**MINUTES OF THE**

**UPPER SHEYENNE RIVER JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD**

June 21st, 2023

The Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource Board met on June 21st, 2023, at the Pizza Ranch, Devils Lake, ND.

Managers Present:

Jerry Hieb, Barnes County WRD

Monty Schaefer, Eddy County WRD

Ben Varnson, Nelson County WRD

Julie Beckstrand, Benson County WRD

Bill Deck, Pierce County WRD

Dennis Clark, Stutsman County WRD

Kevin Veitz,Sheridan County

LeRoy Becker, Sheridan County

Tor Bergstrom, Steele County WRD

Managers Absent:

Griggs County WRD

Others Known To Be Present:

Mandar Nanare, Barr Engineering

Jeff Frith, DLWRD

Dani Hanson-Legislative

Tasha Krueger, Secretary, Upper Sheyenne River Joint WRB

**CALL TO ORDER**: Chair Varnson called the meeting to order @ 7:00 P.M.

Mayor of Devils Lake was supposed to be present. Jeff Frith presented for the mayor.

Jeff discussed the new businesses coming into Devils Lake. The old Wally’s supermarket will be renovated into a parks and recreation. There is a lot of construction that needs to be completed. It is planned to open in February, 2023. The theater is also being renovated. It is planned to open September, 2023.

The pizza hut building was purchased by Sinclair.

**ROLL CALL**: Roll call was taken with seven counties present-Jerry Heib- Barnes County, Monty Schaeffer- Eddy County, Ben Varnson-Nelson County, Bill Deck-Pierce County, Kevin Veitz-Sheridan County, Dennis Clark-Stutsman County, Julie Beckstrand-Benson County, and Tor Bergstrom-Steele County.

**AGENDA REVIEW**: The Agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Manager Deck. Seconded by Manager Beckstrand. Motion carried.

**MINUTES OF April 19th, 2023**: Minutes from the April 19th, 2023, meeting were emailed out. Motion to approve the Minutes of April 19th, 2023, was made by Manager Deck. Second by Manager Vietz. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT JUNE 21st, 2023**: The checkbook balance as of June 21st 2023, was $52,631.13. There has been income of $13,703.92, expenses of $21,117.40 and currently the checkbook balance is $28,024.40. The total funds on hand are $28, 024.40. A Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report was made by Manager Bergstrom. Second by Manager Deck. Upon Roll Call vote, Motion carried.

**BILLS FOR APPROVAL JUNE:** The following bills were presented for approval; Ben Varnson $1,114.17; Tasha Krueger $703.34; Barr Engineering $18,403.00; 941- U.S. Treasury $ 478.89 and Insure Forward $418.00. Total bills for approval total $21,117.40. A Motion to approve payment of bills was made by Manager Clark. Second by Manager Deck. Upon Roll Call vote, Motion carried.

**Devils Lake Joint Board**

Jeff Frith presented. He spoke about the Devils Lake Basin elevations. In June 2011, Devils Lake peak elevation of 1,454.30 feet. At that elevation, the lake covers 208,000 acres. The current lake level as of June 21st, 2023 is 1,450.47 feet and covers 167,415 acres. Each foot of change in lake elevation will correspond to about 8,500 acres. The Stump Lake elevation is 1,450.36 feet and covers 16,166 acres. The combined area of lakes is 167,376 acres and the combined volume of lakes is 3.46 million areas feet.

Karen Hausman and Dan Webster-local land owners were introduced. Dan explained how the Devils Lake flood has impacted this farm land & lively hood. Dan farmed 5000 acres. In 1990, Dan lost several acres of land due to flooding. The land is fairly flat. In 2022, they moved the whole farm-grain bins, buildings, etc. In 2005, they were able to plug the culverts on the county road. In 2011, he lost 3000 acres in less than 24 hours. After the years, they are now farming 3,000 acres and 2,000 acres are still under water. There weren’t many options for water on their land. The water bank program is a 10-year program, paying up to $35 an acre. The landowners were never compensated for their land. They didn’t want to sell their land. The state says if you can drive a boat on the water, the state owners it.

Karen Hausmaun spoke. Karens situation was very similar. Her family also lost agricultural land from the Devils Lake. She expressed her sadness for loss of her family farm. She is a true believer of having room for tourism and agriculture. There was discussion on the economic impact to the agricultural land. Engineer Nangare suggested getting a hold of NDSU studies who would be interested in studying the impacts.

**Red River Basis Commission**

Ted Prister wasn’t able to attend.

**Legislative Update-Dani Hanson**

The Devils Lake tour is being held June 22nd, 2023.

Dani presented. She discussed the legislative manage committee has roughly 25 interim committee studying most of the ideas that were passed during the legislative session.

The water topics committee will continue to meet with the interim. They should be meeting in September or October-yet to be determined.

HB 1247: The Taxation Committee will be meeting to review the way elevators and potato warehouses are taxed. They are zoned as commercial property but is privately owned and are used for agricultural property purposes. The irrigation committee is also involved in this. These properties should be taxed differently.

HB 2372: The Department of Water Resources to established boundaries for watershed districts and appoint water managers to the watershed districts. The mill levy is optional. There is no enforcement for Counties not joining the watershed districts.

**US Fish and Wildlife**

Dave Azru wasn’t presented.

**Red River Retention**

Keith Weston wasn’t present.

**ND Department of Water Resources**

Steve Best wasn’t present.

**Red River Joint Water Resource District**

Randy Gjesive wasn’t present.

**ND Department of Environmental Quality**

Emilie Lachenmeier wasn’t present.

**Upper Sheyenne Pilot Project Update- Mandar Nangare**

Mandar presented. He expressed the progress that is coming along with the 7 sites on the main steam of the Upper Sheyenne Joint project. The following three sites are being worked on.

Eddy County: Site 3-Section 35-150-62; remove of existing and permitted low- flow road crossing on the Sheyenne River to improve conveyance, safety, and restore downstream banks.

Nelson County: Site 5- Section 3-146-60 and Section 34-150-60; consist of restoring an existing wetland to improve biota as well as minimal bank grading and improvement.

Site Alt. A-Sheridan County- Section 11 & 12- 148-74-Upsize the culvert.

The construction on these sites could take place in Spring of 2024. The survey of the sites was filled with water.

The 2 drainage permit applications were submitted.

Eddy County: Site 3-Section 35-150-62; remove of existing and permitted low- flow road crossing on the Sheyenne River to improve conveyance, safety, and restore downstream banks.

Nelson County: Site 5- Section 3-146-60 and Section 34-150-60; consist of restoring an existing wetland to improve biota as well as minimal bank grading and improvement.

60% of the design has been included in the application. It is understood the Office of State Engineers office will forward the applications to the individual water resource districts. Barr Engineering is in the process of submitting Sovereign Lake Permit applications to the Office of the State Engineer.

Site Alt. A-Sheridan County- Section 11 & 12- 148-74 design was just being started. The drainage permit will be submitted within a few weeks.

The surveyor will be out next week to check out those 3 sites to confirm there is no significate artifacts.

North Dakota of Department of Water Quality, Emilie Lachenmeier will be helping with the application & bidding process for the RCPP sites.

RCPP sites: 3 sites in Eddy County and 1 site in Steele County.

All the paperwork is signed. The local NRCS will post in the local newspaper. Local landowners are able to apply & the NRCS staff will help with this process. The funding for the projects should be available summer of 2024.

**County Reports**

No County reports were given.

**MANAGERS REPORT – BEN VARNSON**

No Manager’s report was given.

**NEXT MEETING** – August 16th 2023, at 9:00 a.m., Carrington, ND

**ADJOURNMENT** – A Motion to Adjourn was made by Manager Heib at 8:54 P.M. Chair Varnson adjourned the meeting.

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Ben Varnson, Chair

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Tasha Krueger, Secretary