"BRRWD Holds Last Meeting of 2016"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held their last meeting of the year on December 12, 2016. They discussed a number of topics, including the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) initiative. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, met with Wilkin County to discuss a possible collaboration to tie in the BRRWD's Revised Watershed Management Plan and the County's comprehensive plan updates with the 1W1P. Wilkin County's plan expires on 12/31/18, and Albright thought it might be possible to complete the 1W1P process by that date. BWSR recently approved the BRRWD's funding application ($168,000) for their Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) program, associated with the 1W1P. BWSR is also offering a new 1W1P funding opportunity starting in January 2017. The Board will schedule a meeting with all the Counties and local water planning agencies to discuss the 1W1P effort, as we will need agency resolutions to start that process. The Board will also discuss implementation of the 2015 State Buffer Law requirements at that meeting.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's monthly financial reports. Cash on hand is $2,213,142.66. Income this year totals $10,232,147.34. Since the last meeting, we have received income totaling $1,832,435.75 from the four counties for their 2nd half property tax payments, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation expenses, the Clay County Highway Department for reimbursement of the costs incurred for the County's Wall Street milling/overlay project, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for Otter Tail River Planning expenses. Administrative disbursements for the month are $29,684.48 and for the year total $361,804.91. Current 2016 Accounts Receivable total $3,539,220.23. Albright will be meeting on 12/20/16 with the Clay County Commissioners to present our 2017 Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd. 3, taxation petitions. The BRRWD needs a resolution from a political subdivision to use these levies.

- Approved a permit for Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren, Inc. to clean a ditch in the SW1/4, Section 13, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County.

- Reviewed survey results from Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) regarding a drainage concern on a natural waterway in Sections 22 and 23, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County. The survey showed that there were a couple of stretches of channel with sediment in Section 22, but there was still enough elevation to provide drainage for the upstream field. Albright will forward copies of the survey to the landowners.

- Discussed a tiling complaint in Section 28, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. The landowner had received a permit for the project in 2012, but the project was installed this fall. The outlet was moved from the northwest corner of the property to the southwest corner. Albright conducted a field review of the site and discussed the project with the landowner and neighbors. He noted that the outlet was moved to allow another landowner in Section 28 to tie into the main tile line along the south side of his property and for better access to electrical service. Albright will contact the downstream landowners to find out if they continue to be concerned about the project and to discuss possible area drainage improvements along the outlet route.

- Accepted a draft Operation and Maintenance (O&M) agreement with the City of Moorhead regarding Project No. 71, 50th AVE Flood Control. Moorhead would maintain those portions of the project within their jurisdictional boundaries. The City could also do the
work outside of their jurisdictional boundaries, but would be reimbursed by the BRRWD as a project expense. The City will prepare a formal O&M for the BRRWD's signature.

- Discussed the status of lowering water on Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. Two stop logs have been removed from the north spillway. Conditions are wet for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to clear trees and restore wetlands on their adjoining Wetland Restoration Program easements.

- Approved Pay Request No. 9 in the amount of $100,543.07 for R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc., for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation.

- Approved the Final Pay Request for $4,019.40 to release the contract retainage to R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. for the Project No. 14, Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 10 road repairs.

- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team (PT) meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 15, 2016, at 1:30 PM in the Barnesville Watershed Office. Active PT projects include Barnesville Township Area Drainage Investigation, Stony Creek, and the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County.

- Discussed a document management system for office data storage. The staff has met with three different companies to review their software. Albright plans to provide the Board with a staff recommendation by their 01/09/17 meeting.

- Noting that the Viewers will be meeting in the near future to work on the redetermination of benefits for Wilkin C.D. No. 6A, Becker C.D. No. 9, and Clay C.D. No. 16.

- Noting that Dave Yaggie, a landowner on Wilkin C.D. No. 40, contacted the office to discuss partial abandonment of C.D. No. 40. This ditch receives high flows from the 2-stage Lawndale Trout Stream Restoration project via an overflow structure in the township road (270th AVE). Yaggie would like to see this ditch partially abandoned to reclaim a 75' portion of his field that was landlocked when the ditch was improved in the 1960s. Albright will contact Luther Aadland, DNR, who designed the trout stream project, to determine the capacity of the restored channel. An abandonment hearing would be required with all the ditch system landowners if Yaggie submits a petition.

- Reviewed a proposal for determining wetland management district (wmd) fees that could be used to pay a portion of the local match for the Wolverton Creek Restoration project. Erik Jones, Engineer, HEI, suggested that fees could be assessed according to an average composite land use method that combines runoff values, soil contribution, etc. The Board authorized Jones to tabulate the potential parcel assessment fees, according to the method reviewed, for their analysis at a future meeting. A public hearing would need to be held before the proposed wmd fee could be implemented.

- Several BRRWD Managers attended the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Annual Conference in Alexandria on December 1-3. Manager Peter Fjestad was elected to the MAWD Board of Directors.

- Approved payment of bills totaling $546,981.09.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their annual meeting on Monday, January 9, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. At 9:00 PM, the Board will hold the election of 2017 officers, appointment of 2017 consultants, and designation of 2017 financial institutions. All meetings are open to the public. For more information about the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.