

DEVILS LAKE BASIN JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting held Wednesday, February 12, 2025, Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse, Devils Lake, ND, and Online via Teams.

Vice-Chairman Albin Jallo called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Roll call of the counties was taken.

Cavalier County	Van Howatt
Eddy County	Mike Tweed (absent)
Nelson County	Dave Sateren
Pierce County	Floyd Slaubaugh
Ramsey County	Duaine Ash
Towner County	Randy Benson (via online)
Walsh County	Albin Jallo

APPROVE AGENDA: Jallo asked if anyone had any additional items for today’s agenda. **Sateren made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Ash, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of MINUTES: Jallo asked if everyone had an opportunity to read the minutes from January 8th, 2025, and if there were any corrections or additions. **Howatt made a motion to approve the January 8th, 2025 minutes, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of FINANCIALS: The financial reports were presented. **Ash made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Sateren, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL of MONTHLY BILLS:

	February 2025 Bills	Amount	Ck #
Intuit QuickBooks Online Monthly		\$99.00	ACH
NDTC - Website Hosting		\$21.83	5120
Jeff Frith - Cell Phone Expense & December Travel		\$487.33	5125
Ramsey County Water Resource District (Copier Rent)		\$125.00	5117
Ramsey County Water Resource District (Office Assistant Services)		\$300.00	5117
Ramsey County Auditor: Rent		\$190.00	5122
Ramsey County Auditor: Telephone		\$55.49	5122
Ramsey County Auditor - Health Insurance		\$2,062.94	5121
Ramsey County Auditor - Wages & Withholding Taxes		\$6,176.20	5123
Nelson County Water Resource Board - Winter Conference		\$310.00	2154
NDAWN Center - O & M of Basin NDAWN Sites		\$2,500.00	5118
USGS - Basin Stream Gage Quarterly Payment		\$4,962.50	5119
Total Admin		\$9,827.79	
Total General Project		\$7,462.50	
Total		\$17,290.29	

Ash motioned to pay the February 2025 bills listed, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion carried unanimously.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Stacy Peters, Ramsey County WRD Office Manager, Brian Sea, ND Game & Fish, Matt Vanthuyne, US Fish & Wildlife. Randy Schemionek, RCWRD Board Member. Jim Olson, Blue Water Consultant, David Remmen, Claire Leiseth, & Ally Hanson, NRCS, Suzie Kenner, Director of Chamber of Commerce. Online: Amanda Lee, National Weather Service, Yaping Chi, Sindhuja Pillai-Grinolds & Alexis Faber, Department of Water Resources, Dani Quissell, ND Water Association, Richard Lawford, UND Consultant, & Karen Haussman, landowner.

AGENCY REPORTS:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE: Amanda Lee was in attendance, online. She went over her monthly report. She mentioned the current lake level is 1449.4. She reported that the next preliminary Exceedance Outlook would be out tomorrow and then again on February 27th, 2025.

Amanda also mentioned the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) program, allowing individuals to volunteer to send precipitation information. The only thing needed is a special rain gauge. She is hoping to have one or two individuals per county.

ND GAME & FISH: Brian Sea was in attendance. He said this time of year is slower for them. He mentioned they have a conference with ND & SD and their Division meeting. He said they did get two seasonal workers. He noted they received the most applications this time since 2013.

NRCS: Ally Hanson was in attendance. She said she is the new District Conversationist since May. She mentioned they funded 7 water banks this year. She mentioned that funding is normally \$4 million, but were only funded \$2 million.

US FISH & WILDLIFE: Matt Van Thyne was in attendance. He said they are starting to look at cattail spraying and hoping to start earlier this year. He said aerial spraying (airplane, helicopters, & drones) have to be approved by DC. He mentioned they have been receiving several calls on haying and gazing.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES: Yaping Chi was in attendance, online. She mentioned there was a priority list made of the motors for maintenance and repair after all motors had been inspected in January 2025. She mentioned that pump #4 needed further inspection. She mentioned that the Devils Lake Outlets Advisory Committee meeting is May 7th, 2025 at 1 PM at Lake Region State College.

OLD BUSINESS:

UND STUDY: Richard Lawford, was in attendance, online. He mentioned that the proposal has been sent onto the National Science Foundation, and should know by May.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Dani was in attendance, online, and went through some of the highlights of the Legislative Updates that were provided in each board member's packets. She mentioned that there is an ND Water Legislative social on Tuesday, March 11th, in Bismarck, which gives an opportunity to interact with legislative members.

ENGINEERING CONSULTANT SERVICES: Jim was in attendance. He went over some of the items he could provide assistance with, from cost share requests and grant writing to reaching out to legal counsel. Jim stated that this would not be a monthly or ongoing expense, but just as needed or requested, he would bill the Joint Board. **Howatt made a motion to accept the engineering consultant services from Blue Water Consulting Services, seconded by Sateren, motion carried unanimously.**

WHEELCHAIRS & WALLEYES: Suzie Kenner was in attendance and provided information to the board. **Slaubaugh motioned to donate \$10,000 (donor-level Angel) to the Wheelchairs & Walleyes project in Lakewood, seconded by Ash, motion carried unanimously.**

OTHER OLD BUSINESS: No other old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

SPRING FLOOD OUTLOOK: Frith mentioned that Amanda Lee covered the Spring Outlook in here previous presentation. The latest official outlook will be released tomorrow.

DEVILS LAKE OUTLETS ADVISORY MEETING: The meeting will be held Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, at 1 PM at Lake Region State College. Frith mentioned that this is one of the committees the Governor wants to eliminate. Frith noted that the Governor is looking at 154 different boards.

LETTER TO CONGRESS SUPPORT: Frith shared a letter from Ag groups across the four prairie pothole region that has several million acres under easements by the US Fish and Wildlife. He stated that the letter points out the significant overreach in the acquisition, enforcement, and management of easements that have significantly affected landowners throughout those four states and certainly affects landowners within the Devils Lake Basin. Frith asked the board members if they would be interested in sending a letter of support to the organizations that drafted the letter. **Howatt motioned to send a letter on behalf of the Joint Board to support the letter addressed to Congress highlighting the concerns of US Fish and Wildlife easements and the overreach of that department as outlined in the letter, seconded by Slaubaugh, and the motion carried unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE & MISCELLANEOUS: Nothing to report.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS: No other new business.

BASIN BOARD REPORTS:

Ramsey County: Ash mentioned they met last week. He said there were landowners in to discuss the Lawton Coulee Snag & Clear. He said that the Joint Board, Cavalier and Ramsey County WRD, for the RC Drain #10 project met and voted to dissolve the project. He mentioned that the Advisory Committee members were present to discuss trouble areas on the assessed drains. He said there is discussion on Channel A assessments for fixing culverts on Channel A.

Walsh County: Jallo mentioned they are working on assessments where some landowners are being double assessed. He said they are working on a project with Pembina County to create a dam to hold back water.

Eddy County: Tweed was not present, and no report was provided.

Pierce County: Slaubaugh mentioned they had their meeting last week. He said they paid bills and had no new discussion.

Towner County: Benson mentioned at their meeting that they paid bills. He asked about other entities that collect information, such as the project Amanda Lee had mentioned.

Nelson County: Sateren mentioned that they meet tomorrow. He said they are working on some snag-and-clear projects to bring to the commissioners.

Cavalier County: Howatt mentioned at their last meeting that they did bill paying, and they have some new board members. They still have 1 vacancy.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Frith mentioned January was a busy month for him. He mentioned he attended the Red River Basