The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held a regular meeting on Monday, July 13, 2009, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. BRRWD Managers present were Roger G. Ellefson, John E. Hanson, Curtis M. Nelson, Gerald L. VanAmburg, and E. Robert Olson. Others attending included: Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Zachary Herrmann, Engineer, and Julie Jerger, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.); Tami L. Norgard, Attorney, Vogel Law Firm; Robert Backman, River Keepers; Charles Fritz, International Water Institute (IWI); E. Bruce Langness, Ulteig Engineers, Inc. (UEI); Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Greg Anderson, Oakport Township Chairman; Mark Thelen, Tom Fischer, Mark Brodshaug, and Attorney Sean Fredricks, Southeast Cass Water Resource District (SCWRD); and landowners: Tony Karp, Chris Stepp, Debbie Stepp, and Ardean Haugrud.

Manager Ellefson called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM. He announced that the proceedings were being taped to aid in preparation of the minutes.

**Secretary's Report.** The Board reviewed draft minutes for the 6/08/09 regular BRRWD meeting, the 4/15/09 Project No. 61, Clay County Ditch No. 11N Final Hearing, and the 4/23/09 Wolverton Creek Clean Water Legacy (CWL) informational meeting. Nelson noted a minor correction for the Wolverton Creek minutes. **Motion** by Nelson to approve the minutes, subject to correction. **Seconded** by Hanson. **Approved.**

**Treasurer's Report.** The Board reviewed the monthly financial statements, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, summary of income, and the accounts receivable report. Albright reported that we received the first half property taxes from Becker County ($60,955.51) and Clay County ($442,337.18). Becker County also forwarded their first half ditch system collections ($11,253.75). To date, Clay County has not remitted their ditch system collections. We also received $87,015.00 from Pifer's Auction and Realty for the 6/16/09 Oakport buyout auction. Albright noted that the City of Georgetown did pay their $5,000 payment in 2007, but due to a misallocation at the Clay County Auditor's Office, the payment went to Clay County Ditch No. 54 instead of Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee. Account transfers were made to rectify the error. Currently, we have approximately $267,996.86 cash on hand. The $500,000 Midwest Bank loan for the Sieben property buyout in Oakport is still outstanding. The office has sent a pay request for this funding to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Albright briefly discussed what income he anticipates in the next few months. Olson asked if the 2008 ringdike work was billed before the 6/30/09 deadline. Albright said that we received a bill from Ziegler Construction and made the payment before the deadline. According to the Grant Agreement, we have until 8/15/09 to submit the 2008 ringdike bills to the DNR. All other current grants have been extended due to the spring flood. **Motion** by VanAmburg to approve the Treasurer's Report. **Seconded** by Olson. **Approved.**
Other business brought before the Board included:

**River Keepers.** Robert Backman, Executive Director, River Keepers, presented a report on River Keepers activities, staff, and volunteers. He distributed copies of their annual report for the Board's review. He noted that the SS Ruby pontoon tours and the annual Red River Water Festival are outstanding examples of their community/educational outreach programs. Next year, Backman plans to work with the City of Breckenridge to establish a Water Festival for their community similar to the Festival held in Moorhead. River Keepers plans to continue work on riparian restorations at the Living Laboratory on South University DR in Fargo. They will also work with Clay County and the City of Moorhead to enact a setback ordinance to address the slumping problems on the Red River. He thanked the BRRWD for their continuing financial support. Backman explained that because the BRRWD donates $40,000 per year in undesignated funds, River Keepers is able to leverage other financial support for their activities by using the BRRWD funding as matching funds.

Backman discussed a flood statement River Keepers prepared this year in response to the 2009 spring flood. Backman noted that if the recommendations that the International Joint Commission (IJC) made after the 1997 spring flood had been implemented, less flood damage would have occurred. River Keepers recommends that the area cities enact regulations prohibiting the construction of new homes in flood prone areas, and build all dike projects with minimum impacts to the river. They also encourage a critical review of all the organizations dealing with the Red River to determine their efficiency. River Keepers also advocates the exploration of a "Red River Authority", which would be an organization that would have control over the various aspects related to flooding. He also mentioned that it appears that residents who had property in the floodway this spring have gone back to "business as usual" without considering the cost of the city/local/state flood protection.

Albright noted that the BRRWD is in the last year of our 3-year funding commitment to River Keepers. The group discussed our 2010 budget and future funding for River Keepers. Ellefson commented that the BRRWD appreciates the River Keepers efforts on behalf of the Red River of the North. Their work is very important to the entire watershed.

