

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 14, 2017

The Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) met December 14, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Present were John Finney, Gary Thompson, Rodger Olson, Greg Holmvik and Ben Varnson, Board members; Kent Lokkesmoe, Pat Fridgen and Lance Yohe, non-voting members; Keith Weston, RRRA Executive Director; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Ann Simmons, House Agriculture Committee staff (by phone); Debra Walchuk, Lance Smith and Lanette Dietrich, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Cody Morsching, Congressman Cramer's Office; Dan Jacobson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Robert Rostad, Richland County Water Resource District; William A. Hejl, Rush River Water Resource District (by phone); Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota State Water Commission; Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Pat Downs, Moore Engineering, Inc.; April Walker, A. Walker Consulting; and Ted Preister, Red River Basin Commission. Board member Jerome Deal was absent.

Gary Thompson called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Agenda

It was moved by Rodger Olson, seconded by John Finney and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda.

Minutes

It was moved by Ben Varnson, seconded by Greg Holmvik and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the August 31, 2017, meeting.

Financial Report

It was moved by Rodger Olson and seconded by John Finney to approve the Financial Report, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Bills

It was moved by John Finney and seconded by Rodger Olson to approve the payment of Checks #1477 through #1494, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Amend 2017 budget

It was moved by Ben Varnson and seconded by Greg Holmvik to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to amend the RRRRA 2017 budget. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Office space

It was moved by Ben Varnson and seconded by Rodger Olson to approve the *Sublease Agreement* with the Red River Basin Commission for office space for the 24-month period ending November 1, 2019. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NRCS Agreements

Keith Weston reviewed a budget narrative for *Cooperative Agreement* 68-6633-15-512 with the NRCS for funding outreach to the watersheds selected for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) under the *Memorandum of Understanding*.

Mr. Weston also reviewed a budget narrative for *Contribution Agreement* 68-6633-16-517 with the NRCS to fund cooperation and joint coordination of flood damage reduction projects relating to the RCPP.

Mr. Weston hopes to meet with NRCS officials in late winter / early spring to address the request for a one-year extension to the agreements to September 30, 2019.

RCPP watershed planning update

Outreach at future events such as the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) annual meeting and trade show, the Prairie Grains conference, Farm Bureau convention and Farmers Union convention.

Mr. Weston introduced Debra Walchuk, newly appointed NRCS Red River Basin Coordinator.

The Red River RCPP Watershed Planning Update in Minnesota and North Dakota was presented. Mr. Weston will contact the Corps of Engineers to learn about RCPP funding restrictions. Some of the planning efforts are on schedule and making progress, while others are behind schedule. The *6 Month Progress Report* was distributed.

Executive Director report

Mr. Weston reported on changes to the RRRRA office space.

The request to terminate the Swan Creek watershed planning effort by the Cass County Joint Water Resource District was discussed.

Mr. Weston encouraged completing and submitting watershed plans to the NRCS as soon as possible.

Ted Preister will become the Red River Basin Commission Executive Director on January 1, 2018.

Rob Sipp is the new Red River Watershed Management Board Executive Director.

Emily Javens has been appointed as the Executive Director of MAWD.

Agency reports and information

Kent Lokkesmoe reported on participation in the technical group formed as a result of the Governors' Task Force regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Retention was discussed, but in itself is not a solution to the Fargo-Moorhead area flooding problem; however, retention would help upstream and downstream areas. The technical group is preparing a report for Task Force members and they will have a week or so to provide comment. Going forward, there will be discussion between the Diversion Authority and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as to what project changes need to be made in order for the DNR to issue a permit. It was agreed to design around a discharge of 33,000 cfs. Running more water through town is also being looked at, as well as final alignment recommendations. The operation and mitigation plan is also moving forward.

Mr. Lokkesmoe updated the group on the upcoming Minnesota bonding session.

Gary Thompson reported on state funding concerns and a positive meeting held with the Water Topics Overview Committee in North Dakota. The group was invited to a future Water Topics Overview Committee meeting. Mr. Thompson said Mr. Weston attended the meeting and did a great job informing state officials about the need for water funding. The Water Topics Overview Committee reacted positively to the RCPP process.

Pat Fridgen reported on the process to develop guidelines for North Dakota state cost-share, including the economic analysis of projects. They will seek additional input on the matter in the future. A meeting will be held on January 11, 2018. The State Water Commission will also begin working on the State Water Plan for the 2019-2021 biennium.

The Red River Basin Commission is organizing a Best Management Practices workshop, as well soil health workshops in Minnesota and North Dakota. They are holding winter meetings tied to water quality projects in Minnesota and a drainage workshop is also coming up. An update to the *Long Term Flood Solutions* report is being considered.

2018 meeting dates

It was moved by John Finney, seconded by Ben Varnson and unanimously carried to set the following as the regular meetings dates, times and places for the RRRA in 2018:

- March 22 at 2:00 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, Minnesota
- June 29 at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota

- September 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota
- December 13 at 2:00 p.m. at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

Gary Thompson
Co-Chair

John Finney
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer