

MINUTES OF MEETING  
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
MARCH 12, 2014

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on March 12, 2014, at 2:00 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; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Melissa Sobolik, Fargo City Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner and Jacob Gust, ad hoc Committee Member. Absent were Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner, and Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Also present were Rocky Schneider and Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; Lyndon Pease, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Brittany C. Moen, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Administrative Assistant; Theresa Orecchia, Fargo Cass Public Health; Don Nelson, property owner in the Comstock area; and Arden Breimeier, Oxbow resident.

Rodger Olson called the meeting to order.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Mike Thorstad, seconded by Jake Gust and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2013, and February 12, 2014, meetings.

**Right of Entry Committee report**

Lyndon Pease updated the Committee on access issues relating to the Metro Flood Diversion Project. He displayed a map of all of the property that has been acquired for the project.

Access will be required for cultural resources survey work and potential geotechnical surveys in the spring for environmental mitigation efforts relating to the Wild Rice River Dam project near Cass County Highway 14. Jake Gust informed the Committee that the Southeast Cass Water Resource District made an official recommendation to the Diversion Authority that the Wild Rice Dam be removed as part of mitigation for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Mr. Pease said cultural resources visual impact surveys will be performed in a half mile zone around the in-town levees footprint downtown. The work will be done from public

right-of-way, so no access will be required. Access will also be required to 7 properties for cultural resources visual impact surveys in a half mile zone around the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Subdivision Ring Levee project.

### **Southern alignment ROE letters**

Mr. Pease said letters will be sent to landowners of approximately 100 parcels on both Minnesota and North Dakota sides of the project where access will be required for survey work regarding the southern alignment of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Corps of Engineers will work on a newsletter to be posted on the project website that will describe the types of survey work required.

### **Staging area outreach and relocation options**

Rocky Schneider said no official dates have been set for public meetings regarding staging area outreach and relocation options for residents affected by the project. The Corps of Engineers has expressed interest in hosting a public meeting prior to construction of the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Subdivision Ring Levee as well. He will update the Committee on the matter when dates are set.

### **Federal funding and authorization update**

Mr. Schneider distributed a handout regarding federal funding and authorization of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Mr. Schneider said that Senators John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp announced that the Corps of Engineers Fiscal Year 2014 Work Plan includes \$6.3 million for the project. Senator Hoeven has stated this will bring total funding for the project to \$40 million, which will enable the Corps of Engineers to complete the project engineering and design phases.

Mr. Schneider said the Senators are working to get the Corps of Engineers to address concerns upstream of the project and are also seeking to address these issues through the Farm Bill, which includes rural water management and flood protection provisions.

### **Project refinements summary**

Mr. Schneider reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding Metro Flood Diversion Project refinements to limit upstream impacts, and described specific effects on impacted areas after project refinements. Ken Pawluk asked that the impacts of the project be compared to impacts of the project alternatives previously considered by the Diversion Authority to discuss at the next meeting.

### **Local candidates briefings**

Mr. Schneider said outreach to city council candidates regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project have been helpful in the past, and he would like to continue setting up candidate briefings. Outreach to Fargo City Commission candidates is being set up. Mr. Pawluk would like outreach to be set up with state legislators as well.

**E-Newsletter /FMDiversion.com update**

Daron Selvig said an e-newsletter is scheduled for distribution next week. Articles included in the e-newsletter will outline Corps of Engineers' Work Plan and how it is providing momentum to the project, a review of discussions with Watts & Associates at the Agricultural Policy Subcommittee meeting regarding crop insurance options, and an overview of the discussion at tomorrow's Diversion Authority meeting.

Mr. Selvig distributed an Analytics and Public Comments Report from the project website for the Committee's review. He pointed out that the site has seen an increase in new viewers. Mr. Selvig reviewed a summary of questions submitted on the page from February and said the Corps of Engineers works closely with the outreach team to answer questions. Mr. Gust said he would like a process implemented to follow up with individuals who have asked questions on the site to see if the site is being effective. Mr. Schneider said individuals are contacted by phone regarding site-specific questions, but the process for documenting these calls could be improved.

Mr. Schneider said the Finance Committee directed the Diversion Project Assessment Committee (DPAC) to move towards a vote with the development of public outreach. Mr. Thorstad said that Jim Bownlee will be giving a short presentation at the West Fargo City Commission meeting regarding the progress of the DPAC. Mr. Olson suggested the Public Outreach Committee consider developing a flyer for distribution with area papers regarding project assessment information.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business for the Board to consider, it was moved by Mr. Pawluk, seconded by Ms. Sobolik and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

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Rodger Olson  
Chairman

ATTEST:

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