



1303 4TH Ave. NE
Barnesville, MN 56514
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www.brrwd.org

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday April 13, 2026

Managers Present: Peter Fjestad; Catherine Affield; William Davis; Gerald Van Amburg (remote); Troy Larson; William Steffl.

Managers Absent: Curtis Stubstad.

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

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

Others Attending: Christine Holland, River Keepers; Bethany Bethke, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR); Ross Aigner; Jon Braton, Wilkin County Commission; Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission; Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission.

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

Agenda: Additions to agenda:

Watershed-based Implementation Fund (WBIF), Grant Agreement

Clay County Ditch No. 40, Repair Recommendation

Motion by Davis to approve agenda with additions, **Seconded** by Affield. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Larson, Steffl. Van Amburg Absent. **Motion Carried.**

Citizens to be Heard:

Christine Holland, River Keepers. Holland provided an update on River Keepers' ongoing initiatives including volunteering efforts, water quality monitoring, Reforest the Red, and the Red River Water Festival.

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

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Financial Report

Permit Nos.

26-017, Dave Grommesh – tiling, NW ¼, Section 25, Barnesville Township, Clay County with conditions

26-019, RCH Custom Homes LLC, c/o Raymond Reading – culvert installation, SE ¼, Section 8, Hawley Township, Clay County with conditions

26-020, Jordan Yaggie – tiling, N ½, Section 35, Akron Township, Clay County with conditions

26-021, Steve Thompson – culvert installation, Sections 4 and 9, Alliance Township, Clay County with conditions

Seconded by Davis. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Permits for Discussion:

None.

Projects:

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration. Report of Findings. Uhler presented the Engineer's Report and Findings of Fact. The Engineer's Findings and Recommendations Include:

1. The proposed project will improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient loadings to Clay County Ditch No. 34 and reaches of Whisky Creek downstream of the restoration through the creation of a stable natural prairie stream.
2. The proposed project does not adversely impact drainage and will maintain drainage benefits for the benefitting landowners.
3. The proposed project reduces flood damages along the channel by reconnecting Clay County Ditch No. 34 to its natural floodplain in the alignment of the restored reach of Whisky Creek.
4. Proposed restoration will contain flood flows until the 5-year event. The current channel has approximately a 2-year flood capacity.
5. The BRRWD has identified the minimum land requirements for the project and will acquire ditch right-of-way through a hearing process to accommodate the project.
6. No Clay County Ditch No. 34 assessments will be needed for the construction of the proposed work. The BRRWD has \$3.7 million in stream restoration funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) – Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) to pay for the ditch rerouting / channel restoration work.

Motion by Affield to accept the Engineer's Report and Findings of Fact as presented, **Seconded** by Larson. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration. Engineer's Report. Motion by Van Amburg to accept the Engineer's Report as presented, **Seconded** by Larson. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration. Water Management District (wmd) (Benefits) and Damages. Board of Managers reviewed Damages for proposed project. In total there will be 187.691 new acres of permanent easement for a total Damages payment of \$787,661.09. There will also be two temporary easement for construction, which will result in an additional \$1,000.00 in Damages. **Motion** by Davis to approve Damage payments as presented, **Seconded** by Steffl. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.** Board of Managers reviewed the proposed wmd. Total Benefits are proposed to be \$40,000.00. **Motion** by Larson to accept the wmd as presented, **Seconded** by Affield. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Clay County Ditch No. 34/Whisky Creek, Barnesville Township, Restoration. Set Time & Date for Hearing. Motion by Affield to set Hearing date for Monday May 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the BRRWD Office, 1303 4th AVE NE Barnesville, MN 56514, **Seconded** by Davis. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

City of Moorhead and City of Dilworth. Ditch Mowing Update. At the December 2025 Board Meeting, Board of Managers directed staff to meet with City of Moorhead to discuss frequency of mowing along BRRWD ditches. Goeden and Uhler met with City of Moorhead and City of Dilworth staff. City of Moorhead was willing to work with BRRWD to ensure vegetation is long enough to maintain ditch stability. City of Dilworth keeps their mowers at a height of 4 inches, so their mowers are likely not causing stability issues. Vegetation on ditch slopes shorter than 4 inches is likely mowed by residents along the ditch.

Ditches:

Clay County No. Ditch 41 – Lateral 2. Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Request. Uhler presented request from MnDOT to reroute water from Clay County Ditch No. 50 to Clay County Ditch No. 41 – Lateral 2. MnDOT is in the conceptual phase for proposed reconstruction of Highway 10 in 2031. Board of Managers recommended Uhler ask for additional information from MnDOT to help ensure there are no downstream impacts from proposed plan.

Drainage Repair Recommendations

Drainage	Township	Section	Problem/Proposed Work	Estimated Cost
Clay County Ditch No. 40	Kurtz	20	Brush mow trees along outlet to allow for ditch cleaning. Some may need to be cut and hauled out.	\$5,000.00

Motion by Davis to approve repairs as presented, **Seconded** by Larson. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Other:

Human Resources Update. Goeden informed Board of Managers that the Administrative Assistant – Accounting Specialist position has been filled. Renee Mortenson will start on April 20, 2026. **Motion** by Affield to hire Renee Mortenson for the Administrative Assistant – Accounting Specialist position, **Seconded** by Davis. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

WBIF. Grant Agreement. **Motion** by Davis to authorize Goeden to sign Grant Agreement for C26-0156 Buffalo-Red River Watershed-based Implementation 2026 grant for \$1,919,949.00 with Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), **Seconded** by Affield. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Bills. **Motion** by Affield to approve bills totaling \$741,782.84, **Seconded** by Larson. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Ross Aigner. Aigner noted Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has a brush mower and forestry mulching machine and stated BRRWD can consider hiring them for those services for projects and ditches in Wilkin County. Aigner also presented concern on behalf of C-W Valley Coop. C-W Valley Coop has a fertilizer plant in Section 8, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County. Aigner stated C-W Valley Coop is expecting to be impacted by the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion (FM Diversion) and they have tried to work with the FM Diversion without success. Aigner stated C-W Valley Coop's insurance company has concerns with impacts from the FM Diversion, so C-W Valley Coop is proposing to build a ring dike to the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF). Mongeau recommended BRRWD contact Justin Fischer, Director of Lands and Compliance with Metro Flood Diversion Authority (MFDA) and request to be on next Land Management Committee Meeting to discuss concern. **Motion** by Larson to authorize Uhler to assist C-W Valley Coop with discussion with MFDA regarding concerns with impacts from the FM Diversion on their property, **Seconded** by Davis. Roll Call Vote: Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Davis, Van Amburg, Larson, Steffl. **Motion Carried.**

Next Regular Meeting. Monday May 11, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office.

President Fjestad adjourned meeting at 8:36 PM

/s/ William Davis
Secretary