**Red River Basin Mapping Initiative (RRBMI)** Update. Chuck Fritz, IWI, gave a brief update of the Digital Elevation Modeling (DEM) collect in the Red River Basin. The acquisition phase for the entire basin was completed this spring. All the data will be processed by next summer. A map viewer is now available on the IWI website that will allow anyone to generate 2’ contours from the LiDAR data where data is currently available in the Basin. Fritz noted that during the month of April and during the spring flood, their site received over 500,000 requests for information. Communities, landowners, and engineering firms used information from their website. The next phase of the project will be to determine what type of tools should be developed using the collected data.

**Karppinen Ringdike.** Albright gave a brief history regarding Karppinen's request for a ringdike for his property, located south of Sabin along the South Branch of the Buffalo River on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 52. The soils testing investigation showed that due to the proximity of the buildings/house to the river and an underlying problem with riverbank failure, a ringdike for his property would not be advisable. Karppinen's property flooded this spring and again in June. On July 2, 2009, H.E. submitted an application for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a buyout for Karppinen. At this point, no decision has been made by FEMA regarding that application. Albright noted that Karppinen is not obligated to take a buyout if the funding is approved.

Karppinen explained an alternate plan that includes a floodwall, which he feels would reduce loading on the bank and soils, making it possible to construct a ringdike. The Board discussed the option and potential
costs for a floodwall. Jones explained that Midwest Testing found in their geotechnical review that the riverbank is currently failing, and any additional weight could accelerate the rate of the slope failure. Ellefson felt that if there was a chance that the plan might work, it should be reviewed. VanAmburg was concerned about the potential costs of the floodwall. The DNR would also need to review the proposal in regards to their ringdike requirements. Karppinen reported that the trailer house on his lot has now been removed. He also said that the flood this spring was about 6"-8" lower than the 1997 flood. Karppinen noted that he has lived on his property for 35 years and has never noticed the "slope creep", or bank failure. The trees on his property are still stable. The Board authorized Jones to review Karppinen's plan.

**Adrian Haugrud Wetland Concern.** Zach Herrmann, H.E., presented the results of his preliminary investigation of a water problem along the county line in Section 34, Humboldt Township, Clay County, and Section 4, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County. At the last meeting, Chris and Debbie Stepp and Adrian Haugrud discussed their concerns regarding a series of DNR protected wetlands near Haugrud's buildings that have consolidated into one water body and have risen to a point where they are overtopping roads. Highwater over the township road in this area has affected mail delivery, garbage pickup, the school bus route, and could impede emergency vehicles access to the area.

Herrmann used a map to discuss four alternatives for lowering the wetland/pond. The first option would be to install an inlet pipe in the waterbody, which would include an inlet structure with stoplogs. This option would include an excavated channel at a depth that would maintain a reduced elevation in the wetland to gravity flow the excess water to a 65" x 40" reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) in the Interstate-94 (I-94) right-of-way (r-o-w), eventually entering Wilkin County Ditch No. 41, Branch 5. Another option would be to install 850' of tile to the I-94 r-o-w. The downstream routing would remain the same. Initial estimates indicate that the first option to excavate a channel might be cheaper than tiling. The third alternative would minimize the impacts on the nearby wetlands by utilizing a tile line and inline structure for 400' and then 400' of open cut channel in an alignment designed to avoid the area wetlands, paralleling the I-94 r-o-w on the east following a natural swale. The fourth alternative would be a temporary outlet with a culvert in the township road bordering the waterbody with minimal excavation to drain the initial drawdown naturally through temporary r-o-w. In a year or two, Jones thought the BRRWD could acquire the permanent r-o-w, if needed, which would be significantly less acreage.

Ellefson commented that the county line township road has been raised at least 2 or 3 times in the last few years. He questioned how deep the channel cuts would be. Herrmann thought the cuts would be approximately 4'-6'. The other alternatives would require deeper cuts with rock drop structures. The Board discussed the options' details. Albright pointed out that raising the road keeps the water in the wetland, but there is also water encroaching on roadways/buildings in the surrounding area.

