

DEVILS LAKE BASIN JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting held on Wednesday, October 8th, 2025, Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse, Devils Lake, ND, and Online via Teams.

Chairman Mike Tweed called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Roll call of the counties was taken.

Cavalier County
Eddy County
Nelson County
Pierce County
Ramsey County
Towner County
Walsh County

Ordale Morstad
Mike Tweed
Dave Sateren (**absent**)
Floyd Slaubaugh
Duaine Ash
Randy Benson (**absent**)
Albin Jallo

APPROVE AGENDA: Tweed asked if anyone had any additional items for today's agenda. Frith asked to add bank depositories on the agenda. He mentioned that Bremer Bank is transitioning to Old National and if we wanted to make changes now would be the time. **Slaubaugh made a motion to approve the agenda with the additional item, seconded by Jallo, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of MINUTES: The meeting minutes for the August 13th, 2025, were presented. **Ash made a motion to approve the September 10th, 2025 minutes, as presented, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of FINANCIALS: The financial reports were presented. **Jallo made a motion to approve the financials, as presented, seconded by Morstad, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of MONTHLY BILLS FOR OCTOBER 2025:

October 2025 Bills		Amount	Ck #
	Intuit QuickBooks Online Monthly	\$115.00	ACH
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Copier Rent)	\$125.00	5188
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Office Assistant Services)	\$600.00	5188
	Transcript Publishing - Yearly Subscription	\$54.00	5189
	Ramsey County Auditor - Wages & Withholding Taxes	\$6,176.20	5190
	Ramsey County Auditor - Health Insurance	\$2,377.10	5191
	Ramsey County Auditor: Rent	\$190.00	5192
	Ramsey County Auditor: Telephone	\$55.49	5192
	Leevers Foods North - Meeting Expenses	\$16.88	5193
	NDTC - Website Hosting	\$21.83	5194
	USGS - Stream Gauge Quarterly Invoice	\$5,087.50	5195
	Towner County Record Herald - Yearly Subscription	\$40.00	5196
	Jeff Frith - Cell Phone Expense	\$101.25	5197
	Jeff Frith - September Travel	\$422.80	5197
	Jeff Frith - Computer Software Yearly Subscriptions (Adobe & Anti-Virus)	\$351.61	5197
	Lakota American - Yearly Subscription	\$30.00	5198
	Devils Lake Journal - Yearly Subscription	\$116.00	5199
	Blue Water Consulting	\$581.70	5200
	Total Admin	\$10,793.16	
	Total General Project	\$5,669.20	

Total \$16,462.36

The October 2025 bills were presented. **Ash made a motion to approve the September 2025 bills, as presented, seconded by Jallo, motion carried unanimously.**

OTHERS PRESENT:

Todd Casper, ND Game & Fish, Jim Olson, Blue Water Consulting, Karen Hausmann, landowner. Online: Amanda Lee, National Weather Service, Yaping Chi, Department of Water Resources, Dani Quissell & Julie Ellingson, ND Water Association, and Chuck Fritz, International Water Institute.

AGENCY REPORTS:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE: Amanda Lee, Service Hydrologist/Meteorologist, was in attendance, online. She went over her monthly report. She reported the current lake level is 1448.7. Amanda discussed the last lake exceedance report that was released on September 29th included the assumption that the outlets would be operating at 350cfs throughout the operational season. Given that the outlets are not running, the numbers could be off by a few tenths. The next lake outlook is scheduled for January 22, 2026.

ND GAME & FISH: Todd Casper was in attendance and gave a report on the various activities the department personnel are working on in the district. The activities Casper mentioned were fall fish netting numbers.

NRCS: No one in attendance.

US FISH & WILDLIFE: Dave Azure, District Refuge Manager, was not in attendance

AGENCY REPORTS CONTINUED:

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES: Yaping Chi, was in attendance, online. Yaping provided an update on the level of Devils Lake, stating that the lake is currently at an elevation of 1448.7, which is 0.7 feet lower than a year ago. She mentioned that both outlets were shut down due to water quality. She mentioned on Tuesday, September 16th, that they met with officials from DEQ, and it was determined that the sulfate levels would not improve enough to allow the outlet to operate. As a result, it will be dewatered and weatherized for the season next week. Yaping went through the pumping totals for the season: the West End Outlet discharged 38,511 acre-feet. The East End Outlet discharged 27,853 acre-feet for a total of 66,364 acre-feet. Yaping went through the maintenance schedule for the pumps to prepare for next year's operations.

ND Water Resource District Association: Dani Quissell & Julie Ellingson were in attendance, and their reports and comments are included later in the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

INTERIM LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES: Frith and Quissell both discussed the Interim Legislative committees. **The Ag and Water Management** met on September 11th, and inundated acres were discussed. Frith stated that he provided testimony to the committee, and Quissell stated that Frith's testimony was impactful. The Ag & Water Management committee will meet again on November 13th. Quissell stated that another task of the committee of interest to Water Resources Districts is conducting an economic analysis study of assessment projects, and she will keep members informed of the discussions.

