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Barnesville, MN 56514
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www.brrwd.org

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday March 9, 2026

Managers Present: Peter Fjestad; Catherine Affield; William Davis; Curtis Stubstad; Gerald Van Amburg; Troy Larson; William Steffl.

Staff Present: Kristine Goeden, Administrator; Matthew Schlauderaff, Watershed Specialist.

Consultants Present: Bennett Uhler, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI).

Others Attending: Michael Brandt; Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission; Jon Braton, Wilkin County Commission.

President Fjestad called meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Agenda: Motion by Davis to approve agenda, **Seconded** by Stubstad. **Motion Carried.**

Citizens to be Heard:

None.

Consent Agenda: Motion by Affield to approve consent agenda items:

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Financial Report

Permit Nos.

25-105, Jerry Wetterlin – tiling, SE ¼, Section 8 and NE ¼, Section 17, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County with conditions

26-008, City of Dilworth, c/o L. Peyton Mastera – utility installation, NE ¼, Section 33, Moorhead Township, Clay County with conditions

26-009, City of Moorhead, c/o Michael Aamodt – land development - utility installation, City of Moorhead with conditions

26-010, City of Moorhead, c/o Michael Aamodt – utility improvement – surface drainage, City of Moorhead

26-011, City of Moorhead, c/o Michael Aamodt – utility improvement, City of Moorhead

26-012, City of Moorhead, c/o Michael Aamodt – utility improvement, City of Moorhead

26-114, Darin Brandt – tiling, NE ¼, Section 30, Alliance Township, Clay County with conditions

26-115, Darin Brandt – tiling, W ½, Section 24, Holy Cross Township, Clay County with conditions

Seconded by Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Permits for Discussion:

Permit No. 26-003. Bradyn Boe. Applicant proposing to install new driveway approach and culvert in SW ¼, Section 20, Hawley Township, Clay County. Uhler recommended approval subject to installation of 18-inch culvert and approval from road authority to work within road right-of-way (ROW).

Permit No. 26-016. Steve Thompson. Applicant proposing to replace 18-inch corrugated metal pipe (CMP) through existing approach with an 18 inch High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) culvert in NE ¼, Section 9, Alliance Township, Clay County. Uhler recommended approval subject to installation of 18-inch culvert and approval from road authority to work in road ROW. Board of Managers recommended encouraging applicant to put steel ends on culvert.

Motion by Stubstad to approve Permit Nos. 26-003 and 26-016 with conditions outlined above, **Seconded** by Davis. **Motion Carried.**

Permit No. 26-013. Eric Loomer. Applicant proposing to pattern tile 89 acres in NW ¼, Section 9, Orwell Township, Otter Tail County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Tile outlets to JD2, as it currently does, which is an adequate outlet. Schlauderaff recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions. **Motion** by Larson to approve Permit Nos. 26-013 with conditions, **Seconded** by Affield. **Motion Carried.**

Projects and Ditches:

Project No. 81 – Whiskey Creek Enhancement. Water Quality Monitoring. Board of Managers reviewed proposed work plan for water quality monitoring of Whiskey Creek. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) through the Section 319 grant program will fund activities included in work plan. Work plan involves monitoring in 2026, 2027, and 2028. BRRWD may be required to purchase some equipment, which is expected to be reimbursable by the grant. **Motion** by Van Amburg to approve the Whiskey Creek Effectiveness Monitoring Work Plan, **Seconded** by Stubstad. **Motion Carried.**

Project No. 81 – Whiskey Creek Enhancement. Water Quality Monitoring, International Water Institute (IWI) Proposal. IWI submitted proposal to complete water quality sampling proposed in the Whiskey Creek Effectiveness Monitoring Work Plan (Work Plan). Cost proposal for 13 sampling events in 2026 and 2027 and 6 in 2028, as outlined in the Work Plan is \$33,070.00. **Motion** by Affield to accept proposal from IWI as presented, **Seconded** by Davis. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek Barnesville Township Restoration. Project Discussion. There are two natural gas pipelines that cross Clay County Ditch No. 34 through the Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration. A Sonoco Gas Line is buried 1 ft below the ditch. To date, Sonoco has stated they do not have additional requirements if BRRWD is able to make project work with existing conditions. HEI will survey pipeline when conditions allow and continue to work with Sonoco as needed. A Magellan Gas Line is suspended above the ditch. They have stated BRRWD will be responsible for burying pipeline. They estimate the cost will be \$500,000.00 to \$2,000,000.00. Board of Managers discussed options and directed staff to work with Vogel Law Firm and determine if existing ditch ROW would supersede pipeline easement.

