

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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MINUTES FOR MANAGERS' MEETING July 16, 2013

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held a special meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 2013, at 7:30 PM in the Barnesville office. BRRWD Managers present were Breanna L. Paradeis Kobiela, Roger G. Ellefson, Curtis M. Nelson, John E. Hanson, Peter V. Fjestad, and Troy E. Larson. BRRWD Staff attending included: Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.), and Mona Barker, BRRWD Administrative Assistant.

Vice Chair Paradeis Kobiela called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. She announced that the proceedings were being recorded to aid in preparation of the minutes.

Akron Township. Manager Larson updated the Board on the Akron Township culvert concerns. The history of the concerns pertain to a culvert that was installed a number of years ago by the Wilkin County Highway Department in C.R. No. 169 (290th AVE) between Sections 5 and 6. Allegedly, the County installed a larger pipe after the road washed out during a flood. The pipe is bigger than downstream culverts. Last fall, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) completed a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) project on the upstream land in Section 5. After the 7/08/13 BRRWD meeting, Larson spoke with a downstream landowner who was upset about not having more notice of the meeting and was dissatisfied with the direction of the Board because the existing culvert sizes were measured wrong. Rather than two of the culverts being 42" dia. corrugated metal pipes (cmp), they are actually 48" dia. culverts. Larson confirmed the sizes. The upstream culvert measures 60" and the next two downstream culverts are actually 48" dia. pipes. Larson contacted the landowner, apologized, and said the proposed new culverts would not be placed at this time. Larson also called Wilkin County and instructed them not to install their new culverts. He also updated the Township.

Dan Swedlund, Wilkin County Highway Department, informed Albright that placement of new culverts would be put on hold until the BRRWD decides what should be done. Swedlund also requested a hydraulic analysis be done by H.E. Wilkin County would do the field survey. **Motion** by Ellefson to authorize the analysis by H.E. **Seconded** by Fjestad. **Approved.** Larson commented that the drainage area has changed with the WRP project. According to Swedlund, when the water gets high enough in the WRP project, it spills over the road to the south.

Software Update. Albright updated the Board on the QuickBooks upgrade. Kim Anderson, a certified QuickBooks Pro Advisor and Certified Public Account (CPA) from Bellwether Group Advisors, is a possible resource. Anderson assesses the office needs, can tailor the software to meet our needs, and provide training. **Motion** by Hanson to proceed with obtaining a proposal from Anderson. **Seconded** by Fjestad. **Approval.**

Payroll Professionals. Reports are received timely for in-office processing. Payroll checks are received by Barker consistently and on time.

Administrative Budget. Vice Chair Paradeis Kobiela asked if there was follow up to the 5/28/13 BRRWD meeting when the Administrative Budget was discussed. Albright informed the Board that Harold Rotunda, Certified Public Account (CPA), had completed his preparation and presentation of the 2012 Audit, the necessary changes made, and the revised report submitted. Ellefson stated he thought it was

important to know the cost of employee services from H.E. to the BRRWD. Paradeis Kobiela pointed out that financial detail is presented each month; however, it is not broken out by individual or by job category. Ellefson maintains that it would be difficult for the BRRWD to hire additional employees without knowing the actual costs incurred with H.E. and that a full year of those expenses should be analyzed. Albright thought H.E. could generate a report showing more detail than is currently distributed. Larson commented on the additional personnel and expertise that is available and may be used through H.E. Nelson added that the Red Lake Watershed District's Administrative expense is approximately \$180,000. Paradeis Kobiela said they bill much of their administrative costs to projects. She added that building and operation expenses are also included in billing projects. Albright presented the H.E. billing detail for Project No. 30, Judicial Ditch No. 1 as an example. The Board continued discussing the importance of seeing more detail. Albright will address this request with H.E.

Barker addressed the Board concerning the BRRWD Administrative Assistant position and suggested eliminating the position. She cited the cost of the position to be approximately \$40-45,000 annually, which is an expense the Board can control. This expense will increase when there is a change to her current medical coverage. The BRRWD office has operated successfully for many years and could continue as has always been done. Well-established patterns and practices are difficult to change when they have worked for so many years. Barker also stated that office dynamics are such that being a non-H.E. employee presents additional challenges and that it may be in the best interest of the BRRWD to wait on direct hires until there is a change in administration. In her experience, two things happen when an organization is over budget or wishes to reduce expenses. The first is to prohibit overtime for non-exempt employees and the second is to reduce staff. Ellefson questioned whether there was enough work to keep support both staff busy. Barker explained that it was not the quantity of work but the efficiencies and time management in completing those tasks. She added that doing things as has been done is not wrong but that there are more efficient and cost effective ways to manage those tasks. Barker acknowledged the need for fiscal responsibility and re-structuring as a means to accomplish that.