The Water Topics Overview Committee met on September 18th and included updates on several major water projects that the Department of Water Resources is undertaking. DWR staff and Bank of ND presented on funding, carryover, shortfalls, and opportunities. One item of interest to Water Resource Districts is the continued discussion regarding managing water from a watershed standpoint, rather than adhering to political boundaries, such as counties. Frith stated that he attended the meeting and was able to have conversations with a few of the legislators during breaks and after the meeting. Quissell stated that the committee is scheduled to meet again on December 9th. If you plan to attend the conference, please arrive early to attend the Water Topics Committee.

BASIN WIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE: Jim Olson from Blue Water Consulting was present and discussed the Task Orders from Ackerman-Estvold, as well as the survey results. Olson recommended that the board focus on the top priorities, which include Lake Stabilization, Upper Basin Storage, and Inundated Acres. There was considerable discussion about the priorities and the distinction between actions that can be taken versus those that should be taken. Frith mentioned that he and Olson will meet with Patrick from Ackerman-Estvold to review the Task Orders and develop a direction and proposal for the board to consider at the November meeting.

WATER STEWARDSHIP AWARD: Frith mentioned that all the information has gone out to all the newspapers & it is posted on the website. The deadline is November 3rd, 2025.

ANS WORKING GROUP: Frith mentioned that they have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow. He is the Chairman of the committee and is looking forward to hearing from Ben Holen, the ND Game & Fish Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator, regarding the latest discovery of zebra mussels and the emergency plans being proposed.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE - AWARD NOMINATIONS – CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP:

Conference: Dani & Julie stated that the agenda is out for the conference, and Dani went through the important changes to some of the scheduling. Julie stated that the block of rooms is set aside and available. Frith stated that last year, the board paid for or reimbursed WRD for the registration fees of Joint Board Members and asked board members if they wanted to continue this tradition. **Jallo made a motion for the Joint Board to cover the cost of members' registration to the Annual Water Conference, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion carried unanimously.**

Award Nominations: Both Dani & Julie mentioned that nominations for the annual awards, including the Water Wheel, Commodore, and Hall of Fame awards, are due by the end of the day on Friday, October 17th. Frith mentioned that there are several worthwhile nominees throughout the state. Julie and Dani volunteered to assist with filling out the nomination forms.

Conference Sponsorship: Frith shared the sponsorship letter and mentioned that in previous years, the Joint Board has opted for the Water Partner level, which costs \$1,500. This level includes one registration, listing in the convention booklet, logo on signage, and verbal recognition during the event. **Jallo made a motion to continue with the Water Partner level of sponsorship, \$ 1,500 (one thousand five hundred dollars), seconded by Ash. The motion passed unanimously.**

OTHER OLD BUSINESS: No other old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE COST-SHARE REQUEST: Chuck Fritz, Executive Director, was in attendance online, and went through his proposal that was included in the board members' packets. Chuck mentioned that he was very appreciative of the Joint Board's previous support when going live with the updated LIDAR and keeping the information provided free to all, rather than requiring a fee to access it. Frith demonstrated the value of the IWI map portal, particularly for basic stream crossing analysis. Chuck mentioned that the Devils Lake Basin is the first board he intends to approach for assistance with the cost share. He stated that if we decide to contribute, it would be contingent upon the participation of the other boards as well. **Ash made a motion to approve the cost-share request from the IWI of \$7,548 (seven thousand five hundred eighty-four dollars) contingent on participation of the other boards, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion passed unanimously.** Chuck thanked the board for their time and their support of the IWI.

CORRESPONDENCE & MISCELLANEOUS: Frith shared a letter from Levi Otis, Ellingson Irrigation stated that they are working with the ND Irrigation Association to do a study looking at the economic impacts of irrigation within the state. Frith also shared that the Lake Region State Annual Key Event is scheduled for Friday, October 24th, at the Hofstad Ag Center. Frith also mentioned that he sent information about the precipitation and lake levels via email.

BREMER TO OLD NATIONAL TRANSITION:

This item was overlooked and will be discussed at the November meeting.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS: No other new business.

BASIN BOARD REPORTS:

Ramsey County: Ash mentioned they met yesterday. He mentioned that they discussed several items, including approving the Channel A assessment, the lowering of a culvert request, and approving drain assessment certifications.

Walsh County: Jallo mentioned that they successfully mediated an issue between two landowners. Other than that, just normal WRD responsibilities.

Eddy County: Tweed mentioned that they also help resolve issues between some landowners that weren't seeing things eye to eye.

Pierce County: Slaubaugh mentioned they had their meeting on Monday. They discussed spraying their waterways.

Towner County: Benson was not present; no report given.

Nelson County: Sateren was not present; no update was given.

Cavalier County: Morstad stated that they will meet tomorrow. That there isn't too much going on, other than trying to get through harvest right now, and everyone is busy with that.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Frith mentioned he gave a presentation last week to the Devils Lake Rotary club, continues to work on the Basin Water Plan with consultants, and sent updates to our web developer. He will be working on rehabbing his broken leg, which may take him out of the office for medical appointments.

Meeting adjourned at 11:13 AM.

Approved November 12th, 2025:

Mike Tweed, Chairman

Jeff W. Frith, Manager