

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL SPECIAL MEETING  
RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY  
ORIGINATING AT THE WEST FARGO PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING  
810 12TH AVENUE NW  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

The Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) held a virtual / conference call special meeting on September 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Participating were John Finney, Greg Holmvik, Bill Petersen, Rodger Olson, Ben Varnson, Gary Thompson (alternate for Josh Ihry), Board members; Pat Fridgen and Ted Preister, non-voting members; Keith Weston and Brian Fuder, Executive Directors; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Nina Stone, Accountant; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Administrative Assistant; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Lisa Gibbens, ND Senator Kevin Cramer's office; William A. Hejl, Rush River Water Resource District; Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Alexa Ducioame, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.

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

**Agenda**

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

**Minutes**

It was moved by Greg Holmvik, seconded by Bill Petersen and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2023, meeting.

**Bills**

It was moved by Rodger Olson and seconded by Gary Thompson to approve the wire transfers, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the following Board members voted in favor: John Finney, Gary Thompson, Greg Holmvik, Ben Varnson, Bill Peterson, and Rodger Olson. The motion carried unanimously.

**Financial Report**

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

### **Outreach – KFGO ads and marketing**

Brian Fuder stated he will be meeting with KFGO to discuss additional outreach opportunities within the remaining contract with Midwest Radio & Digital of Fargo-Moorhead. Mr. Fuder discussed the outreach that has been accomplished thus far including previous radio advertisements and radio air time during the 2023 Big Iron Farm Show and he suggested promoting the Red River Basin Flood Impacts Survey through a radio advertisement.

### **Outreach – promotional items**

Mr. Fuder discussed new promotional items that were popular with attendees at the 2023 Big Iron Farm Show and indicated the promotional items help the RRRR reach more individuals.

### **Outreach – Red River Basin Flood Impacts Survey**

Discussion was held on the results thus far of the Red River Basin Flood Impacts Survey. The survey helps the RRRR gain insights into farmer and landowner views toward flood control in the Red River Basin in North Dakota and Minnesota. Mr. Fuder said the survey was promoted at the RRRR booth at the 2023 Big Iron Farm Show, however there were less responses than he would like. He will continue to promote the survey through the end of the year at various events and potentially through a radio advertisement on KFGO to gather more responses. The Board noted of the survey responses thus far, there is interest from the respondents in paying for additional flood control measures.

### **Draft 2024 Red River Basin Retention Project Prioritization List – updates from Water Resource Districts and Watershed Districts**

Discussion was held on the development of the 2024 Red River Basin Retention Project Prioritization List. Mr. Fuder said he is working with project sponsors on updating and prioritizing the projects on the list. The Board discussed various projects on the list and projects that could be potentially added to the list.

### **Outreach – Big Iron Farm Show 2023**

Mr. Fuder reported on the RRRR booth at the annual Big Iron Farm Show at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds September 12 through 14, 2023. There was record attendance at the show this year and the RRRR booth was in a great location. Mr. Fuder said the RRRR booth at the Big Iron Farm Show is a great opportunity to discuss and educate individuals on the RRRR and he recommends the RRRR have a booth at the Big Iron Farm Show in 2024.

A motion was made by Bill Petersen and seconded by Ben Varnson to approve the payment of one booth deposit for an RRRR booth at the Big Iron Farm Show 2024. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board discussed promoting the Red River Basin Flood Impacts Survey at any upcoming events, conferences and meetings Board members may attend such as the Prairie Grains Conference and the Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference.

### **2023 Farm Bill**

Mr. Fuder discussed an opportunity with the Midwest Council on Agriculture to testify on the 2023 Farm Bill on behalf of the RRRRA. A meeting was also held with the Midwest Council on Agriculture to discuss potential opportunities to provide further input on the 2023 Farm Bill. Mr. Weston indicated there may be a 2023 Farm Bill hearing scheduled in South Dakota that the RRRRA could potentially attend and provide testimony. The Board may also have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. in the future to provide testimony on the Farm Bill, as Co-Chairman John Finney has done in the past. The Board indicated the importance of providing testimony at upcoming 2023 Farm Bill hearings, should opportunities become available.

### **Mustinka River Rehabilitation and Redpath Flood Impoundment Project groundbreaking**

Mr. Fuder reported the Bois de Sioux Watershed District is hosting a groundbreaking ceremony on September 22, 2023, commencing construction of the Mustinka River Rehabilitation and Redpath Flood Impoundment Project. Mr. Fuder said he will be present at the event, representing the RRRRA.

### **Next meeting**

The Board discussed changing the time and location of the December 13, 2023, meeting as the Prairie Grains Conference is being held in Grand Forks, North Dakota on December 13 and 14. Mr. Fuder noted there is not a large enough space available at the Prairie Grains Conference to hold the RRRRA meeting. The Board discussed potential meeting locations near the Prairie Grains Conference for the December 13, 2023, RRRRA meeting. Following discussion, the Board directed Mr. Fuder to locate and secure a space near the Prairie Grains Conference for the December 13, 2023, RRRRA meeting. The time meeting is to be determined based on venue availability.

### **2023 budget update**

Discussion was held on the remaining RRRRA 2023 budget. It was noted there will be an increased funding request to the Red River Watershed Management Board and Red River Joint Water Resource District as Mr. Weston has moved into an advisory role while Mr. Fuder transitions into the RRRRA Executive Director position. Mr. Weston indicated he currently plans to retire from the RRRRA following the Prairie Grains Conference in December.

### **National Watershed Coalition conference**

Discussion was held on the upcoming National Watershed Coalition conference in Salt Lake City, Utah from October 1 through 4, 2023. Mr. Weston said the conference is typically well attended by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff and is a great networking opportunity for the RRRRA. Mr. Weston has attended the conference in the past and he said the estimated cost for an individual to attend the conference with travel costs is \$2,000. Mr. Fuder noted he will be out of town during those dates.

A motion was made by Gary Thompson, seconded by Rodger Olson and unanimously carried to approve and authorize Mr. Weston to attend the National Watershed Coalition conference in Salt Lake City, Utah from October 1 through 4, 2023.

### **Agency and partner reports**

Pat Fridgen updated the Board on the NDDWR. The next State Water Commission meeting will be held in Grand Forks, North Dakota at the Grand Forks City Council chambers on October 12, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Fridgen noted a remote option to attend the meeting will be available. Mr. Fridgen also thanked the Board for allowing Randy Gjestvang to represent the NDDWR at the RRRR booth at the Big Iron Farm Show.

The Board discussed the possibility of speaking at an upcoming State Water Commission meeting. Mr. Fridgen indicated the RRRR could contact him to schedule a brief presentation at a future State Water Commission pre-commission meeting to give a brief update on the RRRR.

Ted Preister updated the Board on recent activities of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). The 41st Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference will be held January 16-18, 2024, at the West Fargo Convention Center in West Fargo, North Dakota. The conference will largely focus on soil health topics this year. Mr. Preister also discussed other projects the RRBC is currently involved with.

### **NRCS biomass harvesting tour**

Mr. Weston reported the NRCS is coordinating a tour in Manitoba, Canada, of biomass harvesting on October 11 with NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Plan sponsors. Biomass harvesting is included in several North Dakota RCPP Plans. Mr. Weston said the tour is an opportunity to discuss biomass harvesting with individuals experienced in the process.

### **Secretary-Treasurer position / office staffing**

Brief discussion was held on the Secretary and Treasurer positions upon retirement of the current Secretary-Treasurer towards the end of the year. A motion was made by Bill Petersen and seconded by Greg Holmvik to name Melissa Hinkemeyer as Secretary and Nina Stone as Treasurer of the Red River Retention Authority upon retirement of the current Secretary-Treasurer. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

### **Meeting schedule**

The next RRRR meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2023. The time and location of the meeting will be announced prior to the meeting.

**Adjournment**

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

APPROVED:

---

Josh Ihry  
Co-Chair

---

John Finney  
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

---

Carol Harbeke Lewis  
Secretary-Treasurer