Uhler presented modified water management district (wmd) map. Previous wmd map included all land that drains to the confluence of Whisky Creek and the South Branch Buffalo River. Initially, BRRWD planned to include restoration for South Tributary with Whisky Creek (Clay County Ditch No. 34) restoration. However, due to funding constraints, BRRWD proceeded with Whisky Creek and will complete plans for South Tributary in the future. Therefore, wmd was modified to include all land that drains to the end of the project area. **Motion** by Larson to authorize HEI to proceed with creating wmd using modified boundary as presented, **Seconded** by Davis. Stubstad Abstained. **Motion Carried.**

Goeden provided an update on project timeline. HEI is finalizing engineers report and developing wmd. Staff are waiting on the title company to confirm landownership and then Vogel will need to record proposed easements on property before Hearing. If Board of Managers approve an Order to establish the proposed project, funding for project expires at the end of June 2027. Due to coordination restraints, a project hearing will likely be held in May 2026. This will allow BRRWD to meet noticing requirements for the engineer's report and the hearing. Staff recommended Board of Managers consider holding the hearing in early May before their regular Board Meeting. **Motion** by Davis to direct staff to proceed with plans to hold hearing the first week in May 2026, **Seconded** by Affield. Stubstad Abstained. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek Barnesville Township Restoration. Petition. **Motion** by Larson to accept Petition to Reroute Clay County Ditch No. 34 as part of the Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration in Sections 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23, Barnesville Township, **Seconded** by Davis. Roll Call vote requested. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. Stubstad Abstained. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek Barnesville Township Restoration. Order to Appoint Engineer. Motion by Affield to approve Findings and Order to appoint Bennett Uhler engineer to investigate effects of the proposed reroute of Clay County Ditch No. 34 as part of the Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration and file a report of findings, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. Roll Call vote requested. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. Stubstad Abstained. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek Barnesville Township Restoration. Staking Discussion. Board of Managers reviewed draft letter to landowners to notify them of staking proposed easement boundary. Board of Managers discussed value in showing landowners easement boundary prior to project hearing. Draft letter also notifies landowners that if an Order is approved acquiring ROW after the project hearing, construction will proceed. **Motion** by Larson to authorize staff to send letter as presented, **Seconded** by Steffl. Roll Call vote requested. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. Stubstad Abstained. **Motion Carried.**

Conservation Plan for Stream Restoration Projects (Conservation Plan). Board of Managers reviewed proposed Conservation Plan which includes information on how permanent easements on stream restoration projects will be managed. **Motion** by Affield to approve Conservation Plan as presented, **Seconded** by Davis. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 33. Land Acquisition for Repair. Board of Managers previously approved offering landowners appraised value for additional ROW needed for an outlet repair. 5.26 acres of temporary ROW is required for repair construction. **Motion** by Stubstad to approve payment rate of \$250 per acre for temporary ROW needed for repair, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. **Motion Carried.**

Other:

Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF). Mid-point Evaluation. BRRWD is the fiscal agent and grant administrator for the WBIF program through Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) was approved in 2020, so Buffalo-Red River Watershed (BRRW) is reaching the mid-point of our plan. BWSR requires each watershed to complete a mid-point evaluation to track progress towards goals and modify plan if needed. BRRW Policy Committee, which include elected and appointed officials from BRRWD, each County, and each Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) within the watershed, met in February 2026 to discuss evaluation. Policy Committee members approved applying for the Mid-point evaluation grant through BWSR. The BRRW Policy Committee reviewed and approved proposal from HEI to complete the evaluation for \$38,400.00. The BRRW Policy Committee also identified a need for a tool to track progress towards pollution reduction goals outlined in the CWMP. The BRRW Policy Committee reviewed and approved a proposal from for a tracking tool for \$16,500.00 **Motion** by Larson to authorize Goeden to submit a grant application to BWSR for the Mid-point Evaluation, authorize HEI to complete the Mid-point Evaluation per their proposal, and authorize the purchase of the tracking tool using WBIF funds, **Seconded** by Stubstad. **Motion Carried.**

WBIF Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Funding Application. The BRRW is eligible to apply for another WBIF grant for FY 2026. Staff from BRRWD, Clay SWCD, Wilkin SWCD, Becker SWCD, and West Otter Tail SWCD developed a work plan to allocate funds to activities that support the goals outlined in the CWMP. The BRRW Policy Committee reviewed and approved the proposed work plan. BRRW is eligible for \$1,919,949.00. BRRWD is expected to receive \$485,000.00 for stream and shoreline restoration. **Motion** by Stubstad to authorize Goeden to submit grant application to BWSR for FY26, **Seconded** by Affield. **Motion Carried.**

IWI Water Quality Monitoring Agreement. Board of Managers reviewed proposal from IWI to complete water quality monitoring throughout the District. The cost to complete water quality monitoring for 2026 shall not exceed \$33,400.00. **Motion** by Van Amburg to authorize Goeden to sign Agreement as presented, **Seconded** by Stubstad. **Motion Carried.**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) Stream Gaging Contract. Board of Managers reviewed contract from MNDNR for stream gaging from March 2026 through January 2028. Total obligation will be \$46,700.00. **Motion** by Davis to authorize Goeden to sign contract, **Seconded** by Affield. **Motion Carried.**

IWI River of Dreams Request. IWI requested \$600.00 to transport fourth graders in Barnesville to participate in their River of Dreams program. River of Dreams program provides watershed education to students. **Motion** by Van Amburg to approve funding transportation costs as requested, **Seconded** by Davis. **Motion Carried.**

Bills. Motion by Affield to approve bills totaling \$322,705.19, **Seconded** by Larson. **Motion Carried.**

Minnesota Watersheds Legislative Event. Fjestad attended Minnesota Watersheds Legislative Event in St. Paul and provided an update on the topics the state association is tracking.

Next Regular Meeting. Monday April 13, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office.

President Fjestad adjourned meeting at 8:32 PM.

William Davis
Secretary