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

MINUTES OF RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
SEPTEMBER 16, 2026
10:00 A.M.

A meeting of the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) was held on September 16, 2026. Josh Ihry called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present were John Finney, Josh Ihry, Bill Petersen, Greg Holmvik, Keith Weston, and Bruce Anderson (Alternate for Tom Perdue), Board members; Pat Fridgen and Ben Bergey, non-voting members; Brian Fuder, Executive Director; Melissa Hinkemeyer, Secretary; Amy Hepper, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Rita Nelson, Accounting Assistant; Robert Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB); Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering Co.; Mike Opat, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Bethany Bethke, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and Dan Money, Two Rivers Watershed District. Board Member Tom Perdue was absent.

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

Minutes
It was moved by Greg Holmvik and seconded by John Finney to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2026, meeting, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Items
The Director, Secretary presented the Financial Report of the RRRA.

It was moved by Keith Weston and seconded by Bill Petersen to approve the Financial Report and wire transfers as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Project Development – Congressionally Directed Spending requests
Brian Fuder reported on the status of the requests for congressionally directed spending for construction ready projects in the Red River Basin. Mr. Fuder noted instead of himself traveling to Washington D.C. this year it may be more beneficial for the RRWMB project development representative in Washington D.C. to visit the Red River Basin to tour the projects with congressional delegate staff.

Mr. Fuder indicated he is interested in pursuing congressionally directed funding for North Dakota projects when they are construction ready.

Discussion was held on the travel request and associated funding allocation. The Board directed Mr. Fuder to coordinate the visit with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A motion was made by Bill Petersen and seconded by Keith Weston to approve the travel request for the RRWMB project development representative in Washington D.C. to visit the Red River Basin to tour retention projects with congressional delegate staff, not to exceed $3,000. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Outreach

Mr. Fuder reported the RRRA is attending and has a booth at the Big Iron Farm and Construction Show this week and there has been a good turnout so far.

Mr. Fuder updated the Board on the planning of the joint conference with the Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (MNFDRWG), Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD), and the RRWMB.

There are a few upcoming conferences and events that the RRRA will be present at in North Dakota and Minnesota. Mr. Fuder also indicated he will be participating in a local radio farm show this fall and there is one more issue of the North Dakota Water Magazine that will feature the RRRA this year.

Mr. Fuder is considering attending a national water conference and will update the Board when conference information becomes available.

The Board discussed the layout of the RRRA booth at outreach events and suggested including drone footage of retention projects. Mr. Fuder will incorporate those suggestions into future events.

Executive Director report – Water Management Advisory Group

Next Mr. Fuder discussed the Red River water management advisory committee he is leading to be proactive and consider future water supply needs of the Red River Basin and how retention may help meet those needs. The advisory group is made up of various Water Resource and Watershed District members and technical staff who are holding meetings to discuss water supply needs in the Red River Basin. Mr. Fuder noted the working group in Minnesota and North Dakota are now combined and pursuing a basin-wide plan including identification of potential projects now and in the future. The committee is considering producing an annual report of their findings. Mr. Fuder asked the Board for direction on the advisory committee's goals and objectives. The advisory group will meet on September 18, 2026. The Board discussed having a Board member attend the meeting to provide direction to the group.

Executive Director report – Special District Discussion

Mr. Fuder suggested the RRRA consider pursuing becoming a federal special district. The Red River Basin is frequently divided between federal regulatory agencies such as FEMA and the Corps of Engineers. A special district would provide consistency across the Red River Basin as well as provide opportunity to have a bigger influence federally. The potential of RRRA being a special district was discussed at the creation of the RRRA, at the time it was not pursued. This would allow the RRRA to assist project sponsors with activities such as land acquisition for projects.

Mr. Fuder discussed additional research gathered on similar existing federal districts including their capabilities, authorities, and budgets. Mr. Fuder contacted the Susquehanna special district to find out additional information on the process and effort needed both legislatively and financially to form a special district. Mr. Fuder suggested researching if grant funding is available for this effort. The Board indicated this would be a substantial effort for the RRJWRD and RRWMB to fund for the RRRA. Discussion continued on the potential benefits and drawbacks of a special district. The Board directed Mr. Fuder to bring back additional information on the benefits and usefulness of a special district to the Board for further discussion at a future meeting.

Agency and partner reports

Ben Bergey updated the Board on the activities of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Mr. Bergey noted the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group is meeting next week in Ada, Minnesota. Mr. Bergey also discussed the outcome of the recent Minnesota legislative session with $9 million allocated for flood hazard mitigation projects. Of that $9 million allocated, $8 million has been allocated specifically to the Red River Basin.

Pat Fridgen updated the Board on the activities of the North Dakota Department of Water Resources (NDDWR). Mr. Fridgen indicated the State Water Commission pre-commission meeting will be held today, and they will discuss updating their cost-share program based on budget forecasts and feedback received. It is anticipated the Commission will finalize their program in December.

Rob Sip reported on the recent RRWMB meeting including discussions on legislative development for the next legislative session, bonding work, acquiring funding for the International Water Institute River Watch Program in Minnesota, and securing funding for projects through various funding sources. The Minnesota legislative session begins in January.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, ND.

Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) – Impacts of Subsurface Agricultural Drainage on Watershed Peak Flows Study

John Finney suggested a presentation from a member of the BTSAC on the study completed in 2012 regarding Impacts of Subsurface Agricultural Drainage on Watershed Peak Flows. The Board discussed inviting Chuck Fritz to a future meeting to present on the study and its results.

2027 Meeting Dates

Keith Weston proposed scheduling additional RRRA meetings in 2027 instead of quarterly meetings due to additional activities being pursued by the RRRA. Mr. Ihry indicated this could be beneficial and lead to shorter more efficient meetings.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection at 11:13 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Josh Ihry
Co-Chair

John Finney
Co-Chair

ATTEST:

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Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary

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