

MINUTES OF MEETING  
RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY  
ALERUS CENTER  
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA  
DECEMBER 13, 2018

The Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) met December 13, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. at the Alerus Center, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Present were John Finney, Gary Thompson, Ben Varnson, Lance Yohe (alternate for Rodger Olson), LeRoy Ose and Roger Mischel (alternates for Jerome Deal and Greg Holmvik), Board members; Pat Fridgen (by phone) and Kent Lokkesmoe, non-voting members; Keith Weston, RRRA Executive Director; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Debra Walchuk, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Randy Richards, Congressman Cramer's Office; LeRoy Stumpf, Congressman Peterson's Office; Rob Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board Executive Director; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota State Water Commission (NDSWC); Rich Axvig and Tom Perdue, Grand Forks County Water Resource District; and Pat Downs, Moore Engineering, Inc.;

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

**Agenda**

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

**Minutes**

It was moved by Lance Yohe, seconded by John Finney and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018, meeting.

**Financial Report**

It was moved by Ben Varnson, seconded by Lance Yohe and unanimously carried to approve the Financial Report, as presented.

**Bills**

It was moved by John Finney and seconded by Lance Yohe to approve the payment of Checks #1533 through #1543, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

### **Amend 2018 budget**

It was moved by Lance Yohe and seconded by LeRoy Ose to authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to amend the RRRRA 2018 budget. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

### **2019 meeting dates**

It was moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Roger Mischel and unanimously carried to set the following as the regular meetings dates, times and places for the RRRRA in 2019:

- March 20 at 8:00 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, Minnesota
- June 26 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota
- September 10 at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota
- December 12 at 2:00 p.m. at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

### **Grant for outreach to promote soil health in the Red River Basin in 2019**

Keith Weston said funding is available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that could be used in 2019 to assist with workshops and field days relating to the promotion of soil health and its impacts on retaining moisture in the soil and reducing flood damages. It was moved by Lance Yohe, seconded by Roger Mischel and unanimously carried to support outreach in 2019 to promote soil health in the Red River Basin, as presented by the Executive Director.

### **NRCS Agreements**

*Cooperative Agreement 68-6633-16-517* with the NRCS to fund cooperation and joint coordination of flood damage reduction projects relating to the RCPP ended September 30, 2018. Mr. Weston provided copies of the final progress report submitted to Mary Podoll, North Dakota State Conservationist. Mr. Weston will continue working with the NRCS on a similar agreement to replace the expired agreement.

Mr. Weston distributed copies of the *6 Month Progress Report* submitted to the NRCS for Reporting Period 7 from May 21, 2018, through November 20, 2018, regarding the *Memorandum of Understanding – NRCS Agreement 14-C-ND-669*. It was moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Lance Yohe and unanimously carried to accept the *6 Month Progress Report* regarding the *Memorandum of Understanding – NRCS Agreement 14-C-ND-669*, as presented. Kent Lokkesmoe pointed out that flood mitigation projects completed in Moorhead could be included in Appendix 4.

### **NRCS Report**

Debra Walchuk reported on the status of the Farm Bill, RCPP reminders, submittal of the FY 2018 RCPP Progress Report, development of RCPP Plan Economics/Benefit Cost Analysis and the status of ongoing watershed planning projects.

Mr. Weston reported that 6 of the 7 North Dakota RCPP projects have been granted one-year extensions. They will continue working with all project sponsors to keep them on track.

### **Upper Sand Hill River RCPP Watershed Project**

As directed at the last meeting, the Executive Director sent a letter to the NRCS stating it is the opinion and position of the RRRRA to request the NRCS terminate *Cooperative Agreement 68-6322-16-522* if Sand Hill Watershed District is unable or unwilling to be a member of the Red River Watershed Management Board. The RRRRA received a copy of a letter the NRCS sent to Sand Hill Watershed District dated October 22, 2018, stating the contract is still valid and there would be no changes to the contract based on the recent RRRRA recommendation.

John Finney pointed out that the RRRRA sent the letter as a result of the discussion held with the NRCS at the September 5, 2018, meeting. Gary Thompson agreed that the action taken was at the direction given to the Board at that meeting. Ms. Walchuk said the response was based upon interpretation of the agreement by NRCS counsel. It was determined there are no contractual requirements contingent upon membership of the RRRRA.

Ms. Walchuk was asked to express the RRRRA's disappointment to Mary Podoll and Troy Daniell on how the matter was handled. Ms. Walchuk said she would do so.

Lance Yohe and Randy Gjestvang left the meeting at this time.

### **Executive Director report**

Mr. Weston informed the Board he has been sitting in on meetings of the scoping team for the Proposed Comprehensive Subwatershed Pilot Project in Cass County, North Dakota. The Board indicated support for continued involvement by Mr. Weston.

Mr. Weston discussed the purchase of updated outreach materials for upcoming events.

### **Agency and partner reports**

Gary Thompson reported Mr. Weston received the Steamboat Award from the Red River Joint Water Resource District at the North Dakota Water Convention in December.

Kent Lokkesmoe reported there would be no Minnesota bonding bill in 2019.

Pat Fridgen said the North Dakota legislative session begins in January. The State Water Commission approved recommendations for water development funding last week.

Copies of the *Red River Joint Water Resource District 2018-2022 Watershed Management Strategy* were distributed.

The *36th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference* will be held on January 15-17, 2019, in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Rob Sip informed the group about the *2019 Red River Watershed Management Board and Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup 21st Annual Joint Conference* on March 20 and 21, 2019, at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, Minnesota.

LeRoy Stumpf greeted the group on behalf of Congressman Peterson and reported on the Farm Bill.

**Meeting schedule**

The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2019, at 8:00 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, Minnesota.

**Adjournment**

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

APPROVED:

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Gary Thompson  
Co-Chair

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John Finney  
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

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Carol Harbeke Lewis  
Secretary-Treasurer