"BRRWD Approves Wilkin Ditch Repairs"

At their regular meeting held on April 27, 2020, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), reviewed an alternative repair proposal to clean both branches of Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 27 (310th AVE and 320th AVE), to establish the buffers, as mandated by the 2015 State Buffer Rule, and to work with the landowners to install field inlets where needed. After two informational meetings, it became apparent the ditch system landowners were not in favor of a more extensive ditch retrofit for the east branch along Wilkin County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 19. A traditional ditch repair with installation of side inlet pipes will be completed instead. This alternative will allow the use of some Wilkin and Otter Tail County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) grant funding to reduce the local share. The right-of-way is staked, and the County plans to start the work in July.

Other Business included:

- Approved the BRRWD’s 4/13/20 financial reports, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, and summary of income. Cash on hand is $2,172,724.47. Administrative disbursements since the 3/09/20 meeting equal $41,601.18, and for the year, total $116,809.01. Total income this year is $289,930.28. Income received since the 3/09/20 meeting totaled $12,303.18, including a payment from the Red River Watershed Management Board for Mediation Project Team expenses ($8,542.75). The remainder of the income came from Midwest Bank for March interest ($3,535.43), and Houston Engineering, Inc. for their monthly office rent ($225). They also received an update of the BRRWD’s financial status as of 4/27/20. Cash on hand is $2,154,663.62. Total income is $290,039.19. Income since the 4/13/20 meeting totals $108.91 from Otter Tail County for delinquent property taxes. The Board approved payment of the bills, totaling $484,532.97.

Harold Rotunda, CPA, is working on the 2019 audit and plans to forward the draft for review at the 5/11/20 meeting. The Board also approved a motion acknowledging the financial records are all up to date, and former BRRWD Administrator Albright’s responsibility for the financials ends as of the 4/27/20 meeting.

- Approved permits to the City of Moorhead for the excavation and stabilization for a regional stormwater pond in the NE¼, Section 16, Moorhead Township, Clay County; Bruce Yaggie to install 149 acres of pattern tile in Section 12, Nordick Township, Wilkin County, plus an additional 153 acres of future tile in Section 1, Nordick Township, with a main crossing 230th ST; Aron Kassenborg to install 103 acres of pattern tile in the E½, Section 6, Moland Township, Clay County, outletting to the Buffalo River; Lowell Seidler to install pattern tile in parts of Sections 8 and 9, Meadows Township, Wilkin County, to gravity flow south to Wilkin C.D. No. 6A; Thomas Friederichs to install an approach and 30” dia. culvert off County Road (C.R.) No. 25 in the W½NW¼, Section 21, Humboldt Township, Clay County; Tom Jennen to install side water inlets where open ditches now enter Wilkin/Otter Tail County Judicial Ditch No. 2 in the W½, Section 19, Carlisle Township, Otter Tail County; Thomas Radig to install pattern tile in the NW¼, Section 22, Nordick Township, Wilkin County; Farm in the Dell of the Red River Valley to install 20 acres of pattern tile with a lift station outletting to the east C.R. No. 95 road ditch in the SW¼, Section 11, Oakport Township, Clay County; Brent Halverson to move the dry approach in the southeast corner of their property to the west about 50’-100’ in the E½, Section 26, Barnesville Township, off C.R. No. 51, to provide access to a new home construction site; and the Wilkin County Highway Department to remove the existing 30” dia. centerline corrugated metal pipe culvert/flapgate into Wilkin C.D. No. 1B in the NW¼, Section 4, Nilsen Township, in CSAH No. 18 and to replace it with a same sized reinforced concrete pipe with a gate on the north end.

- Approved Change Order No. 4 in the amount of $180,494.19 to extend the Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, Phase 1 work for one mile downstream through Section 22, Holy Cross Township, subject to the acquisition of a temporary easement from the landowner. The Board also approved making up the difference between the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) payments and the agreed upon easement payments for two Phase 2 landowners who don’t qualify for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program because their land is already enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

- Authorized Staff to send a formal letter to the RIM easement department requesting to partner with them on the use of the RIM reserve outside request easement policy regarding a proposal for the BRRWD to work with the Wilkin SWCD and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to obtain conservation easements along the Otter Tail River. The easements will be used to establish a corridor for a future river restoration project on the Otter Tail River using Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funding. The Board also approved adding a possible
incentive payment up to 20% to match actual land values for the conservation easement acquisitions, subject to future adjustment based on actual funding allocation with the local cost share source yet to be identified.

- Accepted an estimate of $22,000 from the Minnesota State University-Moorhead Archeological Department to conduct a Whiskey Creek channel cultural review in association with the Whiskey Creek Restoration project.

- Approved a purchase offer to sell up to 20 wetland mitigation banking credits to BWSR for their Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program.

- Approved the 2020 International Water Institute water quality monitoring contract for their work at various monitoring sites within the BRRWD, as designated in our current Revised Watershed Management Plan and also for the BRRWD's Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Surface Water Assessment Grant.

- Recognized Kathleen Fenger as the Interim BRRWD Administrator, starting 5/1/20.

The BRRWD Board of Managers will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, May 11, 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.