.
  - b. Executive Director Sip indicated that the annual premium for RRWMB liability insurance and related coverages is just over \$10,000. The Managers were given hard copies of all current policies and it was stated that this policy covers policy making decisions of the RRWMB in addition to several other types of insurable events. This policy renews in February 2018. Sip and Manager Money suggested looking for additional insurances and then compare premium prices. Myron Jesme, Administrator of the Red Lake Watershed District stated that they reviewed their policies last year and reduced costs by using the League of Minnesota Cities policy options and merged all of their policies into one plan. Manager Money stated that the Two River WD pays about \$4,000 for their insurance policy. Sip will research policy premium prices.
- iii. The benefit cost analysis issue has been reviewed and the committee will meet again with hopes of a written report to present to the board in January or February 2018.
- iv. The USGS funding request was presented. The agreement is \$118, 535 for the RRWMB share. The USGS will contribute \$91,174 for a combined total of \$209,709. The joint funding agreement is for the period October 1, 2107 to September 30, 2018. A **Motion** was made by Manager Ose to approve and pay the 2018 proposal, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**.
- v. Executive Director Sip stated that next month the Managers will receive a complete hard copy of all meeting materials well in advance of the regular meeting and this will be done on a monthly basis. The packet will be made available to audience members and partners in an electronic format.
- vi. Executive Director Sip presented the communication plan that was developed by AE2S last year as a reminder for the Managers about recommendations within the plan. Manager Money pointed out that Mark Meister, an employee of NDSU, also presented a strategy back in 2008 and would like to organize another Public Information Committee meeting to verify the direction of the RRWMB regarding communication and outreach activities.
- vii. Manager Wilkens and Executive Director Sip met with the Marshall County Commissioners this month to discuss the value of the RRWMB within Marshall County and the Middle Snake Tamarac WD. Both reported that their meeting was well received and that the discussion was longer than expected. Sip plans to be active with the counties and will use a team effort for communicating and providing education with the counties within the RRWMB boundary along with the watershed districts. Joel Praska, administrator of the Middle Snake Tamarac Watershed District reported that the meeting with the county commissioners was a good opportunity for the Watershed District.



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- d. **Legislative Report:** Executive Director Sip presented a draft workplan to inform the RRWMB of regulatory and legislative issues that the he and the Legislative Liaison will be tracking in 2018. In addition, the workplan illustrated legislative information will be provided to the RRWMB Managers and member districts. Frenette discussed alternatives for meeting with legislatures after a board meeting. Sip and Frenette will hold some one on one sessions with the legislators.
- i. **Bonding:** Frenette stated that some legislators oppose bonding and prefer using general fund dollars for flood damage reduction projects. Manager Money suggested paying special attention to bonding priorities and to play offense. A strategy is needed to sustain the projects that are upcoming within the watershed districts. Frenette stated this is contingent to MAWD's involvement to create an "all for one" bonding bill. Manager Money confirmed he presented a resolution at the 2017 MAWD annual conference regarding funding issues. President Finney replied that he was told the resolution Manager Money presented at MAWD would require a constitutional amendment.

Leroy Stumpf added how communities are presenting projects to individual legislators, making it difficult to prioritize. Bonding bills have not grown to accommodate population and infrastructure requirements. Frenette stated that Governor Dayton's proposals are focused on social programs and that flood damage reduction is a much lower priority. Frenette reported that federal bonding bills for infrastructure are in the process of negotiations, which will ultimately affect funds available at a state level.

- ii. **MN Soil Loss Rule:** Manager Deal asked Frenette to pay special focus on the MN Soil Loss Rule and suggested changes that may be coming forward. Frenette reported that Representative Fabian stated all funds received from the Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund can only be used for permanent easements.

Leroy Stumpf reported that at the Prairie Grains conference a presenter discussed double/triple cropping in Canada and using cover crops as rye grass. While it may still be a fairly new conservation practice in certain areas of the Red River Basin, it is gaining acceptance among the new generation of farmers. Stumpf suggested bringing in a presenter who may be familiar with this to encourage more use of cover crops.

6. **Old Business:** There was no old business brought forth for discussion.

### 7. **New Business:**

- a. **RRWMB Committee Recommendations:** Internal committees have not met and no new recommendations were brought to the board.

