

**DIVERSION AUTHORITY
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
RIVER ROOM, FARGO CITY HALL
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2017**

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on December 20, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. in the River Room, Fargo City Hall, Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer; Jacob Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District (Via Telecon Conference); and John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner.

The following Committee members were absent: Rick Steen, Cass County Commissioner; Elly Peterson, Fargo Moorhead Business Leaders Flood Task Force; and, Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Others present were: Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; and, Lynne Spaeth, Clay County Planning & Zoning.

Rodger Olson called the meeting to order.

MINUTES

The minutes from the November 15, 2017 meeting were unavailable; however, they will be provided when accessible. Thereafter, said minutes will be approved along with the December 20, 2017 minutes at the January 17, 2018 meeting.

LITIGATION UPDATE and SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE

Rocky Schneider reported that this Friday is the deadline to report to the Court on our update on the stay, which technically goes through January 2. An attempt will be made to have all parties agree to an extended stay of 30-60 days, which will postpone the decision. Thereafter, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals would need to approve the appeal stay. Either the Minnesota permit is obtained or litigation resumes.

A summary of the Task Force's Potential Project Changes was distributed and discussed at length. Schneider stated there are approximately \$200-\$400 million worth of changes.

Various options were brought up and Mike Thorstad inquired on how long it will take the engineers to make the acreage changes and what options are permissible. Jason Benson added that the DNR does not say what is and is not permissible, they simply advise of what is "more" permissible. The DNR did, however, state that Option 7A is *not* permissible, and 7B and 7C brought us closer. Thorstad's opinion was that 7C was the better choice. Rocky Schneider stated there is supposed to be a report out this week regarding the timelines. Each member of the Task Force can submit 1,000 words to be

added to the report. John Strand, who is a member of the Task Force, will collaborate with Rocky Schneider to draft the 1,000-word submission.

John Strand asked about the impact of the channel in North Dakota and how carefully it was weighed. Jason Benson felt it should have been weighed at a higher impact. Moreover, he stated the *permanent* impact should carry much more weight than something that is going to occur 30 days in the next 100 years. Rodger Olson deems that no one is looking at the full picture. Rocky Schneider said it will be up to the Board to give direction. Discussion continued about lessening costs, adding more water to the channel and the impact.

Jacob Gust asked if anyone had discussed the effects of moving the emergency spillway to the west of the Sheyenne to increase the amount storage on North Dakota side. Jason Benson stated it had been considered and that the high ground between County Road 17 and the Sheyenne River serve as the tie back and that adds more acreage. The tie back is used as an emergency spillway. On the 1,000-2,000-year event, instead of water rising in the embankment and risking a major dam failure, it will spill over to the west and go around the project. Benson added that is part of the Corp's safety analysis. He stated they had looked at options to increase storage west of the West Fargo Diversion and south of I-94 where water is currently stored. By adding more water, you would not acquire as much storage.

Rodger Olson inquired whether there is a better or cheaper way than to run 37 feet through town and end up with the same result. Rocky Schneider stressed how important the 1,000 words would be and they should include the cost analysis and raise the question of Minnesota helping more. Rodger Olson suggested emphasizing the 8,000-acre impact on the ND side. Jason Benson stated from the Corp's Benefit Analysis, they will not look at it again as they will refer to the changes as locally preferred modifications

The Committee briefly discussed the change in the assessment district. Rocky Schneider deduces it will not have an impact because of the way the official project description was written.

Committee members discussed how outreach and education are key to the project. In addition, possibly meeting with people and keeping them informed would produce a positive result.

The Committee expressed concerns regarding the DNR's involvement, the appeal outcome and permit issues. It is imperative that the first application happens while Governor Dayton is in office. Kevin Campbell suggested forming a new committee that deals with operations, which is part of the permit issuance. He also suggested asking the Governor to appoint someone from the ND Water Commission and the DNR to serve on the operations committee. Rocky Schneider affirmed that this project will be operated by the Diversion Authority, but the Corps will have some influence.

ND WATER CONFERENCE RECAP

Rocky Schneider updated the Committee on the positive outcome of the ND Water Convention and Irrigation Expo held in Bismarck on December 7, 2017. Jason Benson spoke for the Red River Board, and Commissioner Grindberg addressed the entire conference. A water commission meeting was held the next day, and Schneider and Benson met with and updated the Governor. The common themed message from the meetings was that we still need the \$66.5 million but the State Water Commission is waiting until February to ask for the money. Governor Burgum's involvement with the Task Force should help.

