

A virtual meeting of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority Board of Authority was held on February 25, 2021. The following members were present: Shelly Carlson, Mayor, City of Moorhead; Dr. Tim Mahoney, Mayor, City of Fargo; Bernie Dardis, Mayor, City of West Fargo; Chad Peterson, Cass County Commissioner; Chuck Hendrickson, Moorhead City Council; Dave Piepkorn, Fargo City Commissioner; David Ebinger, Clay County Commissioner; John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Mary Scherling, Cass County Commissioner; Rick Steen, Cass County Commissioner and Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District.

No members were absent.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**MOTION passed**

**Dr. Mahoney moved to approve the minutes from the January 28 meeting and the special February 11 meeting together. Mayor Dardis seconded the motion and on a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

**3. APPROVE ORDER OF AGENDA**

**MOTION passed**

**Mr. Steen moved to approve the order of the agenda and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION passed**

**Dr. Mahoney moved to approve items c, d and e on the consent agenda as one item and Mr. Steen seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Mr. Paulsen began his report highlighting the milestones that have been reached, specifically the permit from the MN DNR relating to the upstream mitigation. There was a small change to item #22 of the permit but nothing that was significant.

The House approved bill 1431 and it will now go to the Senate for consideration. If approved, it would make \$435.5 million available to the MFDA in August of 2021.

Mr. Paulsen also provided an update on the P3 and indicated that amendment #1 went to the proposers; there was a slight adjustment to the schedule and the technical responses are due on March 24 with the financial responses due on April 14.

The USACE was provided \$115 million of federal funding for their projects in 2021.

**5. GENERAL COUNSEL UPDATE**

**Formal Settlement Agreement for Upstream JPA**

Mr. Shockley provided an update on the settlement agreement term sheet and stated that there are no major changes, just a few general proceedings. It has been approved by the JPA and all of the cities that are involved.

**MOTION passed**

**Mr. Strand moved to approve the formal settlement agreement for upstream JPA and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

Dr. Mahoney expressed his gratitude to Mr. Strand and Mr. Paulsen for their hard work on making this a reality.

**Resolution Confirming Committees**

Mr. Shockley indicated that this was primarily a housekeeping requirement to confirm the current membership of the Public, Land, Finance and Board of Authority committees.

**MOTION passed**

**Mr. Piepkorn moved to accept the resolution confirming committees and Mr. Steen seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

Dr. Mahoney asked if an amendment is needed to replace Mr. Judd with Mayor Carlson?

**MOTION withdrawn**

**Mr. Steen moved to replace Mr. Judd with Ms. Carlson and Mr. Olson seconded the motion.**

**Ms. Carlson indicated that the board will remain as a 12-member board until the Moorhead City Council appoints her next month.**

**Mr. Steen moved to withdraw the motion and Mr. Olson seconded the withdrawal.**

## **Resolution Appointing Vice Chair & Secretary of DA Board**

### **MOTION passed**

**Mr. Hendrickson moved and Mr. Steen seconded to appoint Mr. Peterson vice chair of the Board of Authority and Ms. Lindblom as the secretary. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

## **6. USACE PROJECT UPDATE**

Ms. Williams provided the following project update:

### **1 Diversion Inlet Structure Construction**

Structure includes 3-50 ft. wide Tainter gates. Winter shutdown began on 18 December; work is anticipated to resume late-February. Construction is 46% complete with a required completion date of 7 June 2023. Anticipated remaining schedule:

2020: Foundations/site work, control structure, dam walls.

2021: Concrete piers/abutments, control building.

2022: Install bridge deck, gates, and operating machinery.

2023: Paint gates, seed.

2024: Turf established.

### **2 Wild Rice River Structure Construction**

Structure includes 2-40 ft. wide Tainter gates. Winter shutdown began on 18 December. Construction is 14% complete with a required completion date of 22 October 2023.

Anticipated schedule:

2020: Foundations/site work, control structure, approach walls, dam embankment.

2021: Dam walls, control building, dam embankment.

2022: Control building, dam embankment.

2023: Complete excavation, dam embankment, gate installation, seed.

2024: Turf established.

### **3 Red River Structure Design**

Structure includes 3-50 ft. wide Tainter gates. The design of this critical-path feature remains on schedule. The 95% review is scheduled to begin late-April 2021. Final plans and specs are scheduled to be completed in late-August 2021.

### **4 Southern Embankment – Reach SE-1 (Western Tieback) Design**

This reach was advertised for bids on 15 January; bid opening was delayed due to not having all permits in hand. Construction contract award is scheduled for 2nd quarter FY21.

**5 Southern Embankment – Reach SE-1B Design.** Detailed design began November 2020.

### **6 Southern Embankment – Reach SE-2A and 2B Design**

The 65% design review by the DA is scheduled to begin late-February 2021. Final plans and specifications are scheduled for November 2021. Reach SE-2B design is scheduled to start in March 2021.

### **7 I-29 Raise Design**

Bids from prequalified sources are currently due 11 March, if permits are in hand.

### 8 Drain 27 Wetland Mitigation Project Design

The 65% design review is complete and the 95% is scheduled to begin in March 2021. Award of a construction contract was scheduled for September 2021 but will likely be delayed due to land acquisition.

