

DEVILS LAKE BASIN JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting held Wednesday, March 13th, 2024, Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse, Devils Lake, ND, and Online via Teams.

Vice-Chairman Mike Tweed called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM, as there were audio issues. Roll call of the counties was taken.

Cavalier County	Van Howatt (Absent)
Eddy County	Mike Tweed
Nelson County	Dave Sateren
Pierce County	Floyd Slaubaugh
Ramsey County	Duaine Ash
Towner County	Randy Benson (online)
Walsh County	Albin Jallo

APPROVE AGENDA:

Tweed asked if anyone had any additional items for today's agenda. **Ash made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Jallo, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

Tweed asked if everyone had an opportunity to read the minutes from February 14th, 2024 and if there were any corrections or additions. **Sateren made a motion to approve the February 14th, 2024, minutes, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion carried unanimously.**

The financial report for the month was presented:

Jallo made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Ash, motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL of MONTHLY BILLS for March 2024:

March 2024 Bills		Amount	Ck #
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Copier Rent)	\$125.00	5005
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Office Assistant Services)	\$300.00	5005
	Ramsey County Auditor: Rent	\$190.00	5006
	Ramsey County Auditor - Postage	\$22.56	5006
	Ramsey County Auditor: Telephone	\$55.49	5006
	Ramsey County Auditor - Wages & Withholding Taxes	\$5,882.09	5007
	Ramsey County Auditor - Health Insurance	\$2,062.94	5008
	NDTC - Website Hosting	\$21.83	5009
	Leever's - February Meeting Expense	\$16.88	5010
	Jeff Frith - January 2024 Travel	\$255.20	5011
	Jeff Frith - Cell Phone Expense	\$101.25	5011
	Intuit QuickBooks Online Monthly	\$45.00	ACH
	ND Water Resource District Association -2024 Legislative Support	\$3,500.00	5012
	USGS - Quarterly Stream Gage	\$4,837.50	5013
	Total Admin	\$9,078.24	
	Total General Project	\$8,337.50	

Total **\$17,415.74**

Ash made a motion to pay the March 2024 bills listed, seconded by Sateren, motion carried unanimously.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Stacy Peters-Ramsey County WRD Office Manager and Dave Azure-US Fish & Wildlife. Online: Brian Sea, ND Game & Fish, Jim Kaiser, National Weather Service, Sindhuja Pillai-Grinolds, Yaping Chi, Jeff Trana, Del Nordrum & Alexis Faber, all with the Department of Water Resources, Julie Ellingson & Dani Quissell, ND Water Association.

AGENCY REPORTS:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE: Jim Kaiser, online, went through the weather report. He mentioned that last month they had 2 spring outlooks for the lake. He mentioned there will be an outlook coming out tomorrow. He said the lake is currently at 1449.12, with this time last year at 1449.48.

ND GAME & FISH: Brian Sea, online, was in attendance. He mentioned they hired 2 seasonal employees. He said they are doing a walleye tagging study in some of the newer/prairie lakes. He said stocking 1.4 million fingerlings will be happening soon with 1 million walleye & 370,000 pike. Ash asked if the new technology in fishing had any affects on fish and Sea said there was a study done in Minnesota and there is no evidence of sonar affecting the fish. Tweed asked if landowners could restrict access to lakes/rivers and Sea mentioned that they could restrict access if it is owned by the landowner. Sea mentioned that if there are easements or a road right away then the access could not be restricted or posted.

NRCS: No one in attendance or updates provided.

AGENCY REPORTS CONTINUED:

US FISH & WILDLIFE: Dave Azure was in attendance. He mentioned open winter and early spring. He said there is an early migration for Canadian geese and he said snow geese 8-10 days early. He mentioned there is no sign of bird flu currently. He said with the weather they plan to start wetland surveying work with landowners earlier. He made the board aware of winter ticks, which normally affect moose, elk and some deer, which may be present due to the winter temperatures. Slaubaugh mentioned the notice of more bold eagles and Azure stated that bold eagles follow the migration of snow geese.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES: Sindhuja Pillai-Grinolds, Yaping Chi, Jeff Trana, Del Nordrum, & Alexis Faber were in attendance, online. Yaping Chi mentioned the Department finalized their draft comments for the CIP on February 26th and they should receive the final at the end of this month. Yaping mentioned the Devils Lake Outlets Advisory Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16th, 2024 at Lake Region State College at 1 PM. Yaping provided Frith with water balances back to 2011. The information for the water balances for 2023 were: 218,290 inflow, 20.04 precipitation, 29.85 evaporation & 88,064 outlet discharge. Frith mentioned that in Nelson County at the East End Outlet, there was a culvert removed or washed out following the East outlet operations into the Tolna Coulee (32nd St NE). There was a request to the Water Commission to put the culvert back in and the township would do the dirt work. Frith had told Lee Williams, who had brought the request for the culvert to be put back in, that there would need to be documentation to show the agreement with the township and county for the removal of the culvert. Jeff & Del mentioned they would start doing spring work.

