



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

John Finney, President-Humboldt LeRoy Carriere-Roseau Dan Money-Hallock Ben Kleinwachter-Strandquist
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Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

March 18, 2014

University of Minnesota – Crookston campus, Crookston, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at the University of Minnesota - Crookston campus, Crookston, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

LeRoy Carriere	Dan Money
Ben Kleinwachter	LeRoy Ose
Daniel Wilkens	Greg Holmvik
Jerome Deal	

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Heidi Hughes, Public Information Officer
- Nick Drees, Project Coordinator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Danny Omdahl, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Pat Downs, Executive Director, RRRRA
- Jim Zeigler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Joe Courneya, Project Manager, RRBC
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Blake Carlson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
- Tracy Halstensgard, Administrator, Roseau River WD

Motion by Manager Deal to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Kleinwachter, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Deal to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

P. Downs distributed a monthly report of activities. He reported that Anne Simmons, a Senior Professional Staff member on the House Agriculture Committee's Democratic staff, conducted a meeting on March 10th at the RRRA office regarding the rule making process for the Farm Bill legislation. He added that he continues to communicate with local Congressional staff members relative to the legislation and that he participated on a team that generated questions and developed recommendations that were forwarded to A. Simmons and Congressman Peterson for clarification with NRCS Chief Jason Weller as they begin the rule making process.

P. Downs explained that Watershed Districts must apply for funding through partnership agreements and conservation program contracts. The regional partnerships will use existing conservation programs to help address water retention in the Red River basin and other areas of the country. Up to six geographical areas can be designated as Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) by the Secretary of Agriculture. The RRRA is currently developing the application components required to obtain CCA designation.

N. Drees asked about the cost-benefit ratio required in order to utilize the conservation programs. P. Downs responded that the NRCS cost-benefit ratio differs from the USACE's in that it incorporates agricultural land benefits.

Water Quality Project Monitoring

N. Erickson explained that W. Goeken forwarded copies of the IWI Monitoring and Education Activity Report and the 2014 Red River Basin River Watch Forum program for today's meeting.

N. Erickson extended an invitation from W. Goeken to RRWMB board members, staff and attendees for lunch in Brown Dining Hall. Following lunch, board managers were requested to view the River Watch poster displays in Bede Ballroom and vote on the *Manager's Choice Award*.

Public Information Initiative

H. Hughes, Public Information Officer, discussed her monthly activities. She is assisting with planning efforts for the 16th Joint Annual Conference which included expanding the email database list for the news media in the Red River basin. She is also coordinating the live KFGO broadcast on the morning of Tuesday, March 25, 2014 prior to the beginning of the conference. She asked for suggestions for potential individuals to be interviewed during the radio broadcast as well as subjects for the interviews. Following discussion, the board agreed the following individuals should participate in the broadcast: J. Finney, J. Deal, D. Wilkens, R. Harnack, M. Carroll and J. Ziegler. She requested that suggestions for interview subjects be forwarded to her prior to the conference.

H. Hughes explained that her professional background includes developing information for NBC broadcasts. She has extensive experience in developing concise articles and inquired whether the board would consider utilizing this skill to expand the board's social media exposure through Facebook. A Facebook page would provide the ability to target specific markets in order to increase awareness of board and member watershed district objectives and achievements.

H. Hughes stated that she developed a sample Facebook page for board consideration and added that she would forward the link to board members for review. The board requested her to conduct a Facebook demonstration at the next monthly meeting.

Project Coordinator Report

In the absence of Ron Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. Legislative updates include:

1. **Bonding FDR**: The House and Senate are continuing hearings on various bonding bill requests. R. Harnack reported that he provided testimony when the Governor's recommendations were discussed as no funding was included for FDR. R. Harnack suggested that with a \$25M appropriation, another 10 community projects could be completed with most of the them in the Red River basin. R. Harnack noted that he's met with several legislative delegates who are supportive of this request.
2. **Bonding RIM Reserve**: Bills have been introduced to fund RIM Reserve in the bonding bill ranging from \$15M to \$20M.
3. **Sales Tax**: Last year cities and counties were added to township exemption from sales tax, however, watershed districts were not included. Bills are being introduced to include sales tax exemption for special districts and joint powers of special districts which would include watershed districts and the RRWMB.
4. **Construction Sales Tax Exemption**: A bill is being introduced in both tax committees that exempts construction materials from sales tax for public projects provided that the bid requests include the contractor's estimate.
5. **LSOHC Funding**: The LSOHC has recommended funding for the Mustinka River Restoration in the Bois de Sioux WD. The \$2.44M request is currently moving through both the House and Senate.
6. **Conservation Easement Taxation**: Several bills have been introduced to allow local assessors to determine the tax on conservation easements. The policy issue involves land going into conservation easements from LSOHC and Clean Water Funds without requiring payment-in-lieu of taxes.

