



1303 4TH Ave. NE
Barnesville, MN 56514
218-789-3100
www.brrwd.org

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday March 11, 2024

Managers Present: Peter Fjestad; Catherine Affield; John Hanson; Troy Larson; Gerald Van Amburg; William Davis (remote); Curtis Stubstad.

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

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

Others Attending: Kim Melton, Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission; Brian Fuder, Red River Retention Authority (RRRA); Steve Thompson; Roger Haglund (remote).

President Fjestad called meeting to order at 6:59 PM.

Agenda: Additions to agenda:

Clay County Ditch No. 21 Repair Recommendation

Clay County Ditch No. 10 Discussion

Information Technology (IT) Update.

Motion to approve agenda with additions by Affield, **Seconded** by Larson. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Citizens to be Heard:

Kim Melton, Wilkin SWCD. Cover Crop Program Update. Melton provided an update on four soil health programs offered by Wilkin SWCD including Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP), Cover Crop Incentive Program (CCI), Clean Water Fund (CWF) Soil Health Program, and Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) Program. In 2023 BRRWD contributed \$25,000.00 to soil health programs in Wilkin County. In Wilkin County, approximately \$427,000.00 was paid to landowners for soil health practices and over 11,000 acres were enrolled in these programs.

Brian Fuder, RRRA. Fuder introduced himself to Board of Managers. He became the Executive Director in July 2023 with the retirement of Keith Weston.

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

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Financial Report

Permit Nos.

23-089, Gerald Zimmerman – tiling, W ½ Section 11, Oakport Township, Clay County with conditions,

24-008, F & D Family Farm LLLP – tiling, NE ¼ Section 3, Alliance Township, Clay County with conditions,

24-009, John, Peter, & Steven Thompson – tiling, Section 36, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County with conditions,

24-013, Barry Langerud – culvert removal and installation, SW ¼ Section 27, Keene Township Clay County with conditions by Affield **Seconded** by Stubstad. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Permits for Discussion:

Permit No. 24-010. Bruce Yaggie. Applicant proposing to tile NW ¼ Section 4, Bradford Township, Wilkin County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets into Otter Tail River, which is an adequate outlet. Tile has been designed to accommodate preliminary easement for Lower Otter Tail River Restoration. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions and approval from Township to work within road right-of-way (ROW).

Permit No. 24-011. Michael Radig. Applicant proposing to tile SW ¼ Section 27, Connelly Township, Wilkin County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets into ditch on southwest corner and flow overland for approximately 120 ft before entering Wilkin County Ditch No. 12. Land is included in benefit area for Wilkin County Ditch No. 12. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions and approval from Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) to work within road ROW.

Permit No. 24-012. Thomas Radig. Applicant proposing to tile SE ¼ Section 22, Connelly Township, Wilkin County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets through township road into Wilkin County Ditch No. 28. Land is included in benefiting area for Wilkin County Ditch No. 28. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions and approval from Township to work within road ROW.

Motion to approve Permit Nos. 24-010, 24-011, and 24-012 with conditions outlined above by Stubstad, **Seconded** by Larson. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Permit No. 19-003. Metro Flood Diversion Authority (MFDA) Southern Embankment 4. Plan Review. MFDA is required to submit plans for review for portions of project within BRRWD. Uhler reviewed plans for Southern Embankment 4 and determined local drainage should not be affected.

Projects:

Project No. 81 – Whiskey Creek Enhancement Project. Wilkin County Ditch No. 6A Tributary. Landowner Meeting Update. Staff met with landowners along Wilkin County Ditch No. 6A tributary leading to Whiskey Creek in Section 7 and 8, Nordick Township and Sections 12 and 13, McCauleyville Township, Wilkin County. Staff were notified that landowners along tributary were interested in extending Whiskey Creek restoration to this area. Overall, staff received positive feedback from landowners in attendance. If landowners sign temporary easements, staff will begin to identify additional funding to complete construction. Staff will reach out to landowners not in attendance to continue to determine interest.

