

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 19, 2011
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

"Local Watershed Signs Joint Powers Agreement"

At their 7/11/11 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), agreed to sign the Limited Joint Powers Agreement (LJPA) regarding the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Diversion project. Attorney Tami Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, who represented the BRRWD in drafting the LJPA, attended the meeting to answer questions. Also attending was Kevin Campbell, Co-Chair, Metro Work Group. In the LJPA, Minnesota will have two of the nine votes. One of the votes is delegated to the City of Moorhead. The remaining vote will be split between Clay County and the BRRWD. The project is being designed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Powers of the Diversion Authority include conducting and arranging for public meetings, hiring and termination of a project manager, lobbyist, and other support personnel, and to provide necessary office space, supplies, equipment, and support; assist in planning, designing, and development of the project; delegation of tasks to one or more of the parties to the agreement; create committees to provide technical, financial, and legal assistance; procure the services of engineers, contractors, consultants, and other persons or entities for the planning, design, and development of the project; enter into contracts with the United States Government or any department thereof; lobby for Federal authorization or other approvals that may be directed by the Diversion Authority; and acquire insurance. Manager Gerald L. VanAmburg, Clay County, was appointed as the BRRWD's delegate. Manager Breanna Paradeis Kobiela, Clay County, will be the alternate. It is anticipated that a Sub-Joint Powers Agreement will be developed to discuss the two Minnesota votes.

Other business included:

- A special meeting will be held on 7/26/11 to review Alliance Township drainage issues. The Board will conduct a field review of the area at 7:30 PM and area landowners will be invited to an office meeting at 9:00 PM.
- The Board discussed the status of the Lake Jacobs Outlet project. The Appraisers are currently working on the determination of benefits and damages. Once their report is filed, the hearing can be scheduled. The BRRWD has secured a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for 50% of the project costs. Of course, with the State shut-down, those funds are currently not available. It is anticipated that the final hearing will be held sometime in August 2011. Affected landowners will be notified.
- The Board spent considerable time meeting with their attorney regarding an easement that's needed for the Cromwell Township Highwater Outlet project north of Hawley. The landowner has refused to allow the Appraiser on his property. The appraisal is needed for the condemnation proceeding started by the BRRWD on 4/11/11. The landowner will be given a deadline, and if permission is not obtained, the BRRWD intends to go to court to seek access to the property.
- The Board also discussed a tiling situation with their attorney that is located in the southwest corner of Norwegian Grove Township, Otter Tail County. The tile was installed in 2009 without a BRRWD permit. The downstream landowner would like to see the tile outlet moved. The BRRWD sent the landowner a letter last summer indicating that if an alternative outlet cannot be found, the tile may need to be plugged. The BRRWD would like to work with both landowners to find a solution.
- The Managers discussed the status of obtaining easement options needed for the Manston Slough Restoration project. The office plans to contact all landowners again before the 7/25/11 BRRWD meeting. All work on the project is temporarily stopped because of the State's shut-down. The Board would like to hold the required hearing this fall.

7/11/11 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Water levels continue to fall on Turtle Lake. The siphon was repaired in the last several weeks by removing the gate valve, which has improved its performance. We could still lower the lake approximately 9" before reaching the DNR permit level.
- The Board discussed several potential wetland restoration sites in Otter Tail and Becker Counties. The work could be done jointly with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, who would use the Wetlands Reserve Program to assist with land acquisition costs, construction, etc. The sites would have multiple benefits, including habitat restoration and flood control. The joint development of these types of sites is currently being discussed by Congressman Collin Peterson. The Board felt that this was an issue that should be further discussed with their Mediation Project Team.
- The Board met on 7/12/11 with Clay County Commissioners to discuss the BRRWD's membership on the Red River Watershed Management Board. The BRRWD has not been a member since 2002.
- The preliminary planning has been completed for the restoration of Wolverton Creek in Sections 17 and 18, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. A DNR grant in the amount of \$25,000 was secured for the design, which had to be completed by 6/30/11.
- The Managers scheduled a special meeting for 7/19/11 at 7:30 PM to discuss the status of the BRRWD's new office building. The BRRWD is also looking for a space to rent until the new office is done. Discussions will also take place regarding a building in the Barnesville Commercial Park that might be available for sale that could be used either as a rental or the new office.
- The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) to conduct an investigation regarding a repair petition filed for Clay County Ditch No. 58 in Section 12, Elmwood Township.
- The Board authorized tree and cattail spraying per a map prepared by H.E. for the various BRRWD projects/ditch systems.
- The Board approved payment of bills totaling \$164,644.08.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 25, 2011, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.