

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

BARNESVILLE, MINNESOTA 56514

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MINUTES FOR MANAGERS' MEETING

July 12, 2021

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held their regular meeting on Monday, July 12, 2021, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. The meeting was also available online. BRRWD Managers present were Peter V. Fjestad, Catherine L. Affield, Gerald L. Van Amburg, Mark L. Hanson, Paul G. Krabbenhoft, and Troy E. Larson. BRRWD staff in attendance were Kristine M. Altrichter, Administrator, Erik S. Jones, Engineer, and Bennett Uhler, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI). Others attending: Pete Waller, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and others online.

At 7:00 PM, President Fjestad called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting was being recorded to aid in the preparation of minutes.

Agenda. Additions to the meeting agenda: Possible repairs for Clay County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 41 and 58, updates on Wilkin-Otter Tail Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 2 wetland restoration, the FM Diversion project, and Upper South Branch of the Buffalo River-Phase 1. **Motion** by Van Amburg to approve the amended agenda. **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

Secretary's Report. The Board reviewed draft minutes for the 6/28/21 regular meeting, the 8/27/09 County Line Outlet informational meeting, and the 9/3/09 Ranum-Tansem Highwater Outlet informational meeting. Affield noted some minor corrections to the 6/28/21 minutes. **Motion** by Affield to approve the minutes, subject to correction. **Seconded** by Van Amburg. **Approved.**

Treasurer's Report. The Board reviewed the 7/12/21 BRRWD financial report. Cash on hand is \$2,707,100.50. Income received since the 6/28/21 meeting totals \$127,997.92, and for the year, totals \$2,769,913.74. Expenses from the last meeting totaled \$19,721.76. Current Account Receivables collected this month total \$125,475.45 and to date, Account Receivables total \$14,201,642.76. **Motion** by Krabbenhoft to approve the Treasurer's Report. **Seconded** by Larson. **Approved.**

Other Business brought before the Board included:

BWSR Legislative Update. Pete Waller, BWSR, presented an update on the 2021 Legislative Session and discussed funding appropriations and grant opportunities. He noted that the BRRWD's Lower Otter Tail River restoration project was included in the 2021 legislation for \$2.3 million. The Board discussed the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) watershed-based funding.

Permit No. 21-080, Gary Johnson. Applicant proposes to install random tile in existing ditches and low areas on his property in the NE¼, Section 17, Trondhjem Township, Otter Tail County, outletting through a wetland area on his property. Johnson and his neighbor, Kevin Brendan, are planning a joint tiling project that will extend west into the NW¼, Section 17, but Brendan has not yet submitted an application for the project on his property. Jones noted that the wetland hydrology will not be affected by the project. Uhler recommended permit approval, subject to our standard tiling permit conditions and an agreement with Brendan to outlet the project across his property. Johnson has also obtained downstream landowners' approval for his project.

Permit No. 21-081, Bruce Nelson. Applicant proposes to pattern tile the NW¼, Section 27, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, with a gravity outlet into Lawndale Creek. Uhler recommended approval, subject to our standard tiling permit conditions.

Permit No. 21-082, Gerald Zimmerman. Applicant proposes to install four 4" tile lines running north and south through field in the NE¼, Section 28, Morken Township, Clay County, connecting to a main along the north line of the quarter, outletting in the center of the field directly into Clay C.D. No. 59 with either an outlet control structure or lift station. Uhler recommended permit approval, subject to our standard tiling permit conditions.

Permit No. 21-083, Elkton Township. Applicant proposes to replace an existing crossing with two 48" dia. culverts on a natural waterway through 110th AVE S between Sections 28 and 33, Elkton Township, Clay County. Uhler conducted a field review and thought the existing culverts are 60" dia. He recommended permit approval, subject to verifying and matching the existing culvert sizing.

Permit No. 21-084, Elkton Township. Applicant proposes to replace an existing 24" dia. culvert on the east side of 160th ST S between Sections 22 and 23 with the same size structure. Uhler recommended permit approval.

Motion by Affield to approve Permit Nos. 21-080 through 21-084, subject to the referenced disclaimers and conditions. **Seconded** by M. Hanson. **Approved.**

Glyndon East Tributary Restoration. The Board reviewed a scope and fee proposal from In Situ Archaeological Consulting, Eden Prairie, MN, to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological survey of 9.2 miles of the East Tributary channel for \$9,676. Uhler noted that this quote is comparable with fees the Minnesota State University-Moorhead charged for the Whiskey Creek and Wolverton Creek archaeological surveys. **Motion** by Van Amburg to accept In Situ Archaeological Consulting's proposal. **Seconded** by Krabbenhoft. **Approved.**

Wolverton Tributary Drainage Investigation. Jones presented the results of a survey the Board authorized for the upper reaches of a tributary to Wolverton Creek in Sections 15, 22, 27, and 34, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County. The survey addressed the upstream landowners' request to extend a proposed natural waterway cleanout upstream approximately 3 miles. The Board discussed the BRRWD's potential involvement with a project for this area. **Motion** by Larson to forward the survey results to the landowners and leave project implementation up to them in accordance with the HEI survey and other agency guidelines. **Seconded** by Affield. The Board discussed ways to ensure the work is done according to the survey specifications. **Approved.**

Wolverton Creek Restoration. A landowner on the upper reaches of the project notified staff that there is water hemp in the native seeding on the project easement area near the excavated channel. The site will be mowed or sprayed with herbicide to control the weeds.

Jones reported that before Robert Nord's easement can be finalized, a contractor will need to be hired to complete additional work needed on his property along Wilkin County Road (C.R.) No. 30. There is also outlet work to complete that will require a DNR permit and additional BWSR funding. Downstream channel grading, rock riffle installations, and channel maintenance will also need to be completed. Jones expects the entire project will be finished by the end of the year.

Clay C.D. No. 41. American Crystal Sugar (ACS) reported a slumping site on the west side of C.D. No. 41 near their factory yard in the NW¼, Section 33, Moorhead Township. There are ACS process pipes crossing the ditch in this area. In 2015, Terracon conducted a soils investigation on slumping sites east of the ditch. Jones suggested that the Board authorize a site inspection to determine the location of the slump in relation to the process pipes. If it is north of the pipes, there would be time for Jones to consult with Terracon and prepare repair recommendations for the Board's review, but if the slump is over the pipes, repairs would be needed immediately. Jones estimated repair costs could be approximately \$50,000 if the slump is over the pipes. The Board reviewed the 2015 geotechnical recommendations from Terracon. **Motion** by Van Amburg to authorize repairs, based on the results of the site inspection and the location of the slump site relative to the ACS process pipes. Jones will come back to the Board with repair recommendations in collaboration with Terracon if the slump is north of the pipes. **Seconded** by M. Hanson. **Approved.**

Otter Tail/Wilkin J.D. No. 2 Wetland Restoration. Jones provided an update on a potential wetland restoration project/wetland banking credit site in Sections 7 and 18, Orwell Township, along J.D. No. 2. A meeting with the landowners and Managers will be scheduled later this summer.

FM Diversion. Jones provided an update on the FM Diversion project. Jones will be reviewing plans submitted by the Diversion Authority for a component of the control structure on the Minnesota side of the Red River.

Upper South Branch of the Buffalo River Restoration. Uhler gave an update on the Phase 1 channel restoration plans in Sections 9, 10, and 11, Manston Township, Wilkin County. The BRRWD will need to hold hearings to abandon a portion of Wilkin C.D. No. 44 and to reroute the ditch to the historic channel alignment. Uhler suggested that the Board consult BRRWD Attorney Tami Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, on the legal hearing process.

Clay C.D. No. 58 Repair. A landowner in Section 11, Elmwood Township, is concerned with the condition of the railing on an old wooden bridge over C.D. No. 58. Jerdee Bridge Company conducted a site investigation and submitted a quote to replace the railings for \$1,200. **Motion** by Larson to authorize the proposed repair. **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

HR Committee Staff Transition. Altrichter provided an update on the staff transition. All three staff members have signed term sheets, indicating that they agree to the proposed benefit plan and salary structure, approved by the Board at their 6/14/21 meeting. Altrichter recommended the Board approve a motion to transition the staff on 7/29/21 and to provide formal notice to HEI. **Motion** by Affield to complete the staff transition, effective 7/29/21, and to send a letter to HEI outlining the staffing changes, as well as any other adjustments to the service contract. **Seconded** by Larson. **Approved.**

After transition, the BRRWD will need a new liability insurance policy to cover both staff and Managers. **Motion** by Krabbenhoft to authorize the HR Committee to select an insurance policy to stay on track with the 7/29/21 transition date. **Seconded** by M. Hanson. **Approved.**

Bills. The Board reviewed bills totaling \$251,686.81. **Motion** by Affield to approve payment of the bills. **Seconded** by M. Hanson. **Approved.** See detailed bill list below.

MAWD Summer Tour. The Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) will hold a virtual summer tour on July 22, 2021, 1:00 PM. MAWD is also planning their Annual Meeting and Trade Show at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria on December 1-3, 2021. Fjestad reported on current MAWD activities and information.

Next Meeting Items. Jones noted that there will be a meeting with the Clay and Becker Soil and Water Conservation Districts regarding potential applications for Clean Water Fund project funding.

Next Meeting. The Board will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, July 26, 2021, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. The conference line phone number is 1-701-404-1699. Conference ID: 235 204 441#. More information will be posted on the BRRWD's website prior to the meeting at www.brrwd.org.

Adjournment. President Fjestad adjourned the meeting at 8:31 PM.