"BRRWD Awards Contract"  

At their regular meeting held on March 9, 2020, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), awarded the contract to repair the Clay County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 41, 47, and 50 concrete liners to Key Contracting, Inc., West Fargo, for their bid of $159,100. The Engineer's estimated project cost was $190,000. The concrete ditch liners were constructed in the 1990s in Moorhead and Dilworth with the assistance of the Economic Development Administration.

Business included:

- Approved the BRRWD's monthly financial statements, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, and summary of income. Cash on hand is $2,403,892.07. Administrative disbursements this month equal $21,457.70 and for the year, total $75,207.83. 2020 Accounts Receivable total $6,738,798. Total income this year is $277,627.10. Income received since the 2/10/20 meeting totaled $12,915.69, including a Upper South Branch of the Buffalo River-Phase 1 grant payment from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council ($5,333.25), a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Upper Buffalo River 319 Grant Payment ($579.80), and a contribution from Hamden Township for the Becker C.D. No. 15-Branch 7 repair ($2,500). The remainder of the income came from Midwest Bank for February interest ($4,228.85), a refund from Premium Waters, Inc. ($48.79), and Houston Engineering, Inc. for their monthly office rent ($225). The Board approved the payment of bills totaling $205,824.12.

- Discussed the Clay County Board of Commissioners' concerns about the process used to hire an expert witness for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) contested case proceeding. County Commissioners Jenny Mongeau and Kevin Campbell voiced the County's concern about the Board's lack of transparency regarding the expert witness hiring and payment. They also discussed potential BRRWD Open Meeting Law violations.

- Appointed BRRWD President Jay Leitch to be the designated signee for the DNR contested case legal documents.

- Approved a motion to enter into a 50-year monitoring easement agreement with the Minnesota Land Committee for a parcel of BRRWD buyout property associated with the Georgetown Levee project to conduct their biotic and geomorphic survey for the Diversion project. This initial monitoring will establish a baseline for biotic and geomorphic conditions for comparison to mid-construction and post-construction conditions to determine if the project caused any changes to the biotic or soil conditions. If there are changes attributable to the project, then there would be opportunities for the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) to use an adaptive management program in conjunction with a number of participating agencies. The COE plans to start the first round of monitoring in May. The Board also approved a motion to send a letter encouraging the Wilkin County landowners within the BRRWD's jurisdiction to sign voluntary rights-of-entry easement agreements with the Minnesota-Clay County Joint Powers Agreement to obtain 2-year monitoring easements for the biotic and geomorphic survey.

- Approved permits to Larry Wiertzema to lower an existing driveway culvert to grade along 280th AVE in the S½SE¼, Section 24, Meadows Township, Wilkin County, subject to township approval to work within their road right-of-way (R/W).

- Received an update regarding the status of the Stony Creek Restoration project easement option acquisitions. All but two options have now been forwarded to the landowners for signature.
• Received an update regarding the status of the Wolverton Creek Restoration project Phase 2 easement acquisitions. About two-thirds of the easements are in place with only three landowners left to finalize their easements. Plans are to open bids in late April or May.

• Noted that the Wilkin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) held a landowner informational meeting on 3/6/20 to discuss the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) grant program. In order to access the potential NWQI funding (estimated $2.9 million) to defray local project costs, landowners can work with Craig Lingen, SWCD, and John Quast, NRCS to implement conservation practices on their private land through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

• Accepted the Wilkin C.D. No. 6A Viewers’ Report for the Redetermination of Benefits proceeding. The Viewers based their benefit rates on a percentage of the county's Estimated Market Value for the land with benefits, totaling approximately $6 million, which also includes the City of Rothsay. Following the Board's acceptance of the Report, a redetermination of benefits hearing notice will be published in the Wahpeton Daily News. The redetermination hearing is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD office. An informational meeting/open house is also tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 2, 2020, for the landowners to meet with the Viewers to ask questions.

• Approved an Order to move forward with the acquisition of R/W for Clay C.D. Nos. 20, 22, 23, 28, and 51 buffer installation in accordance with the 2015 State Buffer Rule. A second Order was also approved to remove approximately 150 acres from the benefit area of C.D. No. 28.

• Approved signing a revised cost-share agreement for the COE Section 1135 Study for the Lower Otter Tail River Revised Project Management Plan. The original 2017 estimate was $340,000 with the COE paying the first $100,000 and the COE and the BRRWD splitting the remainder 50/50. The new cost estimate has risen to $753,749 with the BRRWD's share now at $326,912.50.

• Approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Clay County Highway Department to replace culverts on Clay C.D. Nos. 11N and 9, south of Moorhead.

• Authorized Jeff Nichol, William Nichol Excavating, Inc., to remove a logjam along the South Branch of the Buffalo River just west of the City of Glyndon for his quote of $3,938.

• Approved a new technical service contract with Marco Technologies for our M-Files data management program.

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, March 23, 2020, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. Due to the Coronavirus or COVID-19, we are going to hold an electronic meeting in accordance with Minnesota Statute, Section 13D.021. The conference line information is: Toll Free 1-833-403-3948 or Local 701-499-9476 Access Code 2503. Conference PIN 1401. We thank you for your understanding during these difficult times and look forward to returning to our regular meeting format as soon as conditions allow. More information will be posted on the BRRWD's website prior to the meeting at www.brrwd.org.