"BRRWD Accepts Position on FM DA Land Committee"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held their regular meeting on February 11, 2019, in their Barnesville office. Eric Dodds, Advanced Engineer and Environmental Services, Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority (FM DA) Program Management Consultant, gave a presentation about DA's Property Rights Acquisition and Mitigation Plan in association with BRRWD Permit Application No. 19-003. The Board also considered a request to appoint a Manager to participate on the DA’s Minnesota land acquisition oversite committee and to consider participating in the Moorhead-Clay County Joint Powers Agreement (MCCJPA). After discussion, the Board approved a motion to appoint BRRWD President Jay A. Leitch to the Land Acquisition Committee as a voting member only, and to decline a full membership in the MCCJPA.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD’s monthly financial statements, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, summary of income, and the accounts receivable report. Cash on hand is $3,419,477.32. Total 2019 administrative disbursements to date are $41,107.13. Current 2019 accounts receivable are $6,176,574. Total income this year is $1,040,768.90. Income received since the 1/14/19 meeting totaled $1,040,543.90 for 2018 2nd half tax settlements from Otter Tail County ($1,769.80), Wilkin County ($12,547.79), Becker County ($5,872.71), and Clay County ($238,621.24). We also received Buffer Initiative Contribution payments from Clay County ($65,864) and Wilkin County ($41,603.50). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forwarded the final reimbursement for Project No. 49, Oakport Township Flood Mitigation ($131,770.86) and the first reimbursement from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration ($538,795.14). The balance of income came from Midwest Bank account interest ($3,473.86) and Houston Engineering, Inc. office rental ($225). The Board also approved the payment of bills, totaling $106,954.64.

  The Board authorized the staff to work with Midwest Bank to acquire two credit cards to be used for routine expenses such as booking Manager conference reservations/registrations and purchasing online office supplies.

- Approved permits to Pheasants Forever (PF) for two wetland restoration projects. The first was in Section 29, Cromwell Township, Clay County, in association with the DNR, and the second was in Section 28, Orwell Township, Otter Tail County, in association with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Board postponed action on a third PF/USFWS wetland restoration application in Section 7, Parke Township, Clay County, which was started last fall without a BRRWD permit, pending a field review when weather conditions permit this spring regarding potential impacts to neighboring lands.

- Received an update on Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration. Phase 2 easements have been forwarded to the landowners. Staff plans to contact landowners who didn't respond after the first mailing to encourage them to complete the temporary easement acquisition process. The Board would like to advertise for Phase 2 bids in March/April 2019. Staff is also working on the Phase 3 easement options in Clay County, so that the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District can start the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program process with the landowners. The BRRWD’s overall goal is to complete the entire project in 2019.
• Approved a motion to submit a DNR Stream Restoration Priority List application for the Whiskey Creek Restoration project near Kent, MN.

• Noted that a construction bid opening has been scheduled for Project No. 78, Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1-Improvement, on 3/8/19. The Board expects to review the Engineer's recommendations and award the contract at their 3/11/19 meeting. The Clay County Commissioners will consider a bond sale resolution for the project at their 3/19/19 meeting.

• Agreed to reschedule the Preliminary Resolution Hearings for the Stony Creek and Whiskey Creek Restoration projects for later this spring due to hearing notice requirements and staff work load issues.

• Noted that BRRWD Vice President Peter V. Fjestad, BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright, and Assistant Administrator Kathleen K. Fenger plan to attend the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Legislative Reception and Day at the Capitol on February 20-21, 2019, in St. Paul. On 2/20/19, Albright and Fenger will attend a Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators meeting, and Vice President Fjestad will attend a MAWD Board of Directors meeting. They have appointments scheduled on 2/21/19 to meet with our local legislators to discuss BRRWD project funding and MAWD legislative issues.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next meeting on Monday, March 11, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. The second February meeting (February 25) was not held because several Managers were absent. All meetings are open to the public. For more information about the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.