

DIVERSION AUTHORITY  
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016  
1:00 P.M.

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on October 12, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson (by phone) and Jacob Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; and Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer. Absent were: John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; and Elly Peterson, Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce.

Also present were: Grant Weyland, Clay County Commissioner; Randy Richardson, CH2M HILL Engineers, Inc.; Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (AE2S); Joseph Sander, Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.; and Michelle Anderson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District staff.

**Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update**

Rocky Schneider stated Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney is featured in an informational television commercial, which aired during halftime of the North Dakota State University Bison football game, asking residents of the City of Fargo and Cass County to vote “yes” to extend the existing sales tax to help fund the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney and Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams will visit with the Corps of Engineers and the Office of Management and Budget in Washington, D.C. next week.

**ND Water Topics Overview Committee update**

Mr. Schneider reviewed *North Dakota Funding and Project Expenditures* and the *Mitigation Plan Summary* for the Metro Flood Diversion Project presented to the North Dakota Water Topics Overview Committee by Diversion Authority Chairman Darrel Vanyo and Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney. The Committee reviewed the information and made a suggestion to add federal funding to represent overall funding and project expenditures.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources update**

Mr. Schneider stated a press release was issued regarding the decision by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to deny the *Dam Safety and Work in Public Waters Permit* for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Brenda Elmer joined the meeting at this time.

Discussion was held on the comparison of the *Environmental Impact Statement* and the reasons for denial of the *Dam Safety and Work in Public Waters Permit* by the DNR, mitigation of impacts to property in Richland and Wilkin counties, and emergency measures necessary to protect Fargo-Moorhead in a 100-year or 500-year flood event. The Diversion Authority has developed a detailed Mitigation Plan for the Metro Flood Diversion Project outlining mitigation requirements to address the outstanding issues previously identified by the *Environmental Impact Statement* and the DNR.

Brenda Elmer and Kevin Campbell stated the Red River Basin Commission surveyed flood damage reports from 2009 and made a recommendation to the cities of Fargo and Grand Forks to build for 500-year flood protection.

Mr. Campbell stated if the Metro Flood Diversion Project is not built, during a 100-year or 500-year flood event, there is not an adequate way for the water to flow through the confined Red River channel. The levees in the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead will not be high enough and you cannot throw sandbags on top of a concrete wall. Even with 45 foot high concrete walls, south Moorhead will still need a sandbag levee 12-15 feet high to create a wall of protection for that area.

A Committee member stated he had a discussion with a resident from Abercrombie, North Dakota, that could not believe Richland County is opposed to the Metro Flood Diversion Project, especially when this resident sees the number of vehicles traveling north to work in the Fargo-Moorhead area each day.

### **Community Outreach update**

Rocky Schneider stated updates on the Metro Flood Diversion Project were presented to Reed and Stanley Township officials, the North Dakota Planning Association, the Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead, the Exchange Club and the Fargo-Moorhead Association of Realtors. A press conference was held on October 6, 2016, at Fargo City Hall regarding the denial of the permit by the Minnesota DNR. Future presentations will be given to the MetroCog Transportation Committee, Kiwanis Club, MetroCog Policy Board, the West Fargo Exchange Club and the Minnesota Water Resources Conference.

Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney, Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams and Diversion Authority Chairman Darrel Vanyo will meet with Minnesota Senator Ken Eken and Minnesota Representative Ben Lien on October 14, 2016, regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

### **Metro Flood Diversion Project – outreach and education update**

Discussion was held on public outreach efforts to educate the residents of the City of Moorhead and Clay County about the danger and damage from a potential 100-year to 500-year flood event. Kevin Campbell and Brenda Elmer stated many City of Moorhead and Clay County residents feel Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton has abandoned them due to the denial of the *Dam Safety and Work in Public Waters Permit* by the Minnesota DNR. Mr. Campbell stated the City of Moorhead and Clay County are putting together a press release and suggested business leaders send letters to Governor Mark Dayton. Mr. Schneider will coordinate with the Moorhead Business Association to assist in the communication plan to educate officials in the State of Minnesota. Ken Pawluk suggested Committee members submit letters to the editor.

The Committee offered suggestions and ideas for the development of an educational strategy regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Mr. Schneider stated the Corps of Engineers has made it clear they intend to move forward and will continue to work with the Minnesota DNR. The Corps of Engineers will award contracts by the end of November for the diversion inlet structure and southern embankment. Construction in Minnesota is not expected until 2019. Jake Gust stated 2017 will mark the 20th anniversary of the 1997 flood.

### **Minutes**

It was moved by Brenda Elmer, seconded by Jason Benson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2016, meeting.

### **Communications Plan update**

It was moved by Ken Pawluk, seconded by Brenda Elmer and unanimously carried to approve the *Communications Plan*, as presented by Rocky Schneider, and recommend approval of the same to the Diversion Authority.

### **Metro Flood Diversion Project - sales tax education**

Committee members were encouraged to educate the public on the City of Fargo and Cass County flood sales tax extension to help fund the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

### **E-Newsletter topics**

Jason Benson suggested a monthly article focus on or “debunk” concerns and incorrect information regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Mr. Schneider presented a standing floor sign outlining the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Committee offered suggestions on locations to place the remaining signs.

### **FMDiversion.com**

Mr. Schneider stated social media will be utilized to provide information on the importance of extending the existing flood sales tax to help fund the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Brenda Elmer suggested the website include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to help educate the public on the ballot measures.

**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