Albright was asked for his opinion on the discussion. He commented that going into a closed session was appropriate due to the nature of the discussion. He also noted Chair Van Amburg's absence. The Board decided to schedule another special meeting, likely a closed session, in the near future.

The board continued to discuss the need for a detailed account of personnel expenses with H.E. **Motion** by Fjestad for H.E. to furnish a detailed breakdown of employ expenses for 2012. **Seconded** by Nelson. **Approved.** Ellefson requested to review the vehicle expense. Nelson questioned whether a higher rate existed for trucks. Albright reviewed the H.E. proposal for 2013 and confirmed the rate for 4-wheel drive vehicles is the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate plus \$0.20. All recent H.E. billings for Albright's vehicle, a 4-wheel drive, have been at the IRS rate.

Ellefson mentioned that a new Wilkin County BRRWD Manager was to be appointed on 7/16/13 according to the newspaper. Albright has not yet been notified of the appointment.

Building Update and Use. Albright hired Chris Hoppe Lawn Care Service, LLC to mow and trim around the building after being contacted by the City to improve the site conditions. Extra gravel has been delivered, which will be used to improve the extended parking area. A meeting with Van Amburg, Albright, Architect Margaret Follingstad, and the general contractor, Bob Bristlin & Son, is scheduled for 7/17/13 to review the punch list items. Three landscaping proposals have been received and will be reviewed at the BRRWD regular meeting on 7/22/13. Several other issues concerning the building site were discussed and will be addressed again at the 7/17/13 meeting. Albright confirmed that the HVAC maintenance agreement has been submitted to the vendor, Agassiz Mechanical.

The Board also discussed use of the building, chairs, and equipment by others. Stoneridge Software has used the facility on two occasions. A fee of \$100 has been and will continue to be charged for use of the building. The old folding chairs can be loaned but not the new tables or chairs. Hours of use and return times should be established, and the condition of returned items should be monitored.

Ellefson requested clarification of payment after a manager has left the Board, should he be called to testify. The Board discussed this role being one of a witness and could then be paid. The per diem fee and mileage can be established at that time.

PRAP-Level III. The Managers were given information on the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) need-based grant program. The grant may be eligible for those water management entities that desire to improve their performance or operational effectiveness.

Albright continued the discussion by explaining that the BRRWD has a Level 1 status, which requires answering only 3 questions rather than an onsite review by BWSR. Managers were encouraged to review the distributed materials. Van Amburg will share more information about PRAP at another meeting.

Technology. Paradeis Kobiela asked for an update on the website redesign. Albright said the site is nearing completion. The information on the current site is being moved to the new one. The expectation has been that Julie Jerger, Resident Secretary, H.E., would be making future updates. Albright stated that there needed to be dedicated time weekly for website maintenance. Ellefson asked whether Barker could do the updating and maintenance. Her opinion was that this task could be assigned to an intern or another resource and questioned whether it was effective time management for staff to dedicate the amount of time required.

Albright updated the Board on the Permit Suite progress. He confirmed that the Board will review it before it is released. Albright also talked about the Cloud as a possible option to relieve email storage issues currently experienced. He referred to a February 2013 email from John Murray, IT Manager, H.E. In that email, Murray detailed advantages and expenses of storage on the Cloud. The BRRWD is supported technically by H.E., and there have been some concerns relative to that support and the size of our current system. The Board will revisit this issue at another time.

Structure of Board Meetings. Paradeis Kobiela asked if there were any suggestions for improving the agenda or structure of the Board meetings. Hanson commented that he liked the current agenda because, even if a topic is not discussed, it serves as a reminder that it remains active. Albright talked about using a Consent Agenda and stated that often times Board discussion is needed. It was the Board's consensus, to leave the agenda and meeting structure as is.

The Managers discussed hearing audience members. Larson suggested individuals come to the podium to address the Board to help keep the discussion focused and possibly reduce the conversation within the audience. Using the podium or the handheld microphone acknowledges the individual has the attention of the Board. Ellefson suggested the Chair remind the audience that one person talks at a time and, when appropriate, to inform the speaker that time has expired and other agenda items need to be addressed. The Board decided to continue the discussion when all Managers were present.

Other Items. At a future meeting, Albright will give the Board information on the upcoming Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) meeting.

Paradeis Kobiela updated the Board on her and Van Amburg's attendance for upcoming meetings. Albright mentioned that he has received calls on the Wilkin County Manager position that will be

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vacated with Ellefson's retirement from the Board (08/31/13). Ellefson asked that the Board provide candy for the upcoming Barnesville Potato Days parade. Ellefson is thinking about riding in the parade.

Albright updated the Board on additional funding for Oakport, Georgetown, and the Manston Slough Restoration. The Board will address letting the Manston bid at the next regular meeting on 7/22/13.

Adjournment. Vice Chair Paradeis Kobiela adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John E. Hanson, Secretary