"BRRWD Administrator Albright Retires"

At their regular meeting held on March 23, 2020, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), received news that long-time BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright will retire on 5/1/20. On March 10, 1980, the BRRWD approved a proposal from then District Engineer Robert Muscha, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI), for HEI to provide staff for the watershed office. Albright assumed the Administrator position on May 12, 1980. Over his 40-year career, Albright was known locally and state-wide for his skilled leadership and water management expertise. The Board has assigned Assistant Administrator Kathleen Fenge to the position of Interim BRRWD Administrator until they have determined HEI's future role in staffing the BRRWD Barnesville office.

Business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Cash on hand is $2,206,610.70. Total income this year is $286,169.85. Income since the 3/09/20 meeting totals $8,542.75 from the Red River Watershed Management Board for Mediation Project Team expenses. The Board approved the payment of bills totaling $37,646.66.

- Discussed the response from the Minnesota Data Practices Office regarding Clay County's Open Meeting Law violation concerns, which was that "there would not be an Open Meeting Law violation when a Board goes into closed session even though it did not include a closed session on its meeting agenda."

- Approved a request from the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District for a $25,000 contribution to their Cover Crop Incentive Program.

- Discussed the BRRWD's COVID-19 Action Plan. The Board agreed to cancel the 4/13/20 meeting and postpone the recently scheduled project and ditch system meetings and hearings until further notice.

- Approved permits to the City of Moorhead to decommission a sanitary lift station in the Regal Estates mobile home park and relocate a new lift station to the north in the SE¼, Section 4, Moorhead Township, Clay County, and Four Hills Farm to install a Natural Resources Conservation Service designed grade stabilization project in the SW¼, Section 2, Humboldt Township, Clay County.

- Approved signature of a $1.5 million Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant agreement for the stream restoration component of the Stony Creek Restoration Project and to authorize HEI to move forward with the project's Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and permitting process.

- Discussed an application for grant funding for a potential project to establish a corridor for a future habitat restoration project on the Otter Tail River using Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) funding. LSOHC funding would be used to acquire voluntary conservation easements along the river channel corridor for a future project. Easements would be acquired through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and its Reinvest In Minnesota easement program.

- Discussed repair options and cost estimates for proposed repair of Wilkin County Ditch No. 27. The new information will be forwarded to the ditch system landowners for their review and comment.

- Requested a formal proposal from Moorhead State University-Moorhead Archeological Department for a cultural review of the Whiskey Creek channel, which will be required for the EAW and the DNR permit application for the proposed channel restoration project.

- Authorized HEI to contact the landowners on several Wilkin County ditch systems regarding the staking and seeding of approximately 40-50 acres of buffers that are out of compliance with the 2015 State Buffer Law. The letter will include an advisory that if the buffers are disturbed again, the landowners will be held responsible for reseeding costs.
The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, April 27, 2020, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, we are going to hold an electronic meeting in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Annotated, 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. More information will be posted on the BRRWD's website prior to the meeting at www.brrwd.org.