

Metro Flood Diversion Authority Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

1:00 PM –May 7, 2024

Hjemkomst Center, Willow Room

A meeting of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority Planning Committee was held on May 7, 2024. The following members were present: Bernie Dardis, Mayor, City of West Fargo; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Shelly Carlson, Mayor, City of Moorhead; Tony Grindberg, Cass County Commissioner and Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District.

Member(s) absent: Dr. Tim Mahoney, Mayor, City of Fargo.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 2024

MOTION PASSED

Mayor Dardis moved to approve the minutes from the April 2024 meeting and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

3. APPROVE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Grindberg moved to approve the order of the agenda and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEXT STEPS

Mr. Wilson provided the executive director job description that was presented to the DA board in January 2017. It was noted that staff could not verify if the job description was formally approved by the DA Board. Mr. Redlinger and Mr. Wilson indicated that they would prepare a first draft of a new job description and distribute it to the board for feedback. Additionally, they will work with the human resources teams to get a salary range for the position. The intent is to advertise the position in June.

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Grindberg moved to have the co-executive directors develop a draft job description and create a calendar of events/timeline for hiring a new executive director and present it to the MFDA Board at the May Board meeting. Mayor Dardis seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Redlinger and Mr. Wilson provided the past MFDA executive director recruitment process:

Search #1: This effort was underway when I began employment with Cass County in March 2017 and was initiated in January 2017 by the Board of Authority. The original agreement for recruiting services with Ms. Pam Derby of CPS HR Consulting was signed in February 2017. A job description was developed, and a salary range identified.

The position was posted in early 2017, and three candidates were interviewed on July 24 & 25, 2017 by the Executive Director Search Advisory Group, made up of Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney, Cass County Commissioners Chad Peterson and Mary Scherling and Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams. That group recommended scheduling one candidate for a follow-up full day of meetings and conversations with the Board of Authority, project partners and members of the public. The Board voted to extend an employment offer to the candidate, Mr. Jay Neider. Ultimately Mr. Neider and the Authority could not arrive at acceptable terms for an employment agreement. Following this failed search, the project was the subject of an injunction in September 2017.

Search #2: In February and March of 2018, the Board of Authority updated the position profile and reposted the position. Through April and May the recruitment was challenging, but the reason wasn't immediately clear. Ms. Derby recommended that moving forward perhaps a survey should be added to elicit feedback from potential candidates. Litigation and permitting challenges were mentioned as reasons some would-be candidates did not apply. At that point 8 resumes were received and two were viable candidates. There was some discussion of a \$150k - \$175k hiring range being part of the challenge. The position profile listed a salary range starting at \$150k. In July, Ms. Derby sent a memo that two of the three candidates initially identified to be viable had withdrawn from the process. That left a single candidate, and the Board chose not to make an offer.

Search #3: At the urging of Board of Authority Chair Mary Scherling, the effort to recruit and hire an Executive Director was restarted in February 2019. The Authority updated the recruiting agreement with Ms. Derby and CPS HR Consulting. The Executive Director Search Advisory Group also reengaged and included Moorhead Mayor Judd, Fargo Mayor Mahoney, Commissioner Scherling, Commissioner Steen, and Commissioner Campbell.

An updated recruitment workplan and position profile were also delivered at the end of March. Remote interviews were conducted with four candidates in June and follow-up in-person interviews with three candidates were held on July 16 and 17, 2019. Ms. Derby provided a salary recommendation memorandum to the Co-Executive Directors on August 8, 2019, and on August 22 the Diversion Board of Authority approved an employment agreement with Mr. Joel Paulsen. Mr. Paulsen started as the Metro Flood Diversion Authority Executive Director on September 3, 2019.

5. EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Mr. Shockley reported that the current MFDA employee handbook was not formally approved by the board. Mr. Shockley recommended that it be reviewed by Human Resources legal counsel to ensure that it is compliant with the North Dakota Century Code. Mr. Grindberg requested that a proposed budget be provided regarding the cost to review the MFDA employee handbook.

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Campbell moved to recommend to the Board to have the current MFDA employee handbook reviewed by legal counsel to ensure that it is NDCC compliant and provide the proposed cost of such review to the Board, and Mr. Olson seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

6. CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS UPDATE

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Redlinger reported that they are very appreciative of the assistance that has been offered to them by MFDA staff and consultants. This has been helpful, and they are settling into a manageable rhythm.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be June 11, 2024.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:04 PM.