

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Board of Manager's Minutes
January 27, 2022

President Dale M. Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District Office, Thief River Falls, MN.

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

The Board reviewed the agenda. A motion was made by Ose, seconded by Dwight, and passed by unanimous vote that the Board approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the January 10, 2022, minutes. Motion by Tiedemann, seconded by Page, to approve the January 10, 2022, Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the Financial Report dated January 26, 2022. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Page, to approve the Financial Report dated January 26, 2022, as presented. Motion carried. Administrator Jesme noted that the District received payment in the amount of \$400,000 from the Minnesota Department of Transportation for installation of the box culvert under HWY #32 as part of the construction for Thief River Falls Westside FDR Project, RLWD Project No. 178. Payment from Pennington County for their cost for centerline culverts should be received next week. After all funding has been received by our partners, a full report will be presented to the Board.

Zach Gutnecht, Beltrami SWCD, appeared before the Board to present a "Keep It Clean" campaign for the Upper Red Lake Area. The Beltrami SWCD is partnering with the Upper Red Lake Area Association and local resorts to raise awareness of winter angling impacts to Upper Red Lake when dealing with human waste that is left behind on the ice. Gutnecht discussed a series of meetings held with local resort owners and a kick-off meeting with local governmental units. Where there is public access to the lake, they can have control points with local resort owners, where they can help manage awareness of the "Keep It Clean" campaign. Where there is no public access, this effort may also be a continuous reminder to folks to make sure they take their mess off the lake and dispose of it properly. This campaign is considered a Pilot Project, with plans to install dumpsters ready for use for February 2022, and then again December 2022 through February 2023. Total project cost is expected to be \$52,800, which includes four dumpsters per month, bio-bags, continued outreach and staff time. Robyn Dwight, President, Upper Red Lake Area Association, displayed a magnetic sign purchased as part of the multi-media campaign to be placed on one of dumpsters. Dwight stated that a letter will be drafted and distributed to the public making them aware of the impacts of winter angling on water quality and requesting assistance. Gutnecht stated that they applied for a Competitive Clean Water Fund Grant that they were not awarded as this type of practice doesn't fit in the present scoring system for grant funding. Gutnecht explained that once the Upper/Lower Red Lake 1W1P is completed, funding for this effort may be able to be had by including this practice in the workplan. After considerable discussion, Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Page, to approve

the request of the Beltrami SWCD for the Upper/Lower Red Lake “Keep It Clean” campaign in the amount of \$52,800 to be funded through the District’s Water Quality funding, RLWD Project No. 46. Motion carried.

Zach Gutnecht, Beltrami SWCD, discussed a Drought Management Workshop for local beef producers in the Blackduck area. Gutnecht discussed the impacts of the drought on smaller beef producers. The workshop will be held March 5, 2022 in Blackduck, with various professionals coming to speak. Gutnecht requested \$750 from the District, to assist with the cost of the workshop. President Nelson questioned how this workshop fits into any statutory funding that may be available by the District as he felt it was more NRCS or farm program oriented. Nelson also indicated that he did not feel this workshop was a bad idea, but he couldn’t see where funding the workshop would fit into the District’s mission statement or be authorized by statute. After further discussion, Nelson felt there should be no action on this item and would not entertain a motion.

Zach Gutnecht, Beltrami SWCD, stated that the Beltrami SWCD and Beltrami County are moving forward to get the partners together to submit for a grant application for the Upper/Lower Red Lake 1W1P. Gutnecht anticipates a meeting early March/April, with partners applying for a grant by June 1, with funding by September. The Board will be kept up to date on the process of the project.

Staff member Corey Hanson discussed the 2022-23 Thief River Watershed Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG), with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Hanson stated that the MPCA has a 10-year cycle for collecting and assessing data. Monitoring on the Thief River was last collected in 2011/2012. The cost of monitoring is \$35,541.06, with District staff completing the monitoring. No match is required, but the District would be responsible for any overages of staff time. Motion by Ose, seconded by Dwight, to accept the 2022-2023 Thief River Surface Water Assessment Grant, RLWD Project No. 168A, in the amount of \$35,541.06. Motion carried.