The Minnesota Association of Watershed District's (MAWD) Legislative Reception & Briefing is scheduled for March 19-20, 2014. An invitation has been extended to Red River Basin legislators for the March 19th Legislative Reception.

Administrator Report

A) Governing Documents' Revisions

N. Erickson reported that the Joint Powers Agreement has been forwarded to member watershed districts to be executed by the respective governing bodies. Several copies have been signed and returned. After all the signatures have been received, the information will be forwarded to Brandner Printing to begin printing the revised publication.

B) 16th Joint Annual Conference

The Joint Annual Conference is scheduled for March 25-26, 2014 at the Holiday Inn in Detroit Lakes, MN. The conference packet is available on the board's website.

C) Committees & Membership

N. Erickson stated that due Ron Osowski's retirement, several vacant positions on various committees and organizations need to be filled. Manager Finney reviewed the Committees & Membership list and made the following appointments:

Governing Documents Committee - LeRoy Carriere

Monitoring Advisory Committee - Dan Money

Red River Basin Commission - LeRoy Carriere/alternate

Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group - LeRoy Carriere
Mediation Agreement - Ben Kleinwachter
Drainage Sub-Committee (Rules & Regulations) - Ben Kleinwachter
Red River Retention Authority - Greg Holmvik/delegate, LeRoy Carriere/alternate

D) Red River Watershed Coordinator Contract

N. Erickson explained that the MDNR and the RRWMB jointly fund the Red River Watershed Coordinator position (Dan Thul) which allows for the State to provide ~ 25% of a full time equivalent to assist the RRWMB to coordinate activities between the MDNR and the RRWMB. The total obligation for all compensation and reimbursements to the State under this contract is \$24,000 each year for a two-year period (07/01/13 - 06/30/15).

At the January board meeting, Peter Buessler, Regional Manager - DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources, reported that from July 1 – the December 17th D. Thul had spent 40% of his billable hours on work for the RRWMB which exceeded the 25% of his time planned for in the contract. The net result is about 80% of the \$24,000 (~\$19,000) of our contract with RRWMB has been spent. Approximately 90 hours of Dan's time remains for the remainder of FY14.

The Human Resources Committee met with P. Buessler via conference call following the February board meeting and discussed the following options for board consideration in order to address this situation for the remainder of 2014:

- The hours D. Thul provides to the RRWMB could be limited between now and June 30 to the remaining available funds (~90 hrs./\$4,850)
- The existing contract could be amended to cover either:
 - 25% of his billable hours as was identified in the original contract (\$8,775)
 - 40% of his billable hours to reflect the same level of time he has been spending in the first half of FY14 (\$22,500).

The Human Resources Committee agreed to recommend pursuing the first option under amending the existing contract to the board for consideration. **Motion** by Manager Ose to authorize the existing contract to be amended to cover 25% of D. Thul's billable hours for the remainder of 2014 (\$8,775), **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **River Watch Forum**, Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at the University of Minnesota - Crookston Campus.
2. **MAWD Legislative Reception & Day at the Capitol**, March 19-20, 2014.
3. **Pre-conference Workshop, Tile Drainage and Rules & Regulations Update**, Tuesday, March 25, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to noon, Holiday Inn Detroit Lakes - Inn on the Lake, Detroit Lakes, MN.
4. **16th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference)**, Tuesday, March 25, 2014 - Wednesday, March 26, 2014.

Red River Basin Commission

J. Courneya, Project Manager, RRBC announced that the June tour and board meeting is scheduled for June 4-5, 2014 in Roseau, MN. Projects within the Roseau River WD and Two Rivers WD will be points of interest along the tour route.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul distributed an email that was forwarded to J. Lewis - Executive Director, RRBC regarding the proposed funding process for the Diversion Authority. The email offered a suggestion from the TAC for consideration by the RRBC relative to extending the proposed 8-day detention period to better reflect historical peak flow durations.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that the impoundment in the Hay Creek/Norland Project is operational and ready to be utilized to manage spring runoff. An operating plan using local triggers has been adopted. The District has been contacted by several local contractors who are interested in completing the final punch-list items this summer.
- The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported that at the request of Polk County, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) held a hearing on the redistribution of managers within the District. Before BWSR's North Region Committee made their recommendation to the BWSR board, Polk County requested tabling the recommendation until additional information could be presented. The BWSR board agreed to table the request and scheduled an early March meeting date for another public meeting. The issue remains unresolved.
- The Red Lake WD distributed several handouts for board consideration relative to the upcoming *Tile Drainage and Rules & Regulations Update* workshop scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to noon, Holiday Inn Detroit Lakes, MN.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Green Meadow Project Team is scheduled to meet on March 28, 2014. Plans are to finalize the Goals and Objective Statement at the meeting and then proceed with developing solutions to meet the goals.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on April 15, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:05 p.m. following lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator