

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 14, 2015
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"Local Watershed Holds Annual Meeting"

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), was held on Monday, January 12, 2015, at 7:00 PM in their Barnesville office. The meeting included an election of 2015 officers, which will be as follows:

- Gerald L. Van Amburg, Clay County, Chairman
- Peter V. Fjestad, Otter Tail County, Vice Chairman
- John E. Hanson, Becker County, Secretary
- Mark T. Anderson, Clay County, Treasurer
- Breanna L. Kobiela, Clay County, Manager
- Catherine L. Affield, Wilkin County, Manager
- Troy E. Larson, Wilkin County, Manager

The Board also met with Joel Carlson, who has been the BRRWD's lobbyist for the last ten years. After discussion, the Board renewed his contract for another 2-year period (2015-2016). The Board hopes to work with Mr. Carlson during the current legislative session regarding funding (\$5.66 million) needed to finish the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. The Board also renewed contracts with Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) for 2015 engineering services and Vogel Law Firm for 2015 legal services. Harold J. Rotunda, Certified Public Accountant, was hired to do the 2014 audit. 2015 financial designations were Wells Fargo and Midwest Banks of Barnesville and any other financial institutions within the District as deemed necessary.

Other business included:

- Discussed the status of the preliminary order regarding Project No. 77, Clay County Ditch No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3. The preliminary hearing was held on 01/05/15 in Moorhead. The Board agreed to table action for two weeks to allow Managers time to review all of the hearing data. Erik Jones, Engineer, HEI, was also asked to provide an analysis of the project area's existing drainage conditions, which will become part of the Board's order.
- Met with downstream landowners in Manston Township regarding two tiling permits that were approved at the 12/22/14 meeting. The downstream landowners questioned the proposed drainage outlet. The applicant will be contacted for more information.
- Reviewed a request from a landowner in Section 36, Kragnes Township, Clay County, regarding possible financial assistance for a project he is working on with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The proposed outfall structure will control erosion entering the Red River of the North. The project's estimated costs are \$54,344.95, of which the NRCS is expected to pay \$24,289.20, leaving a balance of \$30,055.75. The Board tabled the request and asked the landowner to obtain bids for the project. We will discuss the request again once he has more detailed cost information.
- Considerable discussion took place regarding the Fiscal Year 2015 Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority Budget. In accordance with the Joint Powers Agreement, which the BRRWD is a signatory, the BRRWD is supposed to approve the budget, which started on 10/01/14. The budget amount was \$211 million, which will be funded by State of North Dakota appropriations, local sales taxes, and a bank loan. There were seven BRRWD landowners in attendance, who are located in the proposed upstream staging area. They had questions as to whether or not the BRRWD should be approving the budget. They referenced a Minnesota Department of Natural

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Resources letter dated 01/14/14, which indicated that acquisition of property prior to completion of the Minnesota Environmental Impact Statement could be a violation of environmental laws. The Board ultimately decided to table any decision regarding the proposed 2015 budget until their January 26, 2015, meeting where the matter will be on the agenda for 7:00 PM. Representatives from the FM Diversion Authority will also be invited to attend to answer questions.

- Approved a resolution in support of funding for the Oakport Mitigation Project. As noted, the project needs \$5.66 million to complete Phase 4. The BRRWD will be working with the 2015 legislature in that regard. Hopefully there will be a bonding bill to include flood damage reduction. The City of Moorhead is expected to pass a similar resolution.
- Noting that the BRRWD is in the process of updating their Revised Watershed Management Plan. Informational meetings will be held on 01/13/15 and 01/15/15 in Rothsay and Breckenridge to meet with landowners in the newly added areas in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties. The plan needs to be finished by 05/31/15. Problem identification is crucial to updating the plan.
- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2015, at 1:30 PM in the Barnesville Watershed office.
- Approved the payment of bills, totaling \$247,255.55.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD is scheduled for Monday, January 26, 2015, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE. The “special” agenda topic will be Stony Creek, located northwest of Barnesville. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.