ND WATER ASSOCIATION: Julie Ellingson and Dani Quissell were in attendance, online. Dani mentioned that the December 2023 videos are available to watch on their YouTube channel. She informed the joint board that the Water Directory is available on the website and that if there are changes to let Julie know. She mentioned the summer conference is scheduled to be held in Minot.

OLD BUSINESS:

WATER TOUR FOR 2024: Discussion was held for the water tour route on June 20th, 2024. Frith stated that he contacted Kathy at the Hawk Museum, and she informed him that they would be open for the tour, there is a cost is \$5 per person. Brenda Boucher, caterer, would be able to provide lunch at the Hawk Museum with pulled pork, 2 sides, and a dessert for \$15 per plate. Frith mentioned that the Upper Sheyenne meeting was moved to Rugby on June 19th. Frith and Julie Ellingson will continue to work on the final details of the tour.

NDAWN ALL SEASON PRECIPITATION ENHANCEMENTS: Discussion was held regarding what sites should the 2 all-season gauges be added to. It was decided that Brockett was a good location. Frith will talk with Daryll on Wolford and Perth.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS: Frith pulled up the Outlet Operation Plan to review before the Devils Lake Outlets Advisory Meeting which is April 16th, 2024 at 1 PM at Lake Region State College, and there were no changes to the one we currently have.

NEW BUSINESS:

INTERIM LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Dani Quissell gave some updates from the Water Topics meeting last week. She mentioned some changes going forward with drains. She mentioned changes in the Cost Sharing with the Department of Water Resources. She mentioned that with Drain #11 (Sargent) the Supreme Court decided that the maintenance could not continue. She mentioned that Water Resource Districts do have to include money on hand on 6-year assessments. She talked about aquifer water for irrigation through MAR (Managed Aquifer Recharge). She said a spending deal has been reached with the Federal Bureau to get rid of some requirements to get projects moving. Frith mentioned the discussion on SB2372 with Water Resource Districts being part of a joint board and possibly moving to a Watershed board for water management. Frith mentioned an Interim meeting is scheduled in Minot on June 5th & 6th.

CORRESPONDENCE & MISCELLANEOUS: Frith mentioned the correspondence is the drought map, stream flows & lake levels that he emails out. He said the joint board received a “thank you” from Julie Ellingson from the sympathy card provided to her. Ash wanted to “thank” Frith for keeping the joint board up to date on all the information. Frith mentioned that tomorrow is the pre-State Water Commission meeting in Bismarck and he was not sure if he was going to drive down for that or participate online.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS: No other new business.

BASIN BOARD REPORTS:

Ramsey County: Ash mentioned that the water board had their meeting on the 5th. They discussed Ramey County Drain #10 and that the Hammer-Sullivan and Starkweather Coulee Advisory Committee members attended their meeting to go over troubled areas on the two drains.

Walsh County: Jallo mentioned they met and discussed complaints they received. He said the FEMA money is coming in short of what was expected. He said there is a discussion on assessments going off & some landowners want the assessment on. He said next Tuesday they were meeting with 4 farmers.

Eddy County: Tweed mentioned they met last week. He said that the Rocky Run gates get repositioned each year and this year they were left wide open. He said they had a request for a Drain Tile permit for 500 acres, but they had to table because they didn’t have all the information to proceed. He said they received some visitors regarding the Red Bridge Crossing over the Sheyenne River. He stated that a landowner had cut out the old bridge and hauled it out, and put in culverts and rocks. There are 2 landowners that want to keep this crossing. There is bidding out on this and it is looking at \$139,000 to remove the culverts and rocks, and \$2 million to put in 2 box culverts and leave as a crossing. The concern is the liability of this crossing.

Pierce County: Slaubaugh mentioned they met on the 11th and they discussed the summer water tour. He said they talked about some drainage projects coming up.

Towner County: Benson mentioned he was not able to attend their meeting and that he would be back next month.

Nelson County: Sateren mentioned they met last in February. He said they are working on a Snag & Clear north and west of Lakota. He mentioned a Snag & Clear on Old Hwy 2 by Mapes (south) to redirect a natural drain.

Cavalier County: Howatt was not in attendance.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Frith mentioned he would be in Bismarck next week, Tuesday and Wednesday for meetings and that he would be out of the office on March 27th. He mentioned there is a Strategic Planning meeting for the Water Users Association on April 3rd and 4th in Bismarck.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.

Approved April 10th, 2024:



Van Howatt, Chairman



Jeff W. Frith, Manager