



Board Meeting Minutes

Monday February 14, 2022

Managers Present: Peter Fjestad, Catherine Affield, John Hanson, Troy Larson, Gerald Van Amburg, Paul Krabbenhoft, Mark Hanson (remote).

Managers Absent:

Staff Present: Kristine Altrichter, Administrator; Lee Olson, Watershed Specialist; Matthew Schlauderauff, Watershed Specialist.

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

Others Attending: Nathan Wallerstead, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) (remote); Craig Evans, USACE (remote); Amanda Hillman, MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (remote); Tim Smith, Aquic; Joseph Williams, Ecosystem Investment Partners (EIP) (remote); Lynn Kotrba, Harvest Hope Farm (remote), Jeff Yaggie, Steve Thompson.

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

Agenda: Additions to agenda Petition for Partial Abandonment of Clay County Ditch No. 50. **Motion** to approve agenda with addition by J. Hanson, **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

Citizens to be Heard:

Lower Otter Tail River Restoration. Specifically Authorized Project. Nathan Wallerstead and Craig Evans.

Wallerstead and Evans presented information regarding USACE Specifically Authorized Project (Section 216) Program, a possible funding opportunity for Lower Otter Tail River Restoration. Section 216 funding supports existing USACE projects to improve quality of environment. Congressional authorization is required to receive funding. If awarded funding, feasibility study with 50/50 cost-share is required. Study costs are capped at \$3 million. Design and Implementation has a 65/35 cost-share with no federal cap. If BRRWD would like to apply for funding for Lower Otter Tail River Restoration, they may submit letter of intent to USACE.

Lower Otter Tail River Restoration. DNR Local Sponsor Request for Section 1135 Program. Amanda Hillman.

DNR submitted request to BRRWD to be local sponsor for USACE Section 1135 application. DNR proposes to install fish passage around Orwell Dam in an effort to further reconnect Red River of the North to Otter Tail River Watershed. DNR anticipates cost-share will be funded through Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) funds. BRRWD will be local sponsor but will not be expected to provide funding to project. Board of Managers discussed project and decided to discuss further at March 14, 2022 Board Meeting.

Upper Buffalo River Restoration Proposal. EIP. Tim Smith. EIP identified Upper Buffalo River Restoration as a project that could generate phosphorus offsets for permit holders in Red River Basin. EIP proposes to assume responsibility for implementation of upstream portion of project in Callaway and Riceville Townships, Becker County. EIP will fund, design, permit, construct, monitor, maintain until performance standards are met, and establish endowment for long-term management. BRRWD would assist with acquisition of easements and be responsible for long term maintenance once performance standards are met. EIP is requesting if BRRWD is interested in pursuing a partnership to complete upper reaches of Upper Buffalo River Restoration. **Motion** to authorize staff to continue to work with EIP to determine if BRRWD should partner with EIP to complete a portion of Upper Buffalo River Restoration by J. Hanson, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. **Approved.**

Project 49, Oakport Township. Harvest Hope Farm Grazing Proposal. Lynn Kotroba. Harvest Hope Farm submitted proposal to graze sheep on 22 acres of land at Oakport Prairie at a rate of \$10/acre. Harvest Hope Farm proposes sheep will provide service to prairie reestablishment and as a 501C3 sheep will be used for educational purposes. Harvest Hope Farm anticipates adding fencing, signage, water troughs, and security will cost \$19,636. Altrichter contacted City of Moorhead about proposed grazing rate, as BRRWD plans to transfer property to City in 2022. Kristie Leshovsky, City of Moorhead Community Development Director, said City did not have concerns with proposed rate. **Motion** to approve grazing rate of \$10/acre for 22 acres for Harvest Hope Farms at Oakport Prairie by Larson, **Seconded** by Van Amburg. **Approved.**

J.D. 2 Wetland Bank Proposal. Jeff Yaggie. Michael Yaggie, Jeff Yaggie, and Dan Bradow submitted proposal for wetland bank site near J.D. 2 in Orwell Township. Landowners are interested in moving forward with project. They are proposing to develop bank site themselves with option to sell wetland credits to BRRWD, Otter Tail County, and Wilkin County. Landowners would sell credits to BRRWD, Otter Tail County, and Wilkin County at 50 percent current market value. Board of Managers discussed proposal and authorized staff to organize meeting with landowners, BRRWD, Otter Tail County Commissioners, and Wilkin County Commissioners to determine credit needs.

Steve Thompson. Thompson asked Board of Managers about status of Stony Creek Water Resource Management Project. Jones indicated that BRRWD is waiting for funding to become available. Thompson presented his petition for NE ¼, Section 24, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County to use Wilkin County Ditch No. 13 as an outlet. Thompson received downstream landowner notifications and permit will be reviewed following Hearing.

Secretary's Report: Motion to approve January 10, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes, January 26, 2022 Project 46, Turtle Lake Outlet Modification Informational Meeting Minutes, and February 2, 2022 Wilkin County Ditch No. 44 Hearing Minutes by Affield, **Seconded** by Krabbenhoft. **Approved.**

Treasurer's Report: Account balance was \$3,535,240.95. Income received since January 10, 2022, totals \$567,872.73, and for the year, totals \$560,273.53. \$501,584.77 was received from Accounts Receivable this month. **Motion** to approve Treasurer's Report by J. Hanson, **Seconded** by Larson. **Approved.**

Permits:

Permit No. 22-001. Red River Valley Coop, Leon Emmil. Applicant proposing installation of underground electric powerline to provide alternate source of power for customers in Holy Cross Township due to impacts of Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project. Work proposed to be completed under Clay County Ditch No. 11 and Clay County Ditch No. 36, Section 32, Kurtz Township, and Sections 5 and 8, Holy Cross Township. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard utility condition and approval from road authority to work in right-of-way (ROW).

Permit No. 22-002. Whiskey Creek Farms, Steven Thompson. Applicant proposing installation of tile in NW ¼ Section 24, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County. System will outlet into road ditch and into Wilkin County Ditch No. 13. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Downstream landowner notifications were received. Land located within benefit area of Wilkin County Ditch No. 13 and Wilkin County Ditch No 13, lateral. Applicant will petition to include NE ¼ Section 24, Deerhorn Township in Wilkin County Ditch No. 13 benefit area and will submit separate application to install tile in NE ¼. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions.

Permit No. 22-004. River Valley Farms, Doug Nordick. Applicant proposing installation of pattern tile in NW ¼ Section 23, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County on west side of Wolverton Creek. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets into Wolverton Creek, which serves as adequate outlet. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions.

Permit No. 22-005. River Valley Farms, Doug Nordick. Applicant proposing installation of pattern tile in SE ¼, Section 12, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets into J.D. 1, which serves as adequate outlet. Land is included in J.D.1 benefit area. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions.

Permit No. 22-006. River Valley Farms, Doug Nordick. Applicant proposing installation of pattern tile in NW ¼, Section 11, Nordick Township, Wilkin County. Natural flow path of water remains unchanged. Proposed tile outlets at upstream

end of road culvert which leads to adequate outlet. Uhler recommended approval subject to standard tile conditions and approval from road authority to work in ROW.

Board of Managers discussed developing policy for marking outlets into ditch systems and requirements for number of outlets allowed into ditch per section. BRRWD staff will provide update and present to Board.

Motion to approve Permit Nos. 22-001, 22-002, 22-004, 22-005, 22-006 with conditions outlined above by J. Hanson, **Seconded** by Larson. **Approved.**

Ditches:

Clay County Ditch No. 50. Petition for Partial Abandonment / 7th ST NE Improvement. City of Dilworth submitted petition for partial abandonment of Clay County Ditch No. 50 as part of project to reconstruct 7th Street NE in Dilworth. City of Dilworth proposes to replace section of Clay County Ditch No. 50 along east side of 7th Street NE with buried stormwater pipe. **Motion** to accept petition by Van Amburg, **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

Projects:

South Branch Buffalo River Restoration. Clean Water Fund (CWF) Grant Agreement. BRRWD partnered with Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for a CWF grant for Upper South Branch Buffalo River watershed in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties. BRRWD was awarded \$350,000 with a 75/25 cost-share. BRRWD will work with Wilkin and West Otter Tail SWCDs to fund upland practices in Upper South Branch Buffalo River watershed. **Motion** to authorize Fjestad to sign grant agreement by Krabbenhoft, **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved**

South Branch Buffalo River Restoration. Wilkin County Ditch No. 44. Findings and Order. **Motion** to approve Findings and Order for Wilkin County Ditch No. 44 by Larson, **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

Lower Otter Tail River Restoration. Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). **Motion** to approve EAW by Van Amburg, **Seconded** by J. Hanson. **Approved.**

Upper Buffalo River Restoration. Schedule Landowner Informational Meeting. **Motion** to schedule landowner informational meeting on Monday March 28, 2022 at 7:00 PM in Barnesville by J. Hanson, **Seconded** by Krabbenhoft. **Approved.**

Project 80 Stony Creek Water Resource Management Project. Schedule Educational Meeting. **Motion** to hold educational meeting for managers to review background and project updates on Monday February 28, 2022 at 7:00 PM in Barnesville by Van Amburg, **Seconded** by Krabbenhoft. **Approved.**

Other:

Bylaws of the Buffalo Red River Watershed District (Bylaws) Update. Altrichter presented proposed updates to the Bylaws. Updates include changing mailing address, updating manager reimbursement to quarterly, changing two regular Board Meetings per month to one, removing 15 consecutive year term limit for advisory committee members, updating the respectful workplace policy to be consistent with the Employee Handbook. Board Managers supported moving forward with update. Board of Managers will vote on Bylaws at March 14, 2022 Board Meeting in accordance with procedures outlined in Bylaws.

Citizen Advisory Committee. Review Orientation Packet and Finalize Committee Members. Altrichter presented Citizen Advisory Committee Orientation Packet. Information will be presented to Citizen Advisory Committee during annual meeting March 9, 2022. Once input from Citizen Advisory Committee is received, document will be finalized and distributed to members. **Motion** to approve list of advisory committee members updated January 13, 2022 by Affield, **Seconded** by J. Hanson. **Approved.**

MN Legislative Session. Discuss Lobbying Efforts. Jones recommended BRRWD work with Lobbyist, Joel Carlson, to gain support to help fund Hawley Buffalo River Restoration, Turtle Lake Outlet Modification, and Stony Creek. Jones will develop factsheets to present legislators during the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Legislative Event.

Bills. Motion to approve bills totaling \$345,936.54 by Larson, **Seconded** by Affield. **Approved.**

Next Regular Meeting. Monday March 14, 2022, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. Agenda will be posted on BRRWD's website prior to meeting.

President Fjestad adjourned meeting at 9:27 PM.

/s/ John Hanson
Secretary