#### b. **Strategic Planning:**

- i. Position descriptions for the Assistant Director were presented to the Managers. The Managers discussed the salary range for the Assistant Director and the board verified that the salary range would be \$45,000 - \$65,000, with other benefits in addition to the salary.



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Executive Director Sip stated an interview committee would consist of Kevin Rudd, Dan Money, and himself.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Holmvik to authorize Sip to move forward with hiring the Assistant Director with the aforementioned salary and benefits, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**.

Sip suggested posting the position in local newspapers and on the RRWMB web-site. The Managers discussed the location of the office and how it should be posted regarding the official RRWMB office location. It was decided to present the location in the same fashion it was presented for the Executive Director position, suggesting the office location could be Fertile, Ada, or Thief River Falls and will be determined by the Executive Director.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Ose approving the presented process for hiring and a timeline for hiring an Executive Assistant by February 1, 2018, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

- ii. **Office Location RFP:** Executive Director Sip presented a brief and updated office RFP. He stated the plan was to meet with the three watershed districts to discuss the issue and to develop proposals to house the RRWMB office.
- iii. **Personnel Manual:** Executive Director Sip informed the Managers that the personnel manual has not been updated since 2006 and would like to suggest the Human Resources Committee meet in the future to start reviewing the manual. Sip will share copies of the manual with the Managers.
- iv. **Strategic Planning:** Jay Leitch informed the Managers he has not been charging for his time for 6 weeks and he is volunteering to assist with strategic planning. Leitch presented a schedule to develop a strategic plan to discuss a futuristic plan and path forward.

Leitch suggested using a different individual rather than using the Executive Director for the facilitation of the upcoming meetings for the Strategic Plan. The Managers inquired with Executive Director Sip to determine if he has had time to review and consider the plan shared by Leitch. Sip stated that he had not had time yet to interact with Leitch and the Managers decided to table the implementation and discussion of moving forward with the strategic plan. Sip will meet with Leitch to discuss alternatives in the interim.

- c. **Process to Accept Sponsorship Funds for March Conference:** Executive Director stated that six to eight thousand dollars have been tentatively acquired for sponsorships towards the March Conference with four engineering companies. The Red River Retention Authority has also tentatively designated funds. The Managers discussed the idea of accepting sponsorships and Manager Money expressed his thoughts and concerns about accepting sponsorships.



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Jim Ziegler of MPCA reported that the engineering firms did not approach the RRWMB but the planning team approached them in an effort to help fund the conference. Jerry Bents of Houston Engineering suggested that if sponsorships are approved, not to have a tiered membership. Manager Deal suggesting accepting the sponsorships. A **Motion** was made by Manager Ose to accept sponsorships for the conference, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere , **Carried**. Manager Money opposed. All other managers approved.

- d. **Credit Card:** Executive Director Sip discussed the need for a credit card and several staff from member watershed districts provided information about how their offices have handled credit cards, the benefits of having them, and how they are can be managed. **Motion** was made by Manager Ose to authorize Sip to obtain a credit card with a limit of \$20,000, **Seconded** by Manager Mischel, **Carried**.
- e. **DNR Contract for RRB Coordinator:** Rodger Hemphill of DNR was introduced by Nathan Kestner of DNR as a replacement to Henry Van Offelen and the current contact between the RRWMB and DNR was provided. Executive Director Sip and Hemphill will meet to review the contract to ensure that duties and responsibilities within the contract continue to be fulfilled. Manager Wilkens suggested that a committee meet before the expiration of the current contract to review the description and the needs of the RRWMB for the future, possibly at the March Conference. Nathan Kestner assured the managers that the DNR is committed to following through with the contract. Kestner stated that the DNR is not opposed to reviewing the needs of the RRWMB and the continuation of the RRB Coordinator as a shared position.

Kestner suggested that a review of how the RRB Coordinator reports expenses take place and the DNR is not asking for additional amounts to cover expenses. An internal structure is in place for the period of transition and project tracking will be reported to the RRWMB and any other areas of common interest. Hemphill's duties will be specific to the RRWMB contract, coordination for the TSAC, project team support, and as a liaison to the FDRWG. Kestner agreed that this is a great opportunity as the RRWMB continues their efforts in regards to strategic planning.

- f. **March Conference Update:** Arrangements are being made for the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to hold their regular meeting during the March Conference. This is a good opportunity to inform and educate the EQB about issues that watershed districts face regarding permitting and project implementation. It was noted that it is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mediation Agreement.