### 9 Drayton Dam Mitigation Project

The design has re-commenced with the goal of having final plans and specs in August 2021. This mitigation project includes replacing the existing dam to incorporate fish passage. An Environmental Assessment was completed in 2013.

Dr. Mahoney asked what permits are currently outstanding. Ms. Williams indicated that they are waiting on the release of the SWC permits.

Mr. Peterson shared that there is a lot of interest on the I-94 project and that many bidders have already pre-qualified.

## 7. PUBLIC OUTREACH

### Communications Director Update

Ms. Darling provided an overview of the communications department after her first 74 days. She indicated that she is building a foundation and planning. The focus on outreach has brought the Project to where it is now.

### COMMUNICATIONS VIEW

High-level view of the communications landscape for this project

### CORE INITIATIVES

Priorities we must keep moving over the next six-months while the local team is being built

### COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Streamline and evolve the ways we're communicating to educate, build community engagement and awareness

### NEXT STEPS

Drive strategic initiatives to stay on schedule while building the local team

### 2021 COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET

Previous spend, current spend and savings

Ms. Darling indicated that it is vital that we focus on the core initiatives that will be our priorities over the next six months.

- **Build** the communications team
- **Engage** ND Legislative Assembly funding
- **Align** communications approach to all constituents
- **Brand** language, visuals, templates, project status
- **Proactive** media relations
- **Strengthen** impacted landowner communications
- **Build** national coalition partnerships
- **Enhance** partner communications (Corps, Fargo-Moorhead, Cass, Clay, MN DNR, ND OSE, consultants)
- **P3** strategic planning, announcement, onboarding, transition to construction
- **Activate** opportunities at key events

The team is also working on branding and gaining consistency with the Project and Authority names and the multiple logos that have been used in the past.

A consistent message needs to be conveyed on all of our communication channels which will entail a lot of updating, especially with the website.

Ms. Darling outlined the next steps in the communications approach and those that will be on the team.

#### **High level strategic support during transition – PR for Good (local)**

- Plan for and activate communications in high visibility phase
- Expertise to support critical move to construction phase
  
- **Full Team**
- Joanne Henry (Local) - proactive media relations, project management support, community outreach
- Mike Klein (National Expert) - P3 communications, strategic planning, onboarding, transition to construction
- Photographer (Local) - visual media repository and website
- Videographers (Local) - podcasts, interviews, project storyline (history, overview, future)
- Graphic design (Local) - brand alignment, templates, project newsletter

The 2021 budget will result in an anticipated \$502,140 savings from prior year.

### **2021 Communications Budget**

**Original    \$969,140    Funds previously included in AE2S 2021**

New            \$237,000    PR for Good contract

New            \$ 60,000    GA Group (previously approved)

New            \$170,000    Creative Media Team – Photo, Video, Web

**SAVINGS    \$502,140**

### **Recap**

#### **COMMUNICATIONS VIEW**

High-level view of the communications landscape for this project

#### **CORE INITIATIVES**

Priorities we must keep moving over the next six-months while the local team is being built

#### **COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

Streamline and evolve the ways we're communicating to educate, build community engagement and awareness

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Drive strategic initiatives to stay on schedule while building the local team

### **2021 COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET**

Previous spend, current spend and savings

### **MFDA Org Chart**

Mr. Paulsen discussed the organizational chart and indicated that the director of finance position is open and there will be other positions becoming available as well.

## **8. LAND MANAGEMENT**

Mrs. Scherling reported that all of the properties that are needed for the channel have been acquired.

567 properties have been acquired to date and the Phase II flowage easement appraisals have been initiated on 494 properties.

Negotiations continue on the Drain 27 parcels and lands for the Red River control structure.

A lot of progress continues to be made and we continue to stay on time and on schedule. It is anticipated, however, that there still may be a handful of properties that will go before Cass County to obtain them via LRED.

The committee continues to work on the excess lands policy.

## **9. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mayor Dardis gave an update on the finance committee meeting.

Mayor Dardis indicated that the PR for Good contract was approved at \$237,000 for a new one-year contract and that the Crown Appraisal MSA was also approved.

### **MOTION passed**

**Mayor Dardis moved to approve the PR for Good new contract and Mr.**

**Hendrickson seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

Dr. Mahoney expressed his dissatisfaction with the communications department, the fact that a poll that was done without consent and the lack of local hires. He indicated that the process needs to be re-evaluated.

Mr. Peterson indicated that he is supportive of the PR for Good contract for one year as it will serve as a bridge. He stressed that there is no shortage of people in the FM area who are capable of filling these roles.

Mr. Campbell does not support the contract and indicated that there is a lot of local talent that would be qualified. With no RFP process, it sends the message that PR for Good was handpicked.

**MOTION passed**

**Mr. Olson moved to approve the Crown Appraisal MSA and Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion carried.**

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Policy on the Disposition and Management of Comprehensive Lands**

Mr. Paulsen indicated that the policy was tabled at the land committee meeting and asked that item #10 not be considered at this time.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION passed**

**At 4:34 PM Dr. Mahoney moved and Mr. Piepkorn seconded the motion to go into executive session. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion carried.**

**The Board returned from executive session at 5:18 PM.**

**12. The next meeting will be held on March 25, 2021.**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION passed**

**Mr. Peterson moved and Mayor Dardis seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:18 PM.**