The District was informed of additional funding from the Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant in the amount of \$124,232.26. The District previously had a 319 Grant grant for priority areas on the Red Lake River area. Staff member Corey Hanson stated that the Pennington SWCD has a Clean Water Fund Grant to stabilize an additional section of Pennington County Ditch 96, where the bank is severely eroding south of St. Hilaire, on the west side of Highway 32. Since this is a federal grant, state funding can be used as matching funds. Motion by Tiedemann, seconded by Dwight, to approve the Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant in the amount of \$124,232.26, for bank stabilization of Pennington County Ditch 96, RLWD Project No. 46R. Motion carried.

Administrator Jesme stated that the Thief River Falls Oxbow Project, RLWD Project No. 46Q, is substantially completed, with the District submitting bills to the RRWMB for the first and final payment in amount of \$250,000.

Administrator Jesme discussed a request he received from a consultant, to purchase wetland banking credits from bank 1504 (Louisville Parnell). Jesme indicated that this bank consists of

18.23 acres of and that only 4.758 was certified by the Corps while the entire 18.23 acres was certified by the State. Jesme indicated that at the time, the USACOE participated in establishing the wetland banking site but failed to process the paperwork in a timely manner, thus letting the certification process fall through the cracks and not getting any acres certified. Once the Corps got back on track to certify the acres, their rules changed thus only allowing 4.758 acres to be certified by them. Jesme felt that due to the ever-growing jurisdiction the USACOE seems to be gaining over the years in the 401 Certification Rule process, it seems rather unlikely many projects can be completed in the future without Corps' jurisdiction therefore making these wetland banking credits less useful. Jesme asked the Board that in the future should anyone request purchasing wetland banking credits from this bank for projects that don't fall under Corps' jurisdiction, would the Board consider giving staff the authorization to sell some of these credits to recoup the costs in establishing the credits. After discussion by the Board, it was suggested that Jesme complete an evaluation of the wetland banking credits to see what the cost per acre is that the District could expect, should the Board decide to move forward in the sale of the credits. Jesme will check into this matter further and report back to the Board.

Staff member Nick Olson stated that aeration system on Pine Lake, RLWD Project No. 35, officially began aerating on Monday, January 24, 2022. Olson stated that oxygen levels fell to 5 ppm, which is an indicator to begin aeration. The Gully Area Sportsman's Club completes all the monitoring and signage of the project. With the District being the permit holder, responsible for advertising and weekly inspection of the site.

MAWD dues for 2022 were presented to the Board. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Tiedemann, and passed unanimously to approve paying \$7,500 for the 2022 MAWD dues. Motion carried.

Administrators Update:

- Jesme was unable to attend the RRWMB as he was on vacation.
- The first District payroll on QuickBooks Online Software was completed without a hitch. Staff is working with Brady Martz on minor adjustments on payment of taxes and reports.
- District and Houston Engineering staff met with Jason Boyle, MnDNR Dam Safety, to review old plans and share new structure ideas for the Knutson Dam to move forward in the design and permitting.
- The Clearwater River 1W1P Policy and Advisory Committee meeting was held on January 26th. The next meeting will be held February 23.
- A Thief River 1W1P Planning Work Group meeting was held on January 26th. Agenda items included the JD 23 Outlet, Education and Outreach Workshop, Implementation Schedule, review of financials for the Watershed Based Funding and year end E-link documentation.
- Jesme and Staff members Hanson and N. Olson and staff from HDR Engineering and the City of Thief River Falls met to discuss the Chief's Coulee project along with funding opportunities. Nate also met with two landowners within the project area.

Legal Counsel Sparby discussed the City of Thief River Falls Council Meeting, referring to Engineer Nate Dalager's, HDR Engineering, Inc., presentation on the Chiefs Coulee Project to the council. Discussion was held on forming a subcommittee, focusing on preferred alternatives to the project.

Legal Counsel Sparby stated that Attorney, Mark Grainger, requested an extension to the scheduled hearing date, which was agreed to by Attorney Kolb, for the Improvement to Polk County Ditch 39, RLWD Project No. 179. Jesme expressed that the delays in the legal process could delay construction for another year should the courts rule in the petitioner's favor. It was the consensus to obtain a new hearing date as soon as possible.

Manager Dwight thanked the Board for supporting the "Keep it Clean" campaign presented by the Beltrami SWCD.

Manager Ose stated he was reappointed to the BWSR Board.

Motion by Ose, seconded by Dwight, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LeRoy Ose". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

LeRoy Ose, Secretary