Ardean Haugrud asked if H.E. had considered installing an equalizer pipe in 100th ST. Herrmann said that part of the plan would be to either install a pipe in the road or excavate a channel through the road on a temporary basis to drain the water. Haugrud asked how far H.E. plans to lower the wetland. Herrmann explained that the DNR will have to establish an Ordinary High Water (OHW) elevation for the wetland. Jones noted that he has already requested the DNR to conduct an OHW survey. By permit, we could go 1.5' below the OHW. The current working plan is to reduce the wetland/water elevation by about 3'.

Chris Stepp noted that with the amount of water along 210th ST, they won't be able to access their homestead next spring. The group discussed area wetland elevations and the effects on area roadways. VanAmburg suggested that H.E. investigate the outlet further to find the quickest, easiest, and cheapest solution for this problem.
Albright suggested that to move forward with the project, the DNR will have to finish their OHW determination, and H.E. needs to finish their report. The Board can schedule an informational meeting once this work is done. If the landowners are interested in proceeding with a project, then the BRRWD will have to explore possible funding sources. **Motion** by VanAmburg to authorize H.E. to finish their study and setup a landowner informational meeting. **Seconded** by Nelson. **Approved.** The Board agreed that the Fargo H.E. office would handle the meeting notices.

**Fargo Southside Flood Control (FSSFC).** E. Bruce Langness, UEI, explained that UEI is the consultant for SCWRD regarding the FSSFC project. He introduced the SCWRD Board members who were present at tonight's meeting and their attorney. The BRRWD has agreed to assist with the Environmental Assessment (EA) by contacting landowners on the Minnesota side of the Red River of the North to obtain permission for staff to access their property in order to conduct the EA. The SCWRD has also requested the BRRWD participate in a Joint Powers Agreement.

Tom Fischer, SCWRD, explained that when they met with the FSSFC Technical Committee on 7/07/09, they were given a variety of information concerning the project studies/engineering, etc. Fischer asked if the Board would like access to any of the information.

Albright and Managers VanAmburg and Olson met last fall and winter with the City of Moorhead and Clay County regarding the FSSFC and the EA property access issue. Both the City and County agreed that the BRRWD should be the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) to represent the interests of the Minnesota agencies/landowners regarding the FSSFC. The BRRWD approved a motion to assist with the EA. UEI has forwarded a list of the parties who the BRRWD will need to be contact to obtain permission to access their property to complete the EA. To date, due to a heavy workload resulting from the flooding this spring/summer, the BRRWD has not had time to contact these parties.

UEI sent a letter to the BRRWD regarding the Joint Powers Agreement that the SCWRD would like the Managers to consider. The Managers all received a copy of the letter for their review. The Board has been reluctant to commit to the project, but preferred to take each issue on an individual basis. Currently, no formal Agreement has been drafted.

Mark Thelen, SCWRD, suggested that if the BRRWD doesn't have time to make the landowner contacts, perhaps UEI could provide staff to help visit with the landowners. Sometimes, the landowners have just forgotten to sign and return the permission forms. Albright suggested that the BRRWD could draft a letter to the landowners, explaining the importance of the EA and encouraging them to allow personnel to conduct the EA survey on their property. Ellefson noted that the Board is aware of the landowners' concerns regarding the FSSFC project. Some landowners are not going to welcome UEI personnel on their property. Thelen said that the SCWRD is aware of the landowners' concerns regarding the FSSFC, and they are trying to work through these difficult issues with the BRRWD's help.

The group discussed the need to hold another landowner meeting. VanAmburg suggested that it might be better to wait until this fall when the COE might have more information regarding their area-wide project study. Thelen felt it was important to complete the EA before winter. Albright felt that the office could prepare a letter for distribution this week with UEI's help. **Motion** by VanAmburg to authorize the preparation of a letter regarding the landowner permission to access their property to complete the EA and authorize consultants to get that work completed. In addition, the BRRWD would also authorize Tami Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, to work with SCWRD to develop a Joint Powers Agreement with the BRRWD. **Seconded** by Hanson. **Approved.**
Tom Fischer noted that if the Board needs any more information, they just have to ask the SCWRD. The group discussed the current FSSFC plans. Albright noted that the Red River Basin Commission has scheduled a bus tour to view the Winnipeg Diversion on 7/16/09.

**Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation.** Kris Carlson, UEI, has prepared a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMAR) for submittal to FEMA and other permitting agencies to notify them that we will be asking them to remove approximately 750 acres within the dike alignment from the floodplain. The CLOMAR includes a description of the building standards we plan to follow for the Oakport Flood Mitigation levee system, and it asks that the agencies certify that the levee will protect the identified properties and amend the flood insurance maps to reflect the levee certification. **Motion** by Hanson to authorize UEI to submit the CLOMAR application and to approve the fee payment of $5,500. **Seconded** by Nelson. **Approved.** Following review of the completed project, FEMA will decide if they can issue a Letter of Map Revision (LOMAR) to officially remove the land from the floodplain. Langness explained that the agencies have 90 days to respond to the CLOMAR.

E. Bruce Langness, UEI, requested that the Board authorize UEI to advertise for bids for Phases 1B and 2 for the Oakport Flood Mitigation project. Plans and specifications have been prepared and are ready for bidding. The advertisements will be published in The Forum and the Construction Bulletin. A bid opening will be held in the Barnesville office on 8/10/09 at 8:00 PM. Plans are also available online from UEI.

Kevin Campbell and Greg Anderson discussed their concerns about the specified completion date language in UEI's bid documents. Carlson explained that because of the volume of material that must be moved, a realistic completion date would be late summer/fall 2010. However, UEI has stipulated that at least 50% of the work must be done by 11/15/09. Campbell felt that the contractor should be able to finish Phases 1B and 2 this fall. He's concerned that the contractor could choose to finish other jobs this fall because they have until next fall to finish the Oakport work. Anderson commented that several contractors have told him that they could get the work done this year. Anderson and Campbell explained that they want protection in place next spring in the event we have another spring flood. They want the contract to require project completion by freeze-up this year with language to allow for an extension, if necessary. The group discussed the compaction requirements for a certified dike and the need to allow for dry material in order to achieve optimum compaction (95%). Anderson pointed out that Phase 1B would be the most crucial area to be finished in terms of flood protection for next spring. Langness commented that UEI would be very happy to have the first two phases completed this fall, but not at the expense of constructing a certifiable dike. He explained that if necessary, temporary flood protection could be installed in the dike area next spring.

Langness noted that Carlson is also preparing plans and specifications for Phase 3A, which is the north leg of the levee along the Brentwood subdivision. Bids for Phase 3A will be opened on 8/27/09, with anticipated completion this fall. The group discussed the contractor qualifications needed to build the Oakport project.

Campbell felt that at the very least, the clearing and grubbing could be completed this fall for the first two phases. This work would allow for emergency diking next spring, if necessary. He commented that it is going to be difficult to find funding for emergency diking next spring, as the State is running out of money. Anderson questioned if contract incentives would be possible to encourage project completion this fall. Albright thought that incentive payments wouldn't be eligible expenses for DNR reimbursement. More discussion followed regarding the optimum moisture content of the dike materials, and UEI's strict dike construction specifications that will make it possible to have a certifiable levee.
Campbell felt that at the very minimum, the contract should state that the west side of the coulee should be completed this fall. Carlson felt that clearing and grubbing the trees in this section of the project would probably be started first, as all vegetation needs to be removed before the dike construction can begin. Ellefson questioned if the clearing and grubbing completion language should be added to the contract. Langness and Carlson thought that this work could be included in the mandatory 50% completion. **Motion** by VanAmburg to accept the plans and specifications for Phases 1B and 2 with the modification in the Phase 1B plans to include clearing and grubbing of trees as part of the 50% completion. The Board authorized UEI to advertise for bids with a bid opening scheduled for 8/10/09 at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. **Seconded** by Hanson. **Approved.**

The Board also needs to sign the Clay County application for a utility permit to work on County Road (C.R.) No. 93 r-o-w. Carlson has also prepared the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) permit application for Phase 2 for Board signature. **Motion** by Hanson to authorize Albright to sign the permit applications on the Board's behalf. **Seconded** by Olson. **Approved.**

UEI has also prepared the revised wetland permit application, which Carlson modified to allow for the installation of a fourth culvert to C.R. No. 93. Wetland mitigation will be necessary for the additional culvert. The permit will cover both Phases 1B and 2. No wetland issues are associated with Phase 3A. **Motion** by Nelson to authorize Albright to sign the application to withdraw 0.33 acres of wetland mitigation credits from the BRRWD's wetland credit bank for Phases 1B and 2. **Seconded** by VanAmburg. **Approved.**

Now that the dike alignment is finalized, it appears that there will be more homes in several areas that will not be protected by the dike because of geotechnical concerns. A landowner informational meeting will be held on 7/15/09 at 7:30 PM in the Oakport Town Hall for the Odegaard Subdivision, Riverside Acres, and an area along Broadway where the road and dike alignment will be shifted to the east because of a slide area. The soils investigation will be discussed in conjunction with the justification for the dike alignment changes, and homeowner options will be reviewed regarding buyouts, etc. The FEMA buyout funding application ($3.5 million), including all the affected property in these areas, has been submitted. The group had an extended discussion regarding project funding sources.

