MINUTES OF RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026
10:00 A.M.

A special meeting of the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) was held on March 25, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Present were John Finney, Josh Ihry, Bill Petersen, Greg Holmvik, Keith Weston and Tom Perdue, Board members; Patrick Fridgen and Ted Preister, non-voting members; Brian Fuder, Executive Director; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Director, Secretary; Amy Hepper, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Robert Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB); Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Jonathan Matz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Grit May, International Water Institute (IWI); Kurt Lysne, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.; Annika Plummer, North Dakota Water Coalition; and Julie Ly, Red River Basin Commission.

Approval of agenda
It was moved by Bill Petersen, seconded by Keith Weston and unanimously carried to approve the order of the agenda, as presented.

Minutes
It was moved by Greg Holmvik and seconded by Bill Petersen and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2025, meeting, as presented.

Administrative Items
The Treasurer presented the Financial Report of the RRRA.

It was moved by Keith Weston and seconded by Greg Holmvik to approve the Financial Report as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Bill Petersen and seconded by Keith Weston to approve the wire transfers as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

North Dakota Water Magazine
Brian Fuder reviewed the article published in the March issue of the North Dakota Water Magazine. The article introduces the RRRA and brings awareness of the RRRA's activities and goals to the magazine's audience. Annika Plummer briefly reported on the engagement of the article. Mr. Fuder reported the next RRRA article will be published in the June issue.

2026 RRRA Priority Projects

Mr. Fuder reviewed the draft 2026 RRRA Priority Projects list. The list will be used during outreach events and meetings with federal, state, and local officials.

A motion was made by Bill Petersen, seconded by Keith Weston, and unanimously carried to approve the 2026 RRRA Priority Projects list as discussed. The motion carried.

Basin United Summit

Mr. Fuder briefly updated the Board on the Basin United Summit being planned for summer of 2026. The summit will bring together federal delegates and agencies, state legislators, state officials and departments, local leaders, and water managers. Mr. Fuder stated he is working on coordinating the date of the summit with the rescheduled visit of the NRCS Chief Conservationist. Mr. Fuder noted potential speakers, discussion points, venue, and estimated cost for the event. The Board agreed with the proposed summit concept and authorized Mr. Fuder to utilize RRRA outreach funds for the event.

Executive Director report

Mr. Fuder noted he will be on WDAY for Weather & Ag in Focus tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. to discuss RRRA activities and water retention. Mr. Fuder also noted he will be in Washington D.C. with Robert Sip, Don Kemp, and Andy Neset in April to engage in discussions with congressional delegates and federal agencies regarding the congressionally directed funding requests, retention, and other RRJWRD and RRWMB related discussions.

Mr. Fuder discussed the idea to incorporate retention with planning for future water supply needs. A working group has been started in Minnesota to discuss retention use for water supply. Mr. Fuder suggested duplicating that working group in North Dakota as well, then bringing the two groups together to form a basin-wide plan including identification of projects now and in the future. Keith Weston indicated he is interested in being involved in these discussions. Mr. Fuder identified three main areas for the working group to study potential retention opportunities including planned dairy operations in Richland County and Traill County and the data center in Cass County.

Mr. Fuder next reported on the status of the requests for congressionally directed spending for construction ready projects in the Red River Basin. Mr. Fuder noted the Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration project received a committal of $50,000 in funding through a federal bill that is in process. The RRRA will reapply this year for additional funding for the Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration project and other construction ready projects through congressionally directed spending. The RRRA continues to seek avenues for federal funding of retention projects in North Dakota and Minnesota. Mr. Sip briefly discussed an upcoming meeting with Minnesota Representative Michelle Fischbach to discuss a potential project for a congressionally directed spending request and the process of acquiring federal funding. Mr. Fuder suggested the RRRA consider starting discussions with federal officials regarding creation of a special district for the Red River Basin.

Basin United Summit continued

Mr. Fuder stated he is seeking additional partners and sponsors for the event and noted the event will cost approximately $15,000. Funding is available through the outreach portion of the RRRA budget.

A motion was made by Bill Petersen and seconded by Keith Weston to authorize the RRRA Executive Director to utilize up to $15,000 of the RRRA outreach funds for the Basin United Summit. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director report continued

The Board continued discussion on the potential creation of a federal special district for the Red River Basin. Mr. Fuder indicated the legal counsel for the RRRA will attend the next meeting to further discuss with the Board the possibility of forming a special district. Brief discussion was held on the matter.

A motion was made by Josh Ihry and seconded by Bill Petersen to authorize RRRA legal counsel to research the possibility of the creation of a special district not to exceed $5,000. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Agency and partner reports

Pat Fridgen updated the Board on the activities of the North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR). Mr. Fridgen indicated the NDDWR 2026 Commissioner-Hosted Basin meetings have been scheduled for this summer. The meeting information is available on the NDDWR website. Mr. Fridgen also noted tomorrow there will be a joint meeting of the Interim Legislative Water Topics Overview Committee and the State Water Commission at the capitol building.

Jonathan Matz briefly introduced himself and discussed the current activities of the NRCS. The Minnesota NRCS is in the process of obligating funds for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Minnesota NRCS is also looking to support producers in the Red River Basin through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

Ted Preister reported recent activities of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). The RRBC is finalizing details with the Corps of Engineers to move forward with the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study. The study is anticipated to be completed this year. Mr. Preister will discuss potential collaboration on the water supply working group with Mr. Fuder. Mr. Preister also noted *Farm Journal* is hosting a workshop in Fargo next week as part of the RRBC soil health program. The NRCS officials will also be in the area next week.

Grit May presented on the Wayfindr program that IWI has developed. The Wayfindr program uses methodologies for measuring monitoring reporting and verifying outcomes for agriculture producers. The program helps rate current environmental practices involving water, soil, and nutrients and provides predicted outcomes for changes in variables. Existing science was utilized to develop metrics within the program. Producers can also obtain a certificate of sustainability. Ms. May noted this allows producers to see

impacts downstream of their property.

Ms. May also discussed a flood mapping project for subwatersheds within the Red River Basin in Minnesota. The mapping provides information on flooding inundation and duration during summer storm events on the mainstem rivers and tributaries upstream. Ms. May discussed the grant funding for this program. Brief discussion was held on if this project takes into account land that has been drain tiled. Ms. May noted the information can be incorporated if available and she will reach out to Professor Lindsay Pease at the University of Minnesota Crookston to inquire about data available on this matter.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, ND.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, it was moved by Bill Petersen, seconded by Keith Weston, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Josh Ihry
Co-Chair

John Finney
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

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Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary