

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Board of Manager's Minutes
March 9, 2023

Vice President, Gene Tiedemann, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District Office, Thief River Falls, MN.

Present: Managers: Gene Tiedemann, Terry Sorenson, Tom Anderson, Brian Dwight, LeRoy Ose, and Allan Page. Absent: Dale M. Nelson. Staff Present: Myron Jesme, Tammy Audette, and Legal Counsel, Delray Sparby.

The Board reviewed the agenda. Manager Dwight requested the addition of the role of the Budget and Salary Committee to the agenda. A motion was made by Dwight, seconded by Page, and passed by unanimous vote that the Board approve the agenda with the addition. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the February 9, 2023, minutes. A motion by Ose, seconded by Page, to approve the February 9, 2023, Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the Financial Report dated March 8, 2023. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Anderson, to approve the Financial Report dated March 8, 2023, as presented. Motion carried. The Board was informed that American Federal Bank increased their interest rates from 2.3% to 2.45%. Staff member Ann Joppru checked into a 12-month CD rates and reported an increase to 5.5%. The Board discussed and asked Joppru to check again in another month.

The 2023 IRS Standard Mileage Rate increased from 62.5 cents to 65.5 cents per mile. Changes will be applied on expense reports going forward.

Staff member Ann Joppru reported that there is a fund balance in the Judicial Ditch 72, RLWD Project No. 41 system that should be transferred to RLWD Project No.'s 41AA and 41BB, as Judicial Ditch 72 is no longer an active project. These funds will be divided between Clearwater County and Polk County based on the percentage of how much land is in each area; to be used for maintenance on each system. Administrator Jesme stated that he would like to see Joint Ditch No. 101, RLWD Project No. 41AA turned over to the District. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Anderson, to transfer the remaining balance in the Judicial Ditch 72, RLWD Project No. 41 in the amount of \$3,375.73 into Joint Ditch 100, RLWD Project No. 41AA and Joint Ditch 101, RLWD Project No. 41BB based on the land area calculation. Motion carried.

Administrator Jesme stated that a landowner meeting for Judicial Ditch No. 4, RLWD Project No. 101 was held in Bagley, with no landowners attending the meeting. Jesme spoke with the Clearwater County Engineer, Dan Sauve, who will speak with Bruce Cox, Clearwater County Land Commissioner, for discussion if the system should be abandoned. Sauve is reluctant to abandon the system. Clearwater County will get back to the District. Manager Dwight questioned if there would be any potential for wetland banking credits in the area.

Engineer, Nate Dalager, HDR Engineering, Inc., appeared before the board to discuss the potential of a project on the Turtle Cross Connection Lakes. This area has a history of dams installed many years ago, and some have lost their functionality. Some lake levels are two feet lower than what the constituents would like. A meeting was held with landowners and MnDNR staff to review history. This project goes back to 1918, and over the years the dams have washed out. Dalager discussed the possibility of retrofitting the dams, with fish passable structures, drawdown features, and then gaining some FDR for temporary flood storage. We need additional landowner input before we decide what direction we go. Dalager estimates approximately 800 ac.ft. of storage possible. Administrator Jesme stated that in order to bounce a lake there is a legal court document hearing from 1933 that set a designated elevation on the lake and in order to change it, we would need all lake frontage owners to sign off on it.. We would need all the landowners in attendance for discussion on how we can proceed with a project work team through FDR. Manager Dwight asked if the MnDNR is stepping up to the plate with any financial backing? Motion by Ose, seconded by Dwight, to move forward with the landowner meeting to gather more information on the Turtle Cross Connection Lakes area. Motion carried.

Engineer Jake Huwe, HDR Engineering, Inc., appeared before the Board to discuss the Mud River Enhancement Project, RLWD Project No. 180C in cooperation with the USFWS-Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. Huwe stated that a Project Team meeting was held in February, with the next one scheduled for April 21st. The Purpose and Need has been established for the project and they are currently looking at alternatives. If the team finds an alternative they like, we can move forward with the design. Mud River comes out of the Moose River Impoundment, crosses Hwy 89 and splits to JD 11-main (78%) and the Diversion Ditch/Branch 8 (22%) and eventually enters the Thief River/SD 83. The Purpose and Need Statement addresses sediment going into Agassiz NWR. Soil borings and probing were completed, with 5-6 feet of sediment to the original channel bottom. Manager Anderson asked what the overall objective of the project is. It is to address sediment into Agassiz NWR which has restricted the flow of Agassiz NWR, which then gets released downstream into State Ditch 83. Engineer Nate Dalager, HDR Engineering, Inc., stated that we are pursuing the FDR portion of the project, and that we should have a defined project by mid-summer.

Administrator Jesme stated that funding rules for Ring Dike construction through the LCMRR are different than what we are used to. The LCCMR funding requires an engineer's analysis, cost estimate, surveying, and completing a 3-5-page application to present to the FDR Work Group, which they can either deny or approve. This would be upfront costs to the landowners, which the landowner would have to pay. Jesme questioned if the District would consider paying all expenses, less the landowners 12.5% share, if the project does not qualify for funding through the FDR Work Group. Motion by Ose, seconded by Page, that if the landowners ring dike does not qualify for funding through the RRWMB/FDR Work Group, the landowner will be responsible for paying 12.5% with the District paying the remaining share. Motion carried.

Jesme asked the Board if he should approach the RRRWMB to assist in funding the upfront costs of a ring dike should the FDRWG not approve funding for a particular ring dike? Consensus of

the Board is to request cost share from the RRWMB should the LCCMR funding not be approved.

Staff member Tammy Audette stated that the current funding request for work completed through FEMA for the 2022 flood event is \$413,176.46. The District has four projects that have not been repaired.

Staff member Tony Olson presented the snow depth and moisture content map as of March 3, 2023.

Staff member, Tony Olson requested that the following permits be tabled for further review: No. 23006, Mike Gasper, Fanny Township, Polk County; No. 23009, Euclid Township, Polk County; No. 23010, Mallea Family Trust, Hickory Township, Pennington County; No. 23011, Poplar River Township, Red Lake County; No. 23012, Poplar River Township, Red Lake County; No. 23013, Poplar River Township, Red Lake County; No. 23014, Cindy Rissanen, Sanders Township, Pennington County; and No. 23015, James & Grant Pulkrabek, Keystone Township, Polk County. Motion by Ose, seconded by Anderson to table the above-mentioned permits for further review and approve RLWD Permit No. 23008, Red Lake County Highway Department, Poplar River Township, Red Lake County with conditions stated on the permit. Motion carried.

Administrator Jesme stated that the Red Lake WMA Stakeholder Focus Group are working on updating their management plan and invited a representative from the District to participate. Jesme indicated that this area is north of the Upper Red Lake. Manager Dwight stated that he will attend the meeting.

Administrator Jesme stated that he has been participating in a Drainage Work Group Advisory Committee since October 2022, which is a technical committee. Jesme indicated that they would like to start meeting in person, once a month in Alexandria, MN to review the differences between the groups. Motion by Ose, seconded by Page, to approve Jesme's participation in the Drainage Work Group Advisory Committee meetings monthly in Alexandria. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed a quote in the amount of \$1,552.00 to clean the carpeting in the District office. Motion by Sorenson seconded by Page, to approve the quote for cleaning the carpet of the District office. Motion carried.

Administrator Jesme stated that the District has six individuals scheduled for interviews on Thursday, March 16, 2023 for the Natural Resources Technician Position.

Manager Dwight discussed the role of the Budget and Salary Committee, referring to their past role in completing personnel items also. Discussion was held on modifying the committee's name to Budget/Salary/Personnel Committee. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Ose, to change the name of the Budget and Salary Committee to Budget/Salary/Personnel Committee. Motion carried.

Administrators Report:

- Jesme and Manager Tiedemann attended the RRWMB meeting on February 21, 2023 in Moorhead. The next meeting will be held March 21, 2023 in Ada.
- Jesme participated in the February 10, 2023 Drainage Workgroup meeting. The MnDNR has decided to pull their Adequate Outlet Legislation and continue to work with DWG on this issue.
- The Red Lake River 1W1P Advisory and Policy Committee met on February 8th, followed by a Planning Work Group meeting on March 2nd.
- The Steering Committee for the Thief River 1W1P met on March 6th in preparation for the Policy Committee meeting on March 13th.
- There will be a technical meeting for the Clearwater River/Wilton Trail later today in Bemidji.
- The River Watch Forum was held March 1st at the Alerus in Grand Forks.
- Included in the packet was a letter from Wideth Smith Nolting regarding the City of Clearbrook proposed water treatment plant and new well construction project.
- The Interagency meeting with the USFWS (Agassiz NWR), MnDNR (Thief Lake), Marshall County Commissioner Gary Kiesow, Wayne Johnson-City of Thief River Falls, Manager Ose and Staff members Jesme, Olson, Koland, and Audette met on February 28, 2023 to review.

Legal Counsel Sparby indicated that he has not heard anything on the Appeals Court decision. Sparby stated that he put some legislative information together and sent it down to Attorney John Kolb. Kolb felt it was better to wait as the deadline was March 10, 2023.

Legal Counsel Sparby referred to the Board's discussion on adding items to the agenda. Sparby indicated that any Board Member can add to the agenda, further stated that the Agenda needs to be approved at the beginning of the meeting and any unwanted items could be motioned to be removed at that time.

Manager Dwight stated that as part of the Pay Equity Report, the District had a couple of inequities which required action by the District to respond; at that time the Budget/Salary Committee met with Jesme and Audette for discussion on the position of Tony Olson, which fell well below the average compared to other positions within the office. Dwight indicated that the Budget/Salary Committee recommended moving Olson from a Step 4 to a Step 6. Motion by Dwight, seconded by Sorenson to approve moving Olson from a Step 4 to Step 6. Motion carried.

Manager Dwight stated that the "Keep it Clean" bill will be introduced into the House Committee on Tuesday and to the Senate on Wednesday. The bill calls for financial support to the counties to help in the enforcement effort, which received a little pushback from the Sheriff's Association. Counties would be required to put together a budget request.

Manager Tiedemann stated that he will be leaving the area March 14-15th and will be gone for several weeks.

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Motion by Dwight, seconded by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting to the March 20, 2023 RLWD Overall Advisory Committee meeting at 9:30 a.m. at the RLWD office. Motion carried.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LeRoy Ose". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

LeRoy Ose, Secretary