"BRRWD Discusses Wilkin County Drainage Projects"

At their meeting held on Monday, September 12, 2016, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), met with representatives from the Wilkin County Highway Department to discuss repairs for Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 6A and 7. Informational meetings were held with the affected landowners on 09/07/16 in Breckenridge. For Wilkin C.D. No. 6A, the landowners would like to see a redetermination of benefits. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI), has done some research regarding the benefit maps and the Viewers’ Reports. It appears that Wilkin County is using the 1951 Auditor’s Tabular Statement for the current assessment of benefits. Estimated project costs are approximately $300,000, including the riprap needed for several rock drop structure repairs, which are failing, and the side slope repairs on two miles of ditch. Dan Swedlund, Maintenance Foreman, Wilkin County Highway Department, said that the County would have a backhoe available to start the slope work this fall. He said that the riprap could be hauled in early December after the ground has frozen and the crops are removed. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said that the ditch system financial account will have about $100,000 in it at the end of the year. The Board authorized a redetermination of benefits, to be completed within about six months, Wilkin County to begin the slope work, as recommended by HEI, and to have Wilkin County supervise the delivery of the needed riprap for the drop structures.

The second ditch system discussed was Wilkin C.D. No. 7. This system is five miles long, and is located in Sections 22, 27, 28, 30, Andrea Township. The estimated repair costs are $252,000. Earlier this year, several landowners thought that the road work should be advertised for bids. Albright noted that in accordance with the Minnesota Uniform Municipal Contracting Law, there is a provision to use the "best value alternative". Swedlund said the County was not interested in doing the repair work, and recommended that HEI solicit bids. The Board authorized a bid opening to be held on October 11, 2016. Copies of the repair plans will be mailed to interested area contractors.

Swedlund will be retiring at the end of this month, and he introduced his replacement, Tim Christopher. Christopher has worked for the County Highway Department for several years and is familiar with operating large equipment. Swedlund is currently running for a County Commission seat. He also noted that he's been trained recently as a ditch system viewer by the Bois de Sioux Watershed District. He would be able to assist the BRRWD regarding our needs for ditch system or project benefits. Since the addition of new areas in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties back in 2012 to the BRRWD, the transition has gone very smoothly with the help of the Wilkin County Highway Department. The drainage systems in the newly added area in Wilkin County have been retrofitted to include side sloping, piped inlets, and the required one-rod (16.5’) grassed buffer strips.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD financial status. Administrative costs to date total $246,956.47. Cash on hand totals $2,176,304.25. Income for the past month totals $1,049,353.31. Accounts Receivable, currently totals $6,527,809.97. Albright said the Line of Credit with Midwest Bank has been renewed. The new loan will expire on 08/01/17, and the interest rate is 3%.

- Approval of permits to: Moxness Farms to install a texas crossing, consisting of two lines of 30” dia. arch equivalent culverts with 1’ to 1.5’ of cover, having no upstream impacts in the SW1/4, Section 6, Nordick Township, Wilkin County; Dan Beske for random tiling in Sections 11, 13, and 14, Carlisle Township, Otter Tail County; Kevin Hanson for random tiling in the S1/2, Section 22, Hamden Township, Becker County; the City of Moorhead for the installation of sanitary sewers and storm sewers, and streets for Johnson Farms 1st Addition, Phase 3, located in the SW1/4, Section 21, Moorhead Township, Clay
County; the City of Hawley to construct sanitary sewer, water mains, street and drainage improvements for a single family residential addition in the SW1/4, Section 2, Hawley Township, Clay County; Bayer Crop Science to construct a seed processing building with storm water management in the SW1/4, Section 8, Elmwood Township, Clay County; the City of Moorhead for street and underground utility improvements to service the 118-lot Prairie Meadows 6th Addition residential subdivision; the City of Moorhead for street and underground utility improvements to service the 5-lot mixed use Bright Sky Addition; Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) to do a mill and overlay project on Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75 between 40th AVE S and 35th AVE S; Moorhead Public Service for directional boring of utilities in the S1/2, Section 17, Oakport Township, Clay County; Anthony Swiontek to install a driveway off County Road No. 10 into the NE1/4, Section 19, Parke Township, Clay County; Shawn and Jessie Norman to pattern tile the NW1/4, Section 26, Manston Township, Wilkin County; Steve Stenerson to install random tile in the NW1/4, Section 32, Norwegian Grove Township, Otter Tail County; and James Klein F.L.P. to tile part of the S1/2, Section 15, Nilsen Township, Wilkin County, with a pump draining to Wilkin C.D. No. 3, to which the property is assessed.

- Noting that the office has received an abandonment petition for Project No. 77, Clay C.D. No. 51-Lateral No. 3. The petition was filed by the Minch Family LLLP. The next step will be to schedule the required hearing. The Board set the hearing date for Tuesday, October 11, 2016, at 6:45 PM in the BRRWD Office. The affected landowners will be notified.

- Noting that HEI has made recommendations for lowering the north spoil bank at two locations along the SW1/4, Section 20, Manston Township, in conjunction with the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The Natural Resources Conservation Service will need to issue a Conditional Use letter in that regard. Hopes are that the material can be hauled offsite onto adjacent property.

- Approved Pay Request No. 6 ($253,032.97) and Change Order No. 4 ($24,465) to R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. for their work associated with Phase 4 of the Oakport Township Flood Mitigation Project.

- Noting that a meeting was held on 09/12/16 with representatives from Clay County, MNDOT, and the City of Georgetown to discuss possible road raises needed to certify their levee project. Kevin Campbell questioned if the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority should be involved with the road closures since their proposed outlet will be near the City of Georgetown, which may necessitate use of the levee on a more frequent basis. Estimates back in 2014 showed that the road raises for five different locations could cost as much as $1,065,451. MNDOT didn't think raising T.H. No. 75 would be a major problem. It would also require filling in two spots on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks.

- Jones noted that R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. has completed the slide repairs at two locations on Clay C.D. No. 14 in Kragnes and Morken Townships. They were seeding those sites today. HEI will prepare a final repair pay request for the next meeting.

- The next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, Barnesville. The Fall Tour will be held on 09/22/16 beginning at 1:30 PM from the BRRWD Office.

- Requested an extension for a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Clean Water Fund grant for the Upper South BMP Strategic Implementation Plan-Part 2. The grant was scheduled to expire on 12/31/16. The extension will allow for another year.
Agreed to contribute $2,001.35 (10%) to a sediment control basin project located in the SE1/4, Section 23, Humboldt Township, Clay County. The area drains directly into Whisky Creek.

Noting that River Keepers will hold their award winning Red River Water Festival on September 20, 21, 22, 23, and 26, 2016, in Moorhead. River Keepers has sponsored their Water Festival for over 18 years. This year's event is expected to include over 2,000 Fourth Grade students from area schools. The BRRWD is one of the sponsors of River Keepers with a $55,000 annual contribution.

Approved the payment of bills totaling $611,377.80.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, September 26, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, located at 1303 4th Ave NE, Barnesville, MN. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.