"Local Watershed Out of Diversion Project"

At their 05/23/16 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), voted 6-1 to not sign the new Joint Powers Agreement associated with the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project. As one BRRWD Manager summarized, "I cannot morally justify taking someone's land so that others can continue to build in the floodplain." Prior to the vote, there were numerous testimonies from both sides, requesting that the Watershed continue to be a part of the project and others requesting that we should not be involved. The City of Moorhead and Clay County will continue to be involved with the project, representing Minnesota.

Other business included:

- A review of the BRRWD's financial status. Currently, the Board has a negative balance, and we may have to use our line of credit at Midwest Bank to pay the current bills. Bruce E. Albright, Administrator, stated that the problem will correct itself when the first-half tax payments come in next month.

- Discussed an ongoing drainage problem in Section 22, Atherton Township, Wilkin County. A meeting was held with the affected landowners approximately one year ago, where they agreed to use an existing tile system as an alternative outlet. The downstream landowner said that since the meeting, no one has contacted him in that regard. The Board felt it was up to the landowners to work together to resolve this issue.

- Approval of permits to: Minnesota Department of Transportation to replace a bridge over Deerhorn Creek on Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9; City of Glyndon for the construction of Centennial Addition to include 140 residential lots and a storm water pond; Whisky Creek Farms to install an approach off County Road (C.R.) No. 11 in the E1/2, Section 36, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County; and Whisky Creek Farms to install an approach and culvert along the E1/2 of Section 10, Alliance Township, Clay County, off C.R. No. 15.

- Noting that the office is still working on a petition for a new legal drainage system that would be located on the south side of Clay-Wilkin County line, west of T.H. No. 75 in Section 6, Wolverton Township.

- Authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) to conduct a waterway survey in the W1/2, Section 29, Tansem Township, Clay County. The Township is concerned that water stands in their road culverts.

- Noting that a drainage dispute was resolved in Section 23, Flowing Township, Clay County. The area drains and is assessed to County Ditch (C.D.) No. 10. A neighboring landowner farming property owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) filled a ditch and lowered a berm. This caused water to overflow onto the adjoining property. The DNR and their renter agreed to restore the area.
Noting that the office is working with Eglon Township regarding two culverts that may need work. Wade S. Opsahl, Technician, HEI, has field reviewed both sites. A report will be furnished at the next meeting.

Agreed to install a culvert in a dry approach along T.H. No. 75 in the northeast corner of Section 8, Holy Cross Township. The water should drain directly into Clay C.D. No. 36, to which it is assessed. A new renter noticed that this approach did not have a culvert and that there were cattails growing along T.H. No. 75. The installation of a pipe should correct these problems.

Received an update regarding the status of work on Phase 4, Oakport Flood Mitigation. R.J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. continues to make good progress. The former Howard Fee's house and garage, currently owned by Andy Noah, will be moved by the end of the week. There have been some ongoing negotiations regarding relocation of the utility cable owned by Century Link. The Board agreed to table a settlement offer with a family regarding a material storage site problem we have had since 2013. The landowners would like to negotiate a settlement in this regard. The Board felt we should wait until the dirt pile is removed so that all issues can be addressed at one time. Albright will contact the affected family members.

Noting that the petition and bond for a diversion outlet on Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1 has been forwarded to BRRWD Attorney, Tami L. Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, for her review in accordance with Minnesota Statues Annotated 103E.238.

The Board received the 2015 financial audit from Certified Public Accountant Harold J. Rotunda. Mr. Rotunda indicated no problems or issues were noted. The draft 2015 Annual Report was also furnished to the Managers for their review. The audit will be added to the Annual Report and all of the information will be sent to various County Boards for their review.

Noting that the next Mediation Project Team (PT) Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 16, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Watershed Office, Barnesville. The meetings will be held during the evening in the summer months. Active project discussions include Barnesville Township, Stony Creek, and the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County. A new agenda item will be added pertaining to a DNR protected waterway on the east side of Glyndon.

Noting that work continues on the Revised Watershed Management Plan.

Noting that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is working on completing the Total Maximum Daily Load and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy documents for the Buffalo and Upper Red study areas.

Noting that the BRRWD has received a $2.8 million Targeted Watershed Program Grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for the Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration Project. The funding will be used for construction on Phase 1. An application was also submitted to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program for approximately $3 million. The office and HEI will need to start work on establishing the "water management district" for local financing for the various grant matches.
• Noting that survey work is ongoing regarding the Otter Tail River and Whiskey Creek Restoration Projects in Wilkin County.

• Noting that Manager reservations have been made for the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Summer Tour. This year's tour will be held on June 22-24 in Winona.

• Approved a Pay Request and Change Order for Sellin Brothers, Inc. and their work associated with Phase 2 of the Buffalo River Restoration Project in Hawley. The Pay Request totaled $14,462.32.

• Authorized a ditch repair on Becker C.D. No. 15 in Section 11, Audubon Township, where a field approach/culvert will be installed along C.R. No. 104 for access into the property.

• Approved the payment of bills, totaling $117,888.82.

• Becker County Manager John Hanson noted concerns from a landowner in Riceville Township regarding cleanout of the Buffalo River in Sections 15, 16, and 21. This has been an ongoing PT discussion item. The work would require a DNR permit and completion of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, June 13, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.