

MINUTES OF MEETING
RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 26, 2019

The Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) met on June 26, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Present were John Finney, Ben Varnson, Greg Holmvik, Dan Jacobson (alternate for Rodger Olson), LeRoy Ose (alternate for Roger Mischel) and Robert Rostad (alternate for Gary Thompson), Board members; Pat Fridgen and Kent Lokkesmoe, non-voting members; Keith Weston, Executive Director; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Melissa Maertens, Administrative Assistant; Christi Fischer and Debra Walchuk, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Rob Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board Executive Director; Randy Gjestvang, North Dakota State Water Commission; Tracy Halstensgard and Jason Braaten, Roseau River Watershed District; William A. Hejl, Rush River Water Resource District (by phone); Mike Opat and Pat Downs, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering, Inc.; and Jennifer Klostreich, Richland County Soil Conservation District.

John Finney called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Agenda

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

Minutes

It was moved by Robert Rostad, seconded by Dan Jacobson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2019, meeting.

Financial Report

It was moved by Greg Holmvik, seconded by LeRoy Ose and unanimously carried to approve the Financial Report, as presented.

Bills

It was moved by Ben Varnson and seconded by LeRoy Ose to approve the payment of Checks #1553 through #1568, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

2018 Audit

A motion was made by Dan Jacobson and seconded by Greg Holmvik to approve the 2018 audit of the Red River Retention Authority. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

2020 budget

A motion was made by Greg Holmvik and seconded by LeRoy Ose to approve the Red River Retention Authority 2020 budget. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Outreach Cooperative Agreement 68-6633-16-512

Mr. Weston stated the *6-Month Progress Report* for Reporting Period 8 from November 21, 2018, through May 20, 2019, regarding the *Memorandum of Understanding – NRCS Agreement 14-C-ND-669* has been completed and submitted to NRCS.

Mr. Weston reported that funds from *Cooperative Agreement 68-6633-16-512* were utilized to sponsor the Grand Forks County Soil Conservation District soil health workshop, the Red River Valley Conservation Service Area 1 Soil Health Training and Tour, the Nutrient Reduction BMP workshop at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, and the Red River Watershed Management Board joint conference. Approximately \$5,000 remains in the agreement, which expires September 30, 2019. Mr. Weston suggested the remaining funds may be used towards additional radio spots or additional soil health / drainage water management fact sheets.

NRCS Agreement 14-C-ND-669 Memorandum of Understanding – request to extend and amend

Mr. Weston reported *NRCS Agreement 14-C-ND-669* has been extended for 1 year, expiring May 20, 2021.

The Four-Legged Lake Watershed and Bois de Sioux Direct Watershed RCPP Watershed Planning projects in Minnesota have requested to cease planning. Letters of support to cease planning for the two watersheds have been sent to Mary Podoll, North Dakota State Conservationist.

NRCS Report

Debra Walchuk reported on meetings and conferences attended and NRCS updates.

Challenges relating to the economic analysis for RCPP Watershed Plans were discussed. NRCS suggested calculating the economics using the traditional method and supplementing the economics with a narrative explaining the environmental quality benefits of the RCPP Watershed Plan. With the addition of the supplemental narrative, NRCS may grant a waiver of the benefit-cost ratio requirement of 1.0 or higher. Kevin Farmer, National Watershed Operations Program Manager with the NRCS, will be visiting the Red River Basin on July 8 and 9, 2019, to discuss benefit-cost analyses of local RCPP Watershed Plans with project sponsors and tour various RCPP project areas.

Discussion was held on potential funding sources for design and construction of RCPP Watershed Plans.

It was moved by Ben Varnson, seconded by Robert Rostad and unanimously carried to schedule and support the trip for Kevin Farmer, National Watershed Operations Program Manager with the NRCS, to visit the Red River Basin on July 8 and 9, 2019.

Ms. Walchuk presented an update on the status of Minnesota RCPP Agreements, and Ms. Fischer presented an update on the status of North Dakota RCPP Agreements.

Upper Sand Hill River RCPP Watershed Project status / eligibility

Mr. Weston reported the Upper Sand Hill River RCPP Watershed Project team has postponed the team meeting this week. Ms. Walchuck stated the Upper Sand Hill River RCPP Watershed Project sponsor has requested an extension, which will not be considered until the Watershed Plan is further along.

Executive Director report

Mr. Weston reported the RRRA is a sponsor of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts summer tour of the Red River Valley on June 26-28, 2019.

Mr. Weston discussed potential outreach and education opportunities for 2020, including sponsorship of annual conferences and a booth at the Big Iron Farm Show. Mr. Weston requested to purchase additional items for distribution at outreach events to help determine if they are valuable to outreach and education of the RRRA.

It was moved by LeRoy Ose and seconded by Dan Jacobson to approve the purchase of outreach and education items as outlined by Mr. Weston, not to exceed \$750. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Weston reported he has been appointed to fill the remainder of a three-year term on Southeast Cass Water Resource District. He assured the Board that he will separate any overlapping duties.

Mr. Weston briefly discussed a request from Walsh County Water Resource District for the RRRA to participate in watershed planning activities for the rehabilitation of Forest River Dam #1 (Matejcek Dam). The Board was in agreement to do so.

Agency and partner reports

Kent Lokkesmoe stated Minnesota is transitioning with the new governor. Mr. Lokkesmoe announced retirement plans for himself and Rita Albright. New representatives from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be appointed for the RRRA in the future. The next Minnesota bonding bill is in 2020. Agency requests become public in July 2019 and the Minnesota legislature convenes in February 2020. John Finney thanked Mr. Lokkesmoe for his service.

Randy Gjestvang reported the North Dakota State Water Commission has been asked to become involved in the Forest River Matejcek Dam Rehabilitation in Walsh County.

Rob Sip reported the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) will be moving to a new office at the end of the week. The RRWMB will be co-located with the Wild Rice Watershed District. The RRWMB *2018 Annual Report* has been published on the website and the RRWMB is currently working on developing a strategic plan.

Meeting schedule

The next meeting will be held on September 10, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, 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