

**Metro Flood Diversion Authority
Public Outreach Committee
Meeting Minutes
2 PM - January 27, 2021**



A virtual meeting of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee was held on January 27, 2021. The following committee members were present: Bernie Dardis, Mayor, City of West Fargo; Dave Ebinger, Clay County Commissioner; Jake Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Rick Steen, Cass County Commissioner; Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Shelly Carlson, Moorhead City Council Member and John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner.

Members absent: Gerald VanAmburg, BRRW Manager and Katie Mastel, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chambers.

1. MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Olson called the meeting to order at 2 pm. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER MEETING

Mr. Steen moved to approve the minutes from the December 2020 meeting as presented and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. APPROVE ORDER OF AGENDA

Mr. Steen moved and Mr. Gust seconded approval of the order of the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

MFDA Communications Approach

Ms. Darling presented the MFDA Communications Approach Plan going forward. Following are the purpose, communication principles and stages:

Purpose

As the Metro Flood Diversion Authority (MFDA) moves from preparation to construction, communication will drive each of the upcoming stages:

- **SUCCESS:** securing the crucial funding commitment from the ND Legislature, along with continued funding appropriations from the federal government and the State of Minnesota in order to keep all components of the project to stay on track

- **BUILD:** supporting the crucial interactions to enable the safe and rapid construction of MFDA – listening to and addressing the expectations of community and various stakeholders to enable performance within the project itself
- **DELIVER:** seamless transition from construction to long-term operation and maintenance of the project

Communication Principles

- **INTERACTIVE:** transparent base communications on what we learn from our conversations with leaders and the community while staying true to our commitment to safe and rapid delivery
- **STRATEGIC:** focus efforts on an efficient portfolio of channels and interventions that reinforce positive views of MFDA with key constituencies, as opposed to “communication for communication’s sake”
- **PROACTIVE:** be aware, responsive, and accurate in the communications we generate and in our engagement with community, political and media stakeholders

Stage 1: Success

Securing the funding package from the ND Legislature to deliver the lifesaving and economy-saving benefits of flood prevention to the region.

Stage 2: Build

Immediately following the conclusion of the legislative session, the communication focus will turn towards a very different range of activities - those required to enable and then support the safe construction of MFDA and to keep its stakeholder universes informed.

Strategically, the landscape changes considerably. North Dakota taxpayers will need to feel reassured about their tax spend. The MFDA construction effort will need to be connected with its internal audiences (contractors and staff in particular) and with its broader community of suppliers, neighbors, and civic and business leaders. Clay County and, to an extent, the Minnesota legislative and media world, needs to be connected to the conversation.

There also needs to be concern about the realities - and the optics - when the progress of the project may appear upsetting to some. Those that are unavoidable like evictions require context and a coherent, consistent approach. Those that are avoidable - like workplace safety incidents - require an unwavering commitment to avoid them.

Stage 3: Deliver

Moving from construction to operation and maintenance requires yet another different approach - a sustainable approach for supporting a very focused multi-municipal entity over the course of its working life.

The number of people involved will be far smaller, the mechanics of its operation will be known and established, and its communication efforts will focus mainly on operations, according to its stakeholders the appropriate level of information for effective oversight and maintaining the confidence of the public in its function and safety.

The main focus of this stage will be to develop a long-term charter for a communication role or function, whether it is standalone or as part of another entity, and in ensuring that this role is adequately and sustainably staffed and serviced.

There was dialogue regarding the poll that was conducted, and Mr. Strand indicated that taxpayers think that polls are a waste of money and not a good idea to conduct them. Ms. Carlson also indicated that a friend from western North Dakota also received the call and was not impressed. The citizens in Minot, ND, are not concerned about the Diversion Authority but rather the flooding issues in their community. Ms. Carlson also indicated that she would like to see a summary of the initial poll that was taken.

Mayor Dardis made a motion to approve the Communications Approach and the motion was seconded by Ms. Carlson. Motion carried.

DA Program Information Points

A MFDA Informational Points booklet has been created to ensure that everyone has current information regarding the Project. The booklet will be shared with all three committees and Ms. Darling asked that any questions or comments be directed to her.

Enhanced Branding and Templates

A new logo and graphic standards have been established to reflect continuity with MFDA visuals to include correspondence, presentations, etc.

Legislative Session Update

Mr. Paulsen presented on HB 1020 to the House Appropriations committee in January.

Newsletter

A newsletter is underway to provide detailed information during the legislative session.

Lobbying Group

A lobbying group has been retained to ensure that we are informed and that we are where we need to be during the sessions.

FAQs

There will be an FAQ section to address commonly asked Project questions.

Baseline Survey

A baseline communications survey will be conducted in coming months.

Visual Progress Tracker Update

What is the best avenue for a visual display of the Project's progress? Signage? Website?

Mr. Olson asked Ms. Darling to provide a one-page construction update that can be used to answer questions for the public as they arise.

Mr. Gust commented that a one-page construction update would be beneficial for land owners who have been bought out.

Mr. Dodds indicated that 496 parcels have been voluntarily acquired to date. Mr. Gust suggested that for the parcels that will be going LRED, it would be beneficial for the jury to know of the successes achieved with the parcels that have been acquired.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on February 24, 2021.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Strand made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Gust seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm.