**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES OF THE**

**UPPER SHEYENNE RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD**

March 19th, 2025

The Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource Board met on March 19th, 2025, at the Valley City Eagles Club, Valley City, ND.

Managers:

Jerry Hieb, Barnes County WRD

Julie Beckstrand, Benson County WRD

Monty Schaefer, Eddy County WRD

Ben Varnson and/or Todd Whitman, Nelson County WRD

Kevin Veitz, Sheridan County WRD

Tor Bergstrom, Steele County WRD

Bill Deck, Pierce County WRD

Dennis Clark, Stutsman County WRD

Others Known To Be Present:

Mandar Nangare, Barr Engineering

Emilee Novak, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

Tasha Krueger, Secretary, Upper Sheyenne River Joint WRB

(See Attached)

**CALL TO ORDER**: Chairman Veitz called the meeting to order @ 9:03 A.M.

**ROLL CALL**: Roll call was taken with eight counties present.

Jerry Hieb, Barnes County WRD

Julie Beckstrand, Benson County WRD-**Absent**

Monty Schaefer, Eddy County WRD-**Absent**

Todd Whitman & Ben Varnson, Nelson County WRD

Kevin Veitz & LeRoy Becker, Sheridan County WRD

Tor Bergstrom, Steele County WRD

Bill Deck, Pierce County WRD

Dennis Clark, Stutsman County WRD

**AGENDA REVIEW**: The agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Manager Clark. Second by Manager Deck. Motion carried.

**MINUTES OF GENERAL FEBRUARY 19th, 2025**: Minutes from the General Meeting February 19th, 2025, meeting was emailed out. Motion to approve the Minutes of General Meeting February 19th, 2025, was made by Manager Clark. Second by Manager Deck. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**: The checkbook balance as of February 19th, 2025, was $59,015.65. There has been income of $19,923.32; expenses of $11,795.11 and currently the checkbook balance is $54,231.08. The total funds on hand are $54,231.08. A Motion to approve the bills was made by Manager Deck. Seconded by Manager Heib, Upon Roll Call vote, Jerry Heib- Barnes County, Todd Whitman-Nelson County, Bill Deck-Pierce County, Kevin Vietz-Sheridan County, Tor Bergstrom-Steele County, Dennis Clark-Stutsman County, Motion Carried.

Managers not present: Julie Beckstrand-Benson County, Monte Schaffer-Eddy County

**BILLS FOR APPROVAL:** The following bills were presented for approval: Barr Engineering (1820) $21,458.50; Ohnstad Twitchell (1821); $510.00; Tasha Krueger (1822) $1,076.05; Valley City Eagles (1823) $150. 00; Total Expenses of $ 23,194.55. A Motion to approve the bills was made by Manager Deck. Seconded by Manager Heib, Upon Roll Call vote, Jerry Heib- Barnes County, Todd Whitman-Nelson County, Bill Deck-Pierce County, Kevin Vietz-Sheridan County, Tor Bergstrom-Steele County, Dennis Clark-Stutsman County, Motion Carried.

Managers not present: Julie Beckstrand-Benson County, Monte Schaffer-Eddy County

**UPPER SHEYENNE RIVER PILOT PROJECT UPDATE:**

Mandar reported.

Site #10-Nelson County-Construction hasn’t started yet. MNL had equipment breakdown due to deep frost depth. Construction is planned for late March. It should be completed in 2-2.5 week. All the easements and permits have been approved. The pumps won’t be turned on until the end of April/May. The construction should be completed by the time the pumps are turned on.

The completion date is scheduled to be completed by November, 2025.

The Joint Board can be will plan a site tour for Site #5 & Site #10 in June, 2025.

**NRCS-RCPP PROGRAM:**

Not present.

Mandar updated.

There have been 2 landowners & 3 projects signed up for the project in Eddy County.

The landowners are: Allan Howard & Austin Langley.

NRCS & Barr Engineering met to discuss the projects. NRCS is requiring Barr Engineering presents different engineering options to the landowners. Barr doesn’t agree with it. The projects are all the same so the design for this project is standard. It also is wasting funding out of the budget that could be used elsewhere.

Mandar will speak with NRCS regarding the slop study, the cost estimate for the study is nearly $50,000.

Manager Bergstrom and the Garrison Diversion met with the Griggs County Commission to inform them about the pipeline being installed in Griggs County and consider re-joining the Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Board. No decision has been made to re-join the Upper Sheyenne River Joint Board.

**BALD HILL DAM\_SCOT TICKY:**

Ticky reported. There is little to no snow in the Sheyenne River Basin. The snow water quality is 1.0-15 inches in February. All the snow melted in late February and early March. The upstream of Lake Ashtabula, the Sheyenne River Basin is currently in drought status. The basin is abnormally dry to moderate drought in the lower portions of the basin. Last year, the entire basin was classified as abnormally dry to moderate drought. The temperatures are forecasted to be above normal and precipitation near normal to slightly above normal over the last two weeks. Since March 1st, 2025, Lake Ashtabula has been steadily rising back to the summer operating level. The current outflow of is low (50 CFS). The NCRFC forecast has less than 5% chance of reaching minor flood stage at Valley City. The NCRFC forecast has less than 5% chance of reaching minor flood stage at Lisbon. The NCRFC forecast has less than 15% chance of reaching minor flood stage at Kindred. The NCRFC forecast has less than 15% chance of reaching minor flood stage at Hardwood. The North Dakota Department of Water Resources will likely operate of Devils Lake Outlets. If operated, total flow from East End and West End Outlets will not exceed 600 csf..

**ND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY:**

Emily Lachenmeier reported.

The North Dakota Department of Environment Quality 319 program has been extended until December 31st, 2025. Indirect Management costs from July 2022 pay qualify for reimbursement.

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE:**

Not present.

**RED RIVER WATER SUPPLY:**

Not present.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – DANI HANSON:**

Dani presented.

**HB 1020: DWR/SWC Funding**

HB 1020 is the appropriations bill for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and State Water Commission (SWC). Senate leadership has floated the idea of reducing the percentage of oil extraction tax that goes to the Resources Trust Fund from 20.5% to 15.5% or 16.5%. There is a perception that there is currently an excess of water funding available and too much funding in HB 1020. There is a belief that large projects will be unable to utilize all the funding currently available and that increased water funding is exacerbating inflation and tight labor supply for contractors. All members are asked to reach out to Senators to let them know that water funding is vital to the economic growth of North Dakota. Please ask them to oppose the idea of decreasing the availability of water funding by diverting oil extraction tax dollars from the Resources Trust Fund. A brief overview of the HB 1020 as it is today can be found below: Bucket Gov Budget Amount House Proposal (Federal fund authority not included) Capital Assets --NAWS --SWPP --Devils Lake Outlet $146.1M --$12.7M --$131.7M --$12.6M --$131.7M\* --$1.7M Flood Control --Valley City --Mouse River --South Bismarck $129.1M --$16M --$76.1M --$1.7M --$16M --$125M --$20M --$20M --Other Flood Control --$17M --$7.5M Water Supply --Red River Valley Water Supply --Western Area Water Supply --Municipal $283.7M --$172.2M --$46.5M ---$260M --$46.5M --$20M Rural Water $45.8M --$25M $80M General Water $15.2M --conveyance --other --Parks and Rec --$15M --$8M --$2.5M Discretionary $5M $10M Heard by the Senate Appropriations – Education and Environment Division, March 11

**SB 2210: Watershed Boundary Study**

SB 2210 would authorize a legislative management study to look at water management from a watershed perspective. The bill passed unanimously out of the Senate committee and passed the Senate 45-2. Heard by the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, March 6

**SB 2276: Joint Board**

SB 2276 is an update to the joint board bill that passed last session. This bill maintains the requirement to join a larger board but changes it from a joint board to watershed boards, mapped by the DWR. These boards would be required to assume the process for possibly establishing an assessment district in the case that counties cannot agree on moving forward with a project. Hearing scheduled in the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, March 20

**HB 1218: Economic Analysis for Conveyance Projects**

HB 1218 would increase the statutory threshold for requiring a state economic analysis for cost share for conveyance projects to $5 million. It would also remove the ability of the State Water Commission to lower that threshold in policy. This bill was heard on January 30 with much supporting testimony from the water and agriculture communities. The committee amended the bill to establish a threshold at $750,000. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee heard this bill on March 13. Water and ag groups were unified in asking for a return to the $5 million threshold. Negotiations are underway with the Governor’s Office and Department of Water Resources to try to find a compromise that is workable for all involved. Heard by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, March 13

**ND DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES:**

Yaping present.

HB 1020 was discussed in more detail. Reice Haase is the new DWR Director.

The Devils Lake Outlet Committee will be meeting May 7th, 2025 at the Lake Region College.

The USGS monitoring locations in the local area are located at Warwick, and Cooperstown.

**COUNTY REPORTS:**

Barnes – Lots of drain tile projects.

Benson- Not Present.

Eddy – Not Present.

Nelson – 2-Snagging and Clearing Project near Mcville. Lots of Beaver Dams.

Pierce – Snagging and Clearing Project, tile permits, no run off from North Fork.

Sheridan – drain tile projects.

Steele – Drain re-assessment. Drainage Complaint.

Stutsman – Illegal draining, Water Study on Crystal Springs not completed.

Mandar spoke on a program similar to River Watch. He will invite the leader to the program to the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING** –

Next Regular Meeting-April 16th, 2025, at 9:00 am, Garrison Diversion, Carrington, ND

**ADJOURNMENT** – A Motion to Adjourn was made by Manager Deck at 10:34 A.M. Seconded by Manager Clark, Motion Carried. Chair Veitz adjourned the meeting.

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Kevin Vietz, Chair

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Tasha Krueger, Secretary