2018 OUTREACH PLANNING

Rocky Schneider reported that in 2018, there will be many changes before submitting a permit. There are a lot of calls and concerns from landowners that are becoming more intense. Along with the Permit, a supplemental Environmental Assessment with the Corp of Engineers will be required. CLOMR will also need to be re-done but the Minnesota permit should not. Schneider feels that at some point, the Hickson Community Center needs to be open for people to come in with questions regarding the changes. He clarified that all the alignments still include the ring levee around the three communities.

The increase in cost was discussed as well as the buyouts of Hickson, Oxbow, etc. and the relocation of the Country Club. They are moving forward with the best option to provide stability for that community and the Kindred School District. John Strand suggested keeping track of how much money was spent, should the public inquire. Rocky Schneider added that the levee protection has been the greatest cost so far. Jason Benson stated that the goal in the next month is to have some sort of alignment locked in. Schneider suggested a meeting be set up the end of January to put positive pressure on the tech team. People are going to start to have questions on buyouts, etc. and will want answers. A date and time would prove positive for the public. A February 1 meeting was scheduled.

FMDiversion.com UPDATE AND ANALYTICS

Tammy Jo Taft provided handouts of the November E-Newsletter, Website and Public Comments report, as well as the 2017 Year in Review analytics.

Taft noted that as of November, the Diversion Dialogue Newsletter had 1,386 subscribers. The Governor's Task Force drew 118 clicks and the Cass County 17 story received 56 clicks. Results show the list continues to grow throughout 2017, with open rates staying solid but click rates varying. Nevertheless, the Newsletter continues to be a steady source of communication.

The FMDiversion.com website evidenced 2,618 sessions in November. The most common visitors were from Minnesota and North Dakota with an average of 4 minutes per session. Search engine results yielded 56% of traffic. Traffic on the Task Force page remained steady. The website traffic increased in 2017, coming from social media sources. The special assessment link drew a large number of visitors. Maintaining

important and interesting information on the front of the webpage and providing easy-to-find sites is crucial.

In November, the YouTube channel produced unusually high levels of watch time the weeks after the Task Force meeting, consisting of 57% in North Dakota, 12% in Minnesota, and nearly 10% in Florida. Compared to 2016, watch time and views have doubled. The analytics for 2017 indicate views increased significantly during construction. The increase earlier in the year was due to animated videos.

The Twitter statistics for November found a decrease in numbers. The opportunity to focus on telling a specific story through social media/Twitter should increase interest. From March to September 2017, the number of tweets, impressions, mentions and followers increased audience engagement.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Rocky Schneider reported that social media tends to drop in the summer and there will be less sensitivity on what is posted now that the Task Force is done. The Task Force provides a lot of material. Schneider said when we can take different targets, and those would be retweeted, resulting in bigger targets. After the first of the year a social media campaign will be developed. Tammy Jo Taft added that all the tweets are based on things we already had. They are put on all the platforms to attract people to the website. Schneider suggested that due to all the changes, the public needs to be informed of the duties of the Public Outreach Committee. Currently, the City of Fargo's Diversion page holds the Committee's Twitter feed that updates automatically and Clay County's website provides a section on the Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rocky Schneider provided a 2018 Committee calendar for review and discussion.

Schneider informed the Committee that the Red River Basin Commission Conference will be held mid-January in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Schneider and other area representatives will be attending and will have a booth and presentation. A tour of the control structure will be arranged.

The Committee discussed acknowledging the various people who have helped in this process by sending a token of appreciation to thank them.

Jacob Gust interjected that in his years working with the West Fargo Diversion, he discerned that Kindred usually receives about 11,000-12,000 cubic feet per second passing down the Sheyenne River. From that amount, 5,000 c.f. travel down the Sheyenne River, 3,000 c.f. travels to the east, and another 3,000 c.f. travels to the north into Drain 15. Gust feels that the problem is political, not engineering. He suggested finding some area to store water around the Rogers area, downstream from Davenport. It would cost approximately \$20-\$30 million and some land would be given up in North Dakota. If that occurred, it would go a long way in that we are expending more land and more cost on the North Dakota side. Additionally, it would be helpful in obtaining a permit.

Gust concluded, although not as effective, it would be less expensive than other solutions. It is an attempt to put more impact on the North Dakota side.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be considered, the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m., without objection.

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

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