

DIVERSION AUTHORITY  
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
FARGO CITY COMMISSION ROOM, FARGO CITY HALL  
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on July 26, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. at the Fargo City Commission Room, Fargo City Hall, Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Jacob Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner; Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; and Elly Peterson, Fargo Moorhead Business Leaders Flood Task Force. Absent were: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; and Mary Scherling, Cass County Commissioner.

Also present were: Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.

Kevin Campbell conducted the meeting.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Jacob Gust, seconded by Jason Benson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2017, meeting.

**Metro Flood Diversion Project – litigation update**

Rocky Schneider updated the Committee on the federal court hearing in St. Paul, Minnesota on July 18, 2017. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Richland-Wilkin Joint Powers Authority filed documents to stop the Corps of Engineers from constructing the diversion inlet structure south of Horace. A ruling will be made within 30 days. City of Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney, City of Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams, Kevin Campbell, Grant Weyland and Chuck Hendrickson attended the hearing.

Kevin Campbell stated the Minnesota DNR referred to the Minnesota alignment as a viable option for the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Mr. Campbell said the Minnesota DNR argued for the health and safety for the people and the environment, but are leaving out a good portion of the population, such as the City of Moorhead. The Minnesota alignment would affect the Buffalo River aquifer. Mr. Campbell said all options were considered, but the current plan is the most viable. Mr. Campbell stated the legal team did a great job presenting data and the consequences of a potential decision to deny 200,000 people permanent flood protection.

### **FMDiversion Website and Social Media Analytics**

Tammy Jo Taft updated the Committee on the website and social media analytics. There are currently 1,313 subscribers to the E-Newsletter and 116 were added to the list in 2017. The E-Newsletters contain links to videos and pictures. The June E-Newsletter included a link to information on the North Dakota Water Education Foundation 2017 water tours. A suggestion was made to utilize the YouTube videos on the summer bus tours. Ms. Taft stated the construction site flyover videos are routinely viewed. Construction updates were sent out through Twitter in June. In addition to the construction updates on the website, the Corps of Engineers is publishing weekly construction updates on Twitter and Facebook.

### **Video Series - "Three Questions"**

Mr. Schneider and Ms. Taft presented "3 Questions," a video featuring Cass County Commissioner Chad Peterson regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The video can be viewed on the FMDiversion.com website.

### **Crisis Communications Planning**

Rocky Schneider presented and briefly reviewed the draft *Crisis Communication Plan Addendum*. Discussion was held on plan implementation, utilization, and updates. The Committee made suggestions and will review the plan at a future meeting.

### **Construction Outreach Update**

Rocky Schneider, Chris Gross, Moore Engineering, Inc., representatives from the Cass County Highway Department, and City of Oxbow Mayor Jim Nyhof updated the Oxbow City Council on the Cass County Highway 81 closure and detour regarding the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Ring Levee Project on June 21, 2017. Bakke residents shared dust control and road maintenance concerns. Jason Benson updated the Committee on construction updates given at the Pleasant Township meeting. The Wolverton City Council declined to meet with Diversion Authority members after Wilkin County officials told city council members they could not have the meeting.

Discussion was held to schedule monthly or bi-monthly meetings with rural townships in Cass County to provide project updates and to respond to published editorials containing false or negative information regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

### **FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Plan for Outreach to Impacted Properties**

Rocky Schneider updated the Committee on the outreach plan to impacted property owners in the upstream mitigation area, Phase III of the diversion channel, under the footprint of the southern embankment and associated infrastructure, and property needed for the Comstock ring levee. The State of Minnesota submitted comments on the FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and FEMA is responding. Public outreach is planned at approximately the same time letters will be sent to property owners. Land agents will contact property owners a day before the letters are released.

### **North Dakota legislative update**

Land acquisition, federal funding and litigation updates were presented to the North Dakota Water Topics Overview Committee in Bismarck, North Dakota on July 25, 2017. Questions were answered on the Cass County Highway 16 and 17 realignment project and the impact of a flood event during construction.

**Minnesota update**

Kevin Campbell stated a meeting has been scheduled with Minnesota Representatives Ben Lien and Paul Marquart and suggested consultants prepare an informational packet to present to Minnesota legislators. Mr. Campbell stated the Minnesota legislature denied funding to the Minnesota DNR to fight the Metro Flood Diversion Project and many Minnesota legislators are not aware of the politics involved in the project. Brenda Elmer suggested Minnesota legislators and leadership staff be invited to tour events and informational opportunities.

**Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update**

Elly Peterson stated a Business Leaders Flood Taskforce meeting will be held next week to discuss contracting with North Dakota State University to complete an economic development impact study regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Kevin Campbell suggested Ms. Peterson invite the University of Minnesota to provide input for the impact study.

Ms. Taft stated consultants put together a survey research study to measure public opinion regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. An article on the Metro Flood Diversion Project will be featured in the *High Plains Reader*. Mr. Schneider stated *The Forum* would appreciate feedback on the articles documenting previous flood events regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Mr. Campbell stated 3 candidates were recently interviewed for the Metro Flood Diversion Authority Executive Director position. All 3 candidates met with members of the Diversion Authority and toured ongoing flood mitigation projects in the area.

Kevin Campbell stated the Corps of Engineers has completed 35% of the design for the Minnesota tieback levees and reviewed the designs with the Clay County engineer. Concerns were expressed regarding road closures, construction detours, dead ended roads and dust control issues. Mr. Schneider stated those issues will be discussed at the Technical Advisory Group meeting on July 28, 2017.

**Adjournment**

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

APPROVED:

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Rodger Olson  
Chairman

ATTEST:

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