Upper South Branch Buffalo River Restoration. Change Order No. 1. Motion to approve Change Order No. 1 for \$5,791.26 to Minnesota Native Landscapes, Inc for the installation of salvaged 72” corrugated metal pipe (CMP) as discussed at the February 12, 2024 Board Meeting for a total contract price of \$803,586.26 by Hanson, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Ditches:

Clay County Ditch No. 21. Repair Recommendation. A truck topper was disposed of in Clay County Ditch No. 21. Estimated cost to remove truck topper is \$500.00. **Motion** to authorize repair as presented by Larson, **Seconded** by Stubstad. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Judicial Ditch No. 1. Review and Approve Repair Agreement. At the February 12, 2024 Board Meeting, Board of Managers directed staff to draft agreement with Todd Lewis to repair damage to Judicial Ditch No. 1. **Motion** to approve agreement to authorize Lewis to restore damage by Van Amburg, **Seconded** by Affield. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Clay County Ditch No. 10. Discussion. Board of Managers held informational meeting for landowners along Clay County Ditch No. 10 at 5:00 PM on March 11, 2024 to discuss slope failures along ditch. Landowners in attendance agreed they did not want to move the ditch to solve problem. Landowners requested BRRWD consider using tiling to address seepage concerns. Uhler will review options and present at future board meeting. Landowners requested notice to attend board meeting so they are aware of solution.

Other:

2024 Legislative Session. Update. Two bills have been introduced this legislative session that could impact BRRWD. One introduced in the House (HF 3389) will require all drain tile, residential or agricultural, to be reported to BWSR annually. The other introduced in the Senate (SF 3684), restricts benefit assessments on properties with conservation easements. Board of Managers discussed concerns with proposed legislation. **Motion** to authorize Altrichter to contact lobbyist, Joel

Carlson, to address these bills by Stubstad, **Seconded** by Larson. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Red River Water Management Board (RRWMB) & Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup (FDRWG). Floodplain Mapping Funding Request. RRWMB and FDRWG have contracted with International Water Institute (IWI) and HEI to map the 10-year floodplain. FDRWG and RRWMB are currently completing pilot project using state funding. Recently, FDRWG and RRWMB submitted grant application for \$1 million through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This grant will require \$333,333.00 match. Rob Sip, Executive Director of RRWMB, asked if BRRWD would provide grant match if FDRWG and RRWMB receive funding. **Motion** to contribute one-third match to grant spent within BRRWD by Hanson, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Salary Program. Review and Approve. In June 2021, Board of Managers approved a Salary Program as part of transition to hiring their own employees. BRRWD hired Sarah Noah of Noah & Associates, Inc to develop program. Noah utilized data collected by public entities across Minnesota by the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC). With changes in the workforce the past few years, the BRRWD Human Resources (HR) Committee discussed updating the Salary Program. LMC updated their database and salary information was not available until late 2023. Altrichter presented a proposed Salary Program based on updated data. **Motion** to approve Salary Program as presented and authorize HR Committee to review staff salaries to ensure all staff are in appropriate zone and present updated salaries to Board of Managers for approval by Affield, **Seconded** by Hanson. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

IT Update. Altrichter presented new software option that monitors emails to reduce opportunities for phishing and impersonation email. Cost is \$6.00 per month per user. **Motion** to authorize Altrichter to work with IT provider, Eide Bailey, to implement software by Stubstad, **Seconded** by Affield. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.** Altrichter also informed Board of Managers of options for updating board room and door locks. Eide Bailey is developing quotes for Board of Managers to review at a future meeting.

Bills. Motion to approve bills totaling \$238,843.34 by Hanson, **Seconded** by Affield. Aye – Fjestad, Affield, Hanson, Larson, Van Amburg, Davis, Stubstad. **Approved.**

Next Regular Meeting. Monday April 8, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. Agenda will be posted on BRRWD's website prior to meeting.

President Fjestad adjourned meeting at 8:16 PM.

/s/ John E. Hanson _____
Secretary