

MINUTES OF MEETING  
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
OCTOBER 12, 2011

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on October 12, 2011, at 8:00 a.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; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; and Gerald VanAmburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District. Members absent were: Brad Wimmer, Fargo City Commissioner, and Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner.

Also present were Brett Coleman and Terryl Williams, Corps of Engineers; Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., Public Relations Team; April Walker, Senior Engineer for the City of Fargo; Keith Berndt, Cass County Administrator; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; and members of the local media.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Mike Thorstad and seconded by Gerald VanAmburg to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2011, meeting.

**Website**

Daron Selvig reviewed the proposed FMDiversion.com site map along with various options for the home page.

The Final Feasibility and Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been issued by the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Selvig said Appendix U is probably the most important for the committee to look at and the website will be mostly built on that document. Chairman Olson asked if there was any easy way to connect to other pages referenced in the document. Mr. Thorstad suggested adding links within the documents. Mr. Selvig said they would do that.

Terry Williams said the Red River is one of the most researched rivers in the United States.

Chairman Olson said he would like to see a "Project Status" hot button on the home page. Mr. Thorstad agreed there should be something that people can find easily for project updates.

Mr. Thorstad would like something included on the website about past flood mitigation efforts. Mr. VanAmburg suggested having what has happened to river discharge in the last 50 years.

Mr. Selvig said a "Quick Project Facts" page could be cycled to include new information.

The committee discussed finding a better way to report water levels so they are easier for the public to understand. Currently some areas go by the number of feet over flood stage and sea level figures are used for rural areas. It would be helpful to find a way to correlate water elevations to sea level elevations. April Walker said the Tech Team could help develop something for the website. It was moved by Kevin Campbell and seconded by Mike Thorstad to have the Tech Team create a user friendly map tool that incorporates sea level numbers for the FMDiversion.com website. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Selvig said the website will have a "comment" link where people can ask questions and leave comments. People would be referred to "FAQ" for answers. Mr. Thorstad suggested stating "information is not available" when that is the case.

Mr. Thorstad asked Mr. Selvig to use maps showing current city limits.

Meeting minutes from the Work Group and Diversion Authority may also be placed on the website.

Mr. Thorstad said he wants the website to only focus on the Locally Preferred Plan and not fall back on the other alternatives that were discussed in the past.

Mr. Selvig will bring a live demonstration of the website to the next committee meeting, which could also be presented at the next Diversion Authority meeting. He estimated everything would be ready in 4-6 weeks. It is a work in progress, so information will be updated and maintained as necessary.

### **Public Outreach**

The committee agreed that Chairman Olson and Daron Selvig could issue press releases as appropriate. Other committee members will be notified when information is going to be released.

Ms. Walker said they may also want to issue press releases for other committees that are reaching out to the public, such as for Right of Entry (ROE) work. The committee indicated they would appreciate receiving updates from the ROE Committee at each meeting.

Chairman Olson said the Cass County Joint Water Resource District recently held an informational meeting with property owners to address right of access and ongoing studies relating to the F-M Metro Project. Mr. Campbell suggested similar meetings be held for both North Dakota and Minnesota properties. Mr. VanAmburg agreed and will coordinate having Minnesota officials attend a future meeting held with North Dakota property owners.

Ms. Williams informed the group that ROE letters will be sent to property owners in the staging area in November. Access is needed to accomplish survey work next spring.

Mr. Selvig informed the committee he received a letter from Pleasant Township, wondering how the project will affect them. Mr. Selvig said he will contact the Corps of Engineers if he cannot find answers to questions he receives.

The committee discussed meeting with townships over the winter to answer any questions they have and address their concerns. All agreed it would be important to have someone available to answer any technical questions that come up. Ms. Walker suggested doing a teleconference so representatives from the Corps of Engineers can be involved in the discussions. Mr. VanAmburg said they could also walk township officials through the website, which may help answer their questions.

Ms. Williams informed those present that the Corps of Engineers will be holding media events next week. Chairman Olson, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Selvig will join the Corps of Engineers at the events.

The 30-day comment period on the FEIS ends November 7, 2011. The Corps of Engineers sent out a news release with how to view the report. Ms. Williams said a copy is also available for review at local libraries.

#### **Meeting schedule**

The next Public Outreach Committee meeting will be held on October 26, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cass County Highway Department.

#### **Adjournment**

It was moved by Mr. Thorstad, seconded by Mr. Campbell 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