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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, DECEMBER 18, 2024
10:00 A.M.

A virtual / conference call meeting of the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) was held on December 18, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Present were John Finney, Josh Ihry, Bill Petersen, Keith Weston, Greg Holmvik, and Bruce Anderson, Board members; Ted Preister, non-voting member; Brian Fuder, Executive Director; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Don Kemp, Pembina County Water Resource District; Pamela Morrau, independent consultant; Randy Gjestvang and Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR); Alexa Ducioame, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.

Josh Ihry 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 amended.

Minutes

It was moved by Keith Weston and seconded by Greg Holmvik to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2024, meeting, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

The Treasurer 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
- Wire transfers
- Authorizing the Treasurer to amend the 2024 budget

Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

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2025 regular meeting dates, time, and location

It was moved by Bill Petersen, seconded by John Finney and unanimously carried to set the following as regular meeting dates at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota, for the RRRRA for 2025:

- March 19
- June 18
- September 17
- December 17

RRRA By-Laws

The Executive Director reported the RRRRA Attorney is reviewing and updating the By-Laws. A draft version of the By-Laws will be brought to a future meeting for the Board's review.

Outreach

Executive Director Brian Fuder stated he is pursuing partner and grant funding for educational outreach and marketing purposes. 4 of the top 5 goals identified in the 2024 RRRRA Partner Summit were educational based. Mr. Fuder proposed developing curriculum for training and education including identifying who the RRRRA intends to educate and why. Mr. Fuder suggested reaching out to engineering partners to inquire if they would be interested in sponsoring the RRRRA curriculum development. Sponsorships would allow the RRRRA to begin working on the project without delay due to budget constraints. The sponsors would also be a great resource for the RRRRA. The Board discussed asking the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) and Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) to consider allocating additional funds in the amount of \$5,000 each for this project. The RRJWRD and RRWMB will add this item to their January meeting agendas for consideration.

A motion was made by Keith Weston and seconded by Greg Holmvik to authorize the Executive Director to pursue funding opportunities for RRRRA curriculum development regarding educational outreach and marketing. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fuder next updated the Board on the recent Minnesota Watersheds Conference. Mr. Fuder had an RRRRA booth at the conference and discussed the RRRRA with many people, however the venue inhibited some conversational opportunities. Discussion was also held on the recent 61st Annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention. The convention was well-attended and there were ample communication and networking opportunities during the event.

Draft 2025 RRRRA Priority Projects List

The Executive Director discussed the draft 2025 RRRRA Priority Projects List. Most project sponsors have provided updates on their projects. A new map will be created after the list is finalized. Mr. Fuder noted he brings copies of the list and the map to the RRRRA outreach booths and displays as it is a great educational tool. The Board will consider finalizing the 2025 RRRRA Priority Projects List at the next meeting.

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Strategic planning for fiscal year 2025

Mr. Fuder discussed quotes received to facilitate a strategic plan for the RRRRA for fiscal year 2025. The quotes ranged from \$2,000 - \$10,000. Mr. Fuder suggested assembling an advisory group to build a framework for the strategic plan before considering hiring an external facilitator. The Board agreed and directed Mr. Fuder to form an advisory group to build the framework of the RRRRA 2025 strategic plan. Mr. Fuder will update the Board on the matter at a future meeting.

Executive Director report – Midwest Council on Agriculture fly-in

Mr. Fuder discussed the Midwest Council on Agriculture fly-in in Washington, D.C. that he attended on behalf of the RRRRA. Midwest Council on Agriculture was mainly focused on the Farm Bill during the trip. Mr. Fuder participated in the Midwest Council on Agriculture events and took the opportunity to meet with all local Minnesota and North Dakota delegates' offices while he was in Washington D.C. He discussed with them the need for funding for projects in the Red River Basin such as funding for dam rehabilitation projects, permitting issues in Minnesota, and PL-566 recommendations the RRRRA had previously drafted. Mr. Fuder indicated his trip went very well and he hopes to return to Washington D.C. in the future to continue discussions with the local delegations in D.C.

Executive Director report – Riverview Dairy

Mr. Fuder said he has continued discussions with Riverview Dairy on 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. Mr. Fuder indicated unfortunately the topography of the landscape at their Abercrombie site is not feasible for retention as floodwaters would need to be pumped to Riverview Dairy's site. Mr. Fuder will continue discussions with Riverview Dairy on their Hillsboro, North Dakota site to see if a project could be done at that site.

Executive Director report – Potential meeting with South Dakota

The Executive Director suggested opening up a dialogue with South Dakota representatives regarding the Red River Basin as there is a small portion of the Basin located in South Dakota. The Board discussed having representation from the RRJWRD and RRWMB present if a meeting with South Dakota is coordinated. Mr. Fuder will work on setting up a meeting with South Dakota representatives and bring an update to a future meeting.

Executive Director report – Legislative sessions (MN, ND, federal)

Mr. Fuder briefly discussed the upcoming Minnesota and North Dakota state legislative sessions and stated he expects he will be interacting with the legislatures on matters that impact the RRRRA during the sessions.

Executive Director performance review

The Board discussed the performance of the Executive Director and increasing the Executive Director's compensation by 5%, which includes a 3.2% cost of living adjustment and a 1.8% merit adjustment.

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A motion was made by Keith Weston and seconded by Greg Holmvik to approve a 5% salary increase for the Executive Director, including back pay from July 2024 – December 2024, and moving the Executive Director’s anniversary to January 1. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

John Finney noted the membership to the Midwest Council on Agriculture has provided many valuable opportunities for the RRRRA. If the opportunity arises to send Mr. Fuder to Washington D.C. again, the Board will strongly consider it to continue communication with the local federal delegation in D.C. Mr. Fuder indicated he is also looking forward to making contact with newly-elected Representative Fedorchak and North Dakota Governor Armstrong in the future.

Agency and partner reports

Ted Preister updated on the activities of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). Mr. Preister said the RRBC is partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on a large-scale soil health project. Currently, 32,000 acres of new conservation practices have been implemented on agricultural land in the area. The goal is 500,000 acres included in the project. The RRBC is excited to see the outcome of the project on water quality and carbon sequestration in particular. To assist with the project, the RRBC recently hired a full-time soil health coordinator. In Minnesota, the RRBC is actively working on a phosphorous offset plan funded by the Minnesota legislature. Mr. Preister also updated the Board on the Lower Red River Regional Detention Study that is being done in coordination with the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Preister invited everyone to attend the upcoming RRBC conference in January. The focus of the conference is resilience.

Randy Gjestvang briefly updated the Board on the NDDWR’s proposed budget and the federal Water Resources Development Act bill.

2025 regular meeting dates, time, and location - amended

The Secretary noted there is a conflict with another meeting on March 19, 2025, and suggested moving the RRRRA March meeting to March 20, 2025, instead.

It was moved by Keith Weston, seconded by Bill Petersen and unanimously carried to amend the motion setting the regular meeting dates to the following at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department in West Fargo, North Dakota, for the RRRRA for 2025:

- March 20
- June 18
- September 17
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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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