Executive Director Sip asked about the board's interest for having Joel Heitkamp available at the March Conference as in the past. Last year the cost for his coverage was negotiated and Jim Ziegler noted that Heitkamp is unavailable to attend the RRBC Conference in Winnipeg in Canada but may be available for the March Conference. The RRBC is checking to see if the funds paid can be transferred to the RRWMB. Ziegler presented the idea of hiring Paul Douglas as a keynote speaker for the cost of \$5,000 on behalf of the conference planning committee.



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Douglas is a nationally-respected meteorologist, with 34 years of broadcast television and 36 years of radio experience. Ziegler stated that he has appreciated Douglas's speaking engagements in the past and he has received good reviews. Ziegler reported that the notion for hiring Douglas was the motive for the sponsorship requests and the committee wanted to keep the costs at the same level as previous years. Ziegler also reported that Roger Moe will be an evening speaker. Keith Weston stated that if the topic could be changed to soil health, NRCS would be able to help contribute.

Manager Deal suggested leaving it up to the committee to hire him and find sponsorship for his services. President Finney stated that it would be difficult to support allocating \$5,000 for one speaker, given that the funds are public. The Managers agreed that hiring a speaker for \$5,000 would not be a good use of public funds, regardless of sponsorship. Therefore, there was not support for this and Paul Douglas will not be contacted.

- 8. Agency and Partner Reports:** Executive Director Sip stated that this is a new format to the agenda and this would be the place on the agenda each month for agencies and partners to give oral or written reports. Each entity will have 2 to 5 minutes unless more time is needed for reporting and discussion.
  - a. Member Watershed District Reports:**
    - i. Wild Rice Watershed District: A written report was presented and included in the meeting packet.
    - ii. Roseau River Watershed District: LeRoy Carriere reported that the RRWD has completed their WMA project. Two individuals are contesting the Lake Bottom Project and the Lake Whitney project is planned for completion soon.
  - b. BWSR:** Henry Van Offelen was not present but a written report was distributed.
  - c. RRBC:** Ted Preister has been hired as the new Executive Director. Morrie Lanning reported that RRBC has reactivated a new water supply committee.
  - d. IWI:** Asher Kingery presented a written report on behalf of the IWI. New staff has been hired for the Monitoring and Education Specialist position. The River Watch Forum will be held in Grand Forks at the Alerus Center due to growth and space restraints at UMC. The RRBDIN/Lidar Viewer is live and comments are encouraged. Kingery asked the Managers and the audience to submit their comments to Chuck Fritz.
  - e. Red River Retention Authority:** Keith Weston presented a written report. Weston has dedicated a fair amount of time to continue discussions regarding benefit cost analysis and its affects in the basin. Weston has been working with Sip to potentially have a booth at the International Sugar Beet Institute this spring in Grand Forks, ND.



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The agreement between the RRRRA and the NRCS will expire and because there is space available at the RRBC, office space will not be an issue. Weston presented a written 6-month progress report to the Managers. A letter of support was drafted between ND NRCS and Cass County JWRD to terminate an RCPP watershed agreement (Swan Creek Watershed).

Debra Walchuk is the new Red River Basin Coordinator and has replaced Keith Weston. Myron Jesme asked Weston if NRCS is comfortable with turnover in this position. Weston confirmed that Walchuk has accepted this as a permanent position.

**9. Advisory Comments:** Executive Director Sip would like to present this an opportunity each month for other agencies such as ag stakeholders, counties, and cities to provide comments to the RRWMB. There were no advisory comments presented.

**10. Upcoming Meetings:** Executive Director Sip informed the Managers of his upcoming schedule and areas of focus. He also shared the following events:

- Next RRWMB Board Meeting – January 16, 2017, Thief River Falls
- RRBC Conference – January 23 to 25, 2018, Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, MB.
- Rinke Noonan Drainage and Watershed Conference – February 15, 2018, Rivers Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud.
- MAWD Legislative Session – March 7 to 8, 2018, Embassy Suites, St. Paul.
- Drainage Work Group Meetings:
  - Thursday, January 11, 2018 at the Minnesota Farmers Union Building
  - Thursday, February 1, 2018 at the Minnesota Farmers Union Building – Tentative Location

**11. Adjournment:** The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, MN. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 11:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerome Deal  
Secretary

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April Swenby  
SHRWD, Meeting Minute Assistant