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These are DRAFT minutes, subject to amendment before final approval by the Red River Retention Authority.

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL / CONFERENCE CALL MEETING
RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024
10:00 A.M.

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) was held on September 19, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Present were John Finney, Bill Petersen, Keith Weston, Greg Holmvik, Don Kemp (alternate for Ben Varnson), Board members; Ted Preister, Theresa Ebbenga and Pat Fridgen, non-voting members; Brian Fuder, Executive Director; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Bruce Anderson, Barnes County Water Resource District; Alexa Ducioame, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co. Board members Josh Ihry and Ben Varnson were absent.

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

Approval of 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 Bill Petersen, seconded by Greg Holmvik, and unanimously carried to dispense reading of the minutes of the June 20 and July 31, 2024, meetings.

It was moved by Greg Holmvik and seconded by Bill Petersen to approve the minutes of the June 20 and July 31, 2024, meetings, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

Keith Weston moved to appoint Leilei Bao as Treasurer of the RRRA. Bill Petersen seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Leilei Bao presented the Financial Report of the RRRA.

It was moved by Keith Weston and seconded by Greg Holmvik to approve the following, as presented:

- Financial Report

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- Wire transfers

Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Board member appointments

Brian Fuder stated Rodger Olson has resigned from the RRRRA and the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) appointed Keith Weston to the RRRRA for the remainder of calendar year 2024.

Discussion was held on identifying alternates from the RRJWRD for the RRRRA. Mr. Fuder, Keith Weston and Don Kemp will discuss the matter at the upcoming RRJWRD Executive Committee meeting.

RRRA By-Laws

The Board discussed reviewing the RRRRA By-Laws to determine if any changes are warranted. Mr. Fuder asked the Board to review the By-Laws and bring any changes to the next meeting for discussion and consideration. The Board also indicated the By-Laws will be sent to the RRRRA Attorney for review.

Outreach

Mr. Fuder reported on the RRRRA booth at the Big Iron Farm Show 2024. The show was well-attended for most of the event and was a great outreach opportunity for the RRRRA. The Red River Basin Commission and Red River Watershed Management Board teamed up to help man the booth and discuss information with the show attendees. Mr. Fuder said the deadline to register for the Big Iron Farm Show 2025 is December 1, 2024, which guarantees the same booth for the 2025 Show. The cost of a booth registration is \$550.

A motion was made by Bill Petersen and seconded by Keith Weston to approve payment of one booth deposit for an RRRRA booth at Big Iron Farm Show 2025, in the amount of \$550. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fuder next discussed the opportunity for the RRRRA to have a booth at the Minnesota Watersheds annual conference in Nisswa, Minnesota on December 4th and 5th.

A motion was made by Greg Holmvik and seconded by Keith Weston to approve payment of one booth deposit for an RRRRA booth at the Minnesota Watersheds 2024 conference, in the amount of \$600. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fuder next discussed an opportunity for the RRRRA to have a booth at the Prairie Grains Conference in Grand Forks, North Dakota on December 11th and 12th.

A motion was made by Keith Weston and seconded by Don Kemp to approve payment of one booth deposit for an RRRRA booth at the Prairie Grains 2024 conference, in the amount of \$500. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

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2024 Partner Summit

Mr. Fuder reported on the RRRRA 2024 Partner Summit held July 31, 2024, at the East Grand Forks, Minnesota Eagles Club. The Summit included partner updates, a presentation from Collin Peterson on the Farm Bill and strategic planning in the afternoon. The Board thanked Mr. Fuder for organizing the event. Mr. Fuder discussed the report Houston Engineering, Inc. put together from the feedback received during the strategic planning session of the Summit. The feedback will be considered for implementation in the RRRRA strategic plan for fiscal year 2025 and beyond.

Strategic planning for fiscal year 2025

Mr. Fuder indicated a new RRRRA strategic plan needs to be developed for fiscal year 2025. John Finney stated the RRRRA needs to inform local congressional delegations on the purpose of the RRRRA and the ability for the RRRRA to accept and distribute federal funding throughout the basin for flood prevention projects and measures as the RRRRA represents the whole Red River Basin.

