

MINUTES OF MEETING  
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
JANUARY 12, 2012

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on January 12, 2012, at 1:30 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District, Chairman; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner; Brad Wimmer, Fargo City Commissioner and Gerald VanAmburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Also present were Eric Dodds and Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., Public Relations Team; Brad Dahl, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Dan Jacobson, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Arden Breimeier, City of Oxbow; and members of the local media.

**Meeting dates**

The Board discussed setting regular meeting dates. Meetings will be held each Wednesday before the Thursday Diversion Authority meetings and again two weeks after Diversion Authority meetings on Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. When meetings conflict with Red River Joint Water Resource District meetings, they will be held at 2:00 p.m.

Rodger Olson informed the group that the Mitigation Committee is now the Land Management Committee. They plan to meet at 1:00 p.m. on the day of Diversion Authority meetings. He and Gerald VanAmburg serve on the committee.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Kevin Campbell, seconded by Brad Wimmer and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2011, meeting.

**Cass Rural Water District**

Jerry Blomeke, General Manager of Cass Rural Water District (CRWD), met with the Board to discuss concerns relating to the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project. The first concern is that the Phase I treatment plant located near St. Benedict along Cass County Highway 16 is within the boundaries of the proposed retention area. If the retention area is full, the plant would be useless. CRWD has sent a letter to the Corps of Engineers outlining their concerns. Due to the way the West Fargo aquifer is laid out,

they cannot necessarily move the well field to another spot and get the same quantity of water; therefore, they would prefer that any compensation be directed to expanding the treatment plant near Leonard rather than into moving the existing plant near St. Benedict. The estimated cost to expand the plant is \$10 million.

Other concerns of CRWD is the potential loss of customers and that they be compensated for the need to lower their lines where needed due to the project. The preliminary cost estimate to do so is \$1.5 million.

The committee agreed that CRWD has some valid points. Mike Thorstad said the City of West Fargo is studying drawing water off of the south aquifer. The State Water Commission told CRWD that relocating the plant and getting the quantity of water they currently have is questionable. They have done work at the Sheyenne Delta aquifer near Leonard and supplies are adequate there.

CRWD has not yet heard back from the Corps of Engineers, but will continue to communicate with them. They will keep the committee informed as to what they hear back on the matter.

### **Public outreach**

Chairman Olson informed the group about meetings held with various local officials and property owners in the Oxbow area. Issues discussed included farming, insurance, fair buyouts and easement payments. The City of Oxbow would prefer to be protected by the project so they can stay where they are, but if not, they want to be bought out. The main request from the city is that it not be cut in half. They would like more information and answers as the process continues. Mayor Jim Nyhoff was appreciative of the information provided. Arden Breimeier thought they were very productive meetings. Mr. Breimeier said it is difficult for property owners to know if they should make improvements to their property or not. The Corps of Engineers has indicated they should continue to make those improvements, until they know the project is ready to proceed and is ready to start property buyouts. Eric Dodd said it is clear a land acquisition plan is needed and they are working on that. Communication with property owners will continue to be very important.

Mr. Campbell reported on the recent meeting with Senator Al Franken. Mayor Voxland updated him on interim protection plans. Bob Zimmerman reported on the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project. Ultimately, they requested his support for \$30 million in fiscal year 2013.

Richland and Wilkin Counties have indicated they are not ready to meet with the committee yet. Information is being compiled for them and should be available in the next week or so.

Booth space has been reserved at the Red River Basin Land and Water Conference in Winnipeg next week to present information on the project.

Major General John W. Peabody, Commander of the Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, will visit the area January 30 and 31, 2012.

The Diversion Authority will consider approval of various work directives relating to the project at its meeting this afternoon, including the following:

- Advance studies to refine design features of the channel and associated structures;
- Study opportunities to improve drainage to benefit adjacent properties;
- Investigate road/transportation in the northwest corridor to assure good access; and
- Identify options for recreational amenities along the project.

*The Forum* will feature a *Living with Water* series during February. An advertisement is being put together highlighting benefits of the project.

### **Website**

Daron Selvig said the website is going well. They have begun the process of answering questions and comments relating to the project. The Corps of Engineers has been very helpful. The questions and answers will remain on the site for a period of two weeks. Various documents have also been added to the website, as well as information on upcoming meetings. A media tracking system has been started to monitor project related information in the media.

The committee will continue to pursue meetings with Wilken and Richland Counties. Meetings with the townships involved will also be scheduled, starting with Reed Township in February.

Mr. Campbell suggested having a map of the project area available for future committee meetings. Mr. Dodds said they will do so.

### **Right of Entry Committee report**

Brad Dahl reported that letters and Access Agreements have been sent to property owners to which access was previously granted and has expired or is about to expire.

There is discussion as to how to follow up on Phase II cultural work needed.

Mr. Olson said the Corps of engineers will want access to the staging and storage area, so they need to think about holding some public meetings to let people know there is going to be some investigation on their land. This should remain high on the priority list.

### **Meeting schedule**

The next Public Outreach Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 1, 2012, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department.

**Adjournment**

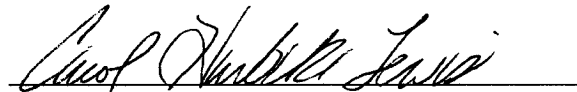
There being no further business to be considered by the committee, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:



Rodger Olson  
Chairman

ATTEST:



Carol Harbeke Lewis  
Cass County Joint Water Resource District  
Secretary-Treasurer