Regarding the FSSFC project, Kevin Campbell asked the Board to appoint a representative to serve on the Joint Powers Board, and to forward the name to Vijay Sethi, Administrator, Clay County. He also wanted permission to contact the BRRWD Staff for this project, if necessary. **Motion** by Nelson to appoint VanAmburg as Joint Powers Board representative, and make the BRRWD staff available to Clay County in regards to the FSSFC project. **Seconded** by Hanson. **Approved.**

Corey Elmer has prepared an easement form, which Langness has reviewed. Carlson also has the easement exhibit drawings prepared for Phases 1B and 2. The next step is to get the easements signed by the landowners. Albright pointed out that the BRRWD office is extremely busy and suggested that UEI could assist Corey Elmer and Tami Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, in conjunction with Kevin Campbell and Greg Anderson to move forward with easement acquisition process. The group also discussed making use of the Board's right to condemnation as a last resort to acquire r-o-w for the project. Norgard suggested that Vogel should probably start the paperwork to condemn at least two of the properties we've been trying to acquire, as the process can be time consuming (at least 90 days). Anderson and Campbell volunteered to meet with the landowners to negotiate the easements. **Motion** by Olson to authorize Vogel Law Firm, UEI, Campbell, and Anderson to move forward with the easement acquisitions for Phases 1B, 2, and 3A. **Seconded** by Nelson. **Approved.**

A Technical Committee meeting has been scheduled for 8/11/09 at 1:30 PM in the Moorhead Court House.
Langness briefly discussed concerns about a cleanup issue on the Orval Spiesz property. Spiesz owns a couple of acres that contain old cars, etc., and there is a concern that because of his age and health condition, he might need help removing the items. Anderson felt that Spiesz should be encouraged to get the site cleaned up as soon as possible.

The Sieben house was appraised at $359,000 with 5-10 acres of land. Realtor Fran Snelgrove has recommended that the Board invest $20,000 in the house for cleaning, interior painting, and carpeting. Mike Staber had expressed an interest in the property before it was appraised and wants to buy the property as is without cleanup/painting. Snelgrove agreed to exempt Mike Staber from the realtor clause. The Board had an extended discussion regarding the recommended repairs and listing the property with a realtor. Albright also noted that ICS Agency, Inc. has provided a quote of $1,484.74 for 3 months of insurance on the Sieben house. The premium is high because the house is empty. **Motion** by Hanson to list the Sieben property with the realtor and to have the repair work completed. Mike Staber will be given time to make an offer on the property before the repairs begin and will not be subject to the realtor's fees. The motion will also include the acceptance of the ICS Agency, Inc., insurance quote, and authorization for UEI to prepare a certificate of survey, showing the potential number of acres that could be sold with the Sieben house, including an examination of the road access agreement. **Seconded** by VanAmburg. **Approved.**

**Project No. 46, Turtle Lake Outlet.** The Turtle Lake Improvement Association (TLIA) will hold their annual meeting and picnic on 7/18/09. This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the installation of the siphon system. The TLIA would like as many Board members as possible to attend. Albright won't be able to attend, but Wade Opsahl, Technician, H.E., and Chairman Ellefson plan to go. There are some concerns about the maintenance costs, which average about $20,000 per year. Albright will prepare an annual summary of activities, and Opsahl will provide a lake elevation graph to handout at the meeting.

**Minch Lawsuits.** Based on attorney/client privilege, and in accordance with Open Meeting Law, the Board went into closed session at 10:50 PM to discuss the status of this issue with Attorney Norgard. At 11:25 PM, the Board reopened the meeting.

The following bills were presented for approval:

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### Motion

Motion by VanAmburg to approve payment of the bills and to schedule a special BRRWD meeting on 7/20/09 at 8:00 PM to address the remaining agenda items that the Board was unable to get to tonight. Seconded by Nelson. Approved.

### Next Meeting

Next Meeting. The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, July 27, 2009, in the Barnesville office at 8:00 PM.

### Adjournment

Adjournment. Chairman Ellefson adjourned the meeting at 11:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John E. Hanson, Secretary