

**MINUTES OF THE ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT BOARD OF
MANAGERS SPECIAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 5, 2020**

ORDER: Chairman Jason Braaten called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MANAGERS PRESENT: In person: Carter Diesen, Cody Schmalz, and Jason Braaten. Via WebEx: Tony Wensloff and LaVerne Voll.

STAFF PRESENT: In person: Watershed Specialist McCormack. and Administrator Halstensgard

OTHERS PRESENT: In person: see sign-in sheet. Via WebEx: Chad Reese, Kimberly Wynn, Daryl Wicklund, Tammy Kriese, and David Losson.

CONSULTING STAFF: In person: Nate Dalager, HDR Engineering;

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss project options with landowners. No action will be taken by the board at this meeting.

Engineer Dalager discussed impacts to the basin showing slides for pre and post project inundation, as well as the infrastructure benefits.

Terry Kveen spoke about the need for some spring flooding on the island. He stated that their engineer stated the project was only 5% effective for reducing flooding and was not cost effective. Norman Kveen stated that they resent the board for continuing to pursue this project.

Manager Diesen asked some questions of the landowners including a request for crop history for the land in question. Melanie Benit, Institute for Justice, addressed the group stating that the landowners didn't feel comfortable providing that information and the proof that is productive is that they live off of the land. There was discussion about the District utilizing eminent domain. It was stated several times that the Board of Managers is not in favor of "taking" of private land. There was discussion on raising the dikes on the island and the south side of the cutoff channel. Mitch Magnusson stated that raising the dikes to 1032' is not going to be a benefit to the landowners.

Randy Prachar, MN DNR area manager, spoke about natural resource goals and general operating goals noting that the operating plan can't be finalized until a final design is put forth. There was continued discussion on operation.

Ms. Benit stated that the landowners were willing to work with the board on smaller projects if the following conditions were met: 1) the board committed to not purchasing easement, fee title or acquiring land by eminent domain from any unwilling landowner; 2) the Board guarantee improved conditions for coalition landowners; 3) and the Board guarantee improved transparency. The Coalition wants the Watershed Board to abandon the project in all forms.

Manager Diesen asked landowners if any landowners present had willingly sold land to the RRWD. Terry Kveen stated he had been offered a land trade but he turned it down. Vangie Byfuglien had stated that they had approached the District about purchasing property they owned in the lake basin.

Chad Reese, Institute for Justice, addressed the group stating that is the Watershed District agreed not to obtain any land from unwilling landowners tonight, it would go a long way to easing the minds of the Coalition landowners and tone down the conversations. The second thing Mr. Reese requested was that the Board re-work the operating plan and allow adjacent landowners to have input into the plan.

There was further discussion about miscommunication and misinformation being presented online by the Landowner Coalition and the Institute for Justice. Administrator Halstensgard spoke to the process that the Watershed District is following for this project. There was discussion on the environmental review and permitting processes.

Specialist McCormack addressed some of the questions about the iteration of the project from the District's Overall Plan and the surveys that have taken place for the project.

Daryl Wicklund spoke to the group on behalf of his constituents in support of the project. Brad Blawat spoke about his farming operation and the reality of farming with frequent flooding and his support of the project.

Deb Stone stated that their goal in coming to Roseau tonight was to stop the project.

Rick Sikorski spoke about how projects like this will be a benefit to landowners downstream and in the Two Rivers Watershed by reducing the cross-over flows. There was extensive discussion on the positions of both the Watershed Board and the Landowner Coalition concerning this project.

The general positions of the coalition are as follows:

1. They are not in favor of a project in the Roseau Lake Basin in any form.
2. They stated they would work with the District on a smaller project such as additional culverts under the bridges at each crossing downstream.
3. They are not interested in raising the dikes on the island or the south side of the cutoff channel to 1032'.

Manager Wensloff spoke about how he had hoped there was room for compromise to reach an agreement on the project. Mr. Sikorski spoke again about the water that cross over water from the Roseau to the Two Rivers watersheds.

A **motion** to adjourn was made at 8:35 p.m. by Manager Diesen and seconded by Manager Schmalz Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Schmalz, Secretary

Tracy Halstensgard, Administrator