The Board discussed whether to update the strategic plan internally or hire a facilitator to assist with developing the plan. Mr. Fuder suggested reaching out to strategic planning consultants for an estimate of costs and timeline to develop a strategic plan for the RRRRA for 2025. The Board also discussed involving partners, agencies and the public in the process through public and agency meetings. Discussion was also held on funding for development of a strategic plan.

A motion was made by Keith Weston and seconded by Bill Petersen to authorize the Executive Director to obtain quotes from strategic planning consultants regarding development of a RRRRA strategic plan for fiscal year 2025. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director report – performance review

The Board discussed an annual performance review of the Executive Director, as the Director has now been employed for more than one year. The Board directed the Executive Director to prepare a document of his performance. The Secretary will distribute the performance review document to the Board for their review. The Board will finalize the performance review of the Executive Director in December.

Executive Director report – Midwest Council on Agriculture fly-in

Mr. Fuder stated the Midwest Council on Agriculture is hosting a fly-in in Washington, D.C. from November 18-20 to discuss priorities with local congressional delegates. The discussion will be mainly focused on the federal Farm Bill. The RRRRA activities fall under conservation in the Farm Bill and Mr. Fuder suggested he and any interested Board members attend the fly-in to discuss various issues including funding and legislation. One of the topics to be discussed would be the current number and status of dam rehabilitation projects in the Red River Basin and how the lack of federal funding for these projects will substantially hamper the necessary improvements. Mr. Fuder estimated \$2,200 in travel fees to attend the Washington, D.C. fly-in with the Midwest Council on Agriculture.

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It was moved by Bill Petersen and seconded by Greg Holmvik to authorize the Executive Director to attend the Midwest Council on Agriculture fly-in in Washington, D.C. from November 18-20, representing the RRRRA. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director report – Renewable Grid Energy

Mr. Fuder discussed an idea to include retention in renewable energy projects, such as the Renewable Grid Energy solar farm project in Harmony Township, Cass County, North Dakota. Mr. Fuder discussed the idea with Renewable Grid Energy, and although the solar project in Harmony Township is too advanced to add a retention feature, the company is interested in continuing discussions for future projects as they expand. Mr. Fuder said the idea is to bring additional environmental benefits to renewable energy companies while also creating additional retention on land that is already being taken out of agriculture production. The Board was in favor of pursuing the idea. Mr. Fuder indicated he will also begin conversations with other solar farm companies considering projects in the Red River Basin.

Executive Director report – Riverview Dairy

Similarly, Mr. Fuder said he has been in contact with Riverview Dairy to discuss a potential opportunity to add a retention feature to their new dairy facility planned for the Hillsboro, North Dakota area, as well as a potential future site in Abercrombie, North Dakota. Riverview Dairy is open to the idea and is interested in a more permanent pool for water supply for their operations. The Board agreed and encouraged Mr. Fuder to continue discussions with Riverview Dairy and other industries to come up with new creative ideas to implement additional retention in the Red River Basin.

Agency and partner reports

Pat Fridgen briefly updated the Board on the NDDWR budgeting for 2025.

Theresa Ebbenga updated on the activities of the MDNR including budgeting development for 2025, the upcoming Drayton Dam completion celebration in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers and Metro Flood Diversion Authority, drawdown of Lake Bronson Dam for upcoming construction, and sturgeon restoration activities in the Red River Valley in Minnesota.

Ted Preister updated on the activities of the RRBC including outreach activities such as Big Iron Farm Show 2024, working to get the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study moving forward again, soil health and conservation, and other projects.

Randy Gjestvang noted that the Elm River Dams Nos. 1, 2, and 3 improvements projects are continuing and will be completed this year.

Next meeting

The next RRRRA meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

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Adjournment

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

APPROVED:

Josh Ihry
Co-Chair

John Finney
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary

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