



North Prairie Regional Water District

Good afternoon, Monte

Enclosed you will find transcript of the 2012 Annual meeting where the Water Cents Stipend Program was voted in by the membership. Then you will find transcript of the 2015 annual meeting where the Water Cents Program added scholarships for anyone whom applied as long as they were a user of North Prairie. Also, I have included all scholarships and money given to scholarship winners and to various community things. (after prom parties, 4-H, playground equipment, Back Pac Buddies, school reading programs etc.)

North Prairie always gave to the communities previously even after they became a water district. So, we gave from the Water Cents Program to these community causes as Water Districts are technically not supposed to give donations. This was an opt-out program and a letter was sent out to all users in the district explaining the program when it began. All donations were given in the name of the Water Cents Scholarship Program not North Prairie.

The board did not take responsibility for this, a committee was created to award scholarships, and I gave a donation to everyone that applied as long as it was for the youth of our North Prairie Community. We provided a list of every dime that we have given away. We did not want to make it part of the NP financials, but Brady and Martz felt that was the best way to show transparency.

We have given a report at our annual meetings except lately as we can barely get done what needs to be done.

This stipend program was put in place to help recruit people to go into the water business. Investing in your system to insure water for future generations. My current board is relatively new and though they have been informed many times how this program works. Very frustrating.

Teresa

1 are from the Max area, and last fall we did get
2 North Prairie Rural Water. We're happy as a lark.
3 It took a long time. Mr. Moldenhauer came out and
4 I signed an easement. We got it in in October.
5 It's just great. We love it dearly.

6 MR. LINRUD: Thank you much. We
7 appreciate hearing this.

8 Is there any other new business? Bruce?

9 MR. CARLSON: Well, we're doing area
10 informational meetings, and just today I had a lot
11 of questions down in Ryder about Measure No. 2.
12 Verendrye Electric pays \$500,000 a year in in-lieu
13 property tax. With Measure No. 2 the investors of
14 utilities get property tax relief, Verendrye
15 Electric does not. My concern is what happens when
16 all this funding stops and we're left as a taxable
17 entity. Guess what? You as members of the co-op
18 are going to end up paying more. So you can debate
19 all the rest you want, but I can tell you there's a
20 great unfairness between the investor in utilities
21 and the RECs with regard to the taxes.

22 MR. LINRUD: Thank you, Bruce. Well
23 said.

24 Is there any other new business?

25 Hearing none, the board has a proposal for

1 your consideration. The whole water industry is in
2 need of more and younger personnel. We propose,
3 with your approval, a stipend program. Bismarck
4 State College offers a one-year program in water
5 and wastewater training, much like their lineman
6 program. They are the only college in the nation,
7 by the way, that offers this program. The cost of
8 the program is \$10,000 a year. If every customer
9 of North Prairie would add 50 cents to one dollar
10 to their water bill every month, we could raise
11 between fourteen and twenty-eight thousand dollars
12 a year. Participation in this proposal would be
13 entirely voluntary. Hopefully we would have enough
14 participation that we would offer to pay all of the
15 tuition for the training.

16 Upon completion of the program the
17 applicant would come back to work at North
18 Prairie. He would work for one year. In other
19 words, if they work for us, the money would be
20 forgiven, a day of work for a day of school, so to
21 speak. If for some reason they chose not to work
22 for North Prairie, the money would have to be paid
23 back. Essentially what we would be offering is a
24 free education and a guaranteed job at the end of
25 it.

1 We believe this would be an excellent
2 program to address our needs for trained personnel.
3 The board is looking for your approval of this
4 program and also your input as to the amount
5 contributed every month. Whatever is decided,
6 everyone will contribute the same, 50 cents or one
7 dollar, per month if you're participating in the
8 program.

9 Are there any questions or comments?
10 There's got to be some questions. Bruce?

11 MR. CARLSON: Well, our operation roundup
12 program is very similar. The key to that program's
13 success is that you're automatically enrolled. If
14 you choose not to participate, that's fine, it's a
15 voluntary program. But I'd highly recommend
16 automatic enrollment. If you don't want to
17 participate, drop out. Is that what you're talking
18 about?

19 MR. LINRUD: Our intention would be if
20 this passes or is approved by the members, we would
21 send out a letter to everybody, and they would have
22 to -- in order to opt out of the program, they
23 would have to call or contact our office and opt
24 out of it. Otherwise, you would be enrolled in it.
25 So it's entirely voluntary. We're hoping for an

1 80 percent participation rate, in which case we
2 could fund one person for one year. But we're in
3 need of younger people in this industry, trained
4 people. And this is one way you can do it, by
5 funding it from the bottom up.

6 The applicants would be from -- North
7 Prairie's area would be given a priority. Any
8 customer with family members from North Prairie
9 would be given the priority. If we get none from
10 this area, we would open it up to other areas, as
11 long as they come back and work for North Prairie
12 for one year. It's a terrific idea and I think it
13 would be a good way to address our shortage of
14 personnel. Teresa.

15 MS. SUNDSBAK: When I attend all the North
16 Dakota rural water managers meetings and I look
17 around the room, most of them are pretty
18 silver-haired, and there's going to be probably
19 about 25 percent or better of those retiring over
20 the -- within the next five years, and there is
21 nobody to replace them.

22 It's crucial that we start to educate our
23 young people and people in general on how important
24 water is and the treatment of water. You know,
25 it's our most precious resource. And this is one

1 way that, you know, we could encourage the young
2 people -- or even if you're not so young and you
3 want to start a new career, I mean what a better
4 way to get people in the water business, offering
5 to pay for the school and then have them come work
6 for us. It's just a win-win for everybody. And I
7 think it's a tremendous way of supporting our youth
8 and getting more people in the water business and
9 making them aware of how crucially important it is
10 that we have qualified water operators to run our
11 water systems.

12 So I encourage you to approve this. It
13 would be a great thing.

14 MR. LINRUD: Any other comments?
15 Question?

16 MR. WENGER: If you're looking for a
17 motion to that effect, I so move.

18 MR. LINRUD: Thank you. We have a motion
19 to institute our stipend program. Do we have a
20 second?

21 MR. CARLSON: At what rate?

22 MR. LINRUD: We need -- we're looking for
23 input as to that. The board had a discussion.
24 Some people were in favor of 50 cents, some a
25 dollar, so we decided we'd leave it up to the

1 membership. What dollar amount did you have in
2 mind, Vernon?

3 MR. WENGER: A dollar would be fine.

4 MR. CARLSON: I second the motion.

5 MR. LINRUD: We have a second. Bruce
6 Carlson. Any discussion? Bruce?

7 MR. CARLSON: Again, it's voluntary. We
8 have 80 percent of our Verendrye membership that
9 takes part in the operation roundup program. We
10 raise \$45,000 a year in donations through Verendrye
11 Electric's operation roundup program. Very, very
12 successful. It's the best PR tool we've got. How
13 can anybody argue against a voluntary program. But
14 it's critical that everybody is signed up. You got
15 to opt out.

16 MR. LINRUD: Yes. And that's the way we
17 intend to pursue it.

18 I should also mention that Teresa has been
19 in communication with Bismarck State College about
20 this, and if we approve this tonight, when they go
21 out and do their career day thing at the local
22 schools they will include this and put it out there
23 that it is available. Any further discussion?
24 Yes.

25 MS. ROLLE: I think the roundup program is

1 wonderful. And we have been on the rural water for
2 years. And I would like to see if we could go
3 ahead and do it with rural water, do it on the
4 roundup program similar to Verendrye.

5 MR. LINRUD: We looked at that, ma'am, but
6 our billing software does not allow us to do that.
7 The only way we can make this work is there would
8 be an additional line item on your bill that would
9 say a dollar, and that's the only way we can make
10 our billing software work.

11 Go ahead. Would you stand, please, and
12 state your name.

13 MR. ROLLE: I'm Milton Rolle. What would
14 the process be for choosing these fortunate
15 students?

16 MR. LINRUD: Okay. We have not finalized
17 anything yet. We are looking at setting up a
18 committee that would review the applicants. The
19 committee would be comprised of our general
20 manager, at least two board members, and possibly
21 some people from the community. We haven't decided
22 that yet, but there will be a committee that will
23 decide it.

24 John, stand up, state your name.

25 MR. BEARMAN: John Bearman here. You have

1 a motion and a second, do you not?

2 MR. LINRUD: Yes.

3 MR. BEARMAN: I'll call for the question.

4 MR. LINRUD: Question has been called.

5 All those in favor, say aye.

6 (Aye.)

7 MR. LINRUD: Opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. LINRUD: Motion carried. Thank you.

10 Is there any further business to come
11 before the meeting? If not, I'll declare the
12 meeting adjourned and we will draw for some door
13 prizes.

14 (Concluded at 8:12 P.M., the same day.)

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2 STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA)
3 COUNTY OF WARD) ss.
4)

5 I, Sharon A. Bakken, a Professional Court
6 Reporter,

7 DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I recorded in
8 shorthand (Stenotype) the foregoing proceedings had
9 and made of record in the above-entitled matter at
10 the time and place hereinbefore indicated.

11 I DO HEREBY FURTHER CERTIFY that the
12 foregoing and attached typewritten pages contain a
13 true, accurate and correct transcript of my
14 shorthand (Stenotype) notes, as they purport to
15 contain, then and there taken.

16 Dated at Minot, North Dakota, this 17th
17 day of April, 2012.

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Sharon A. Bakken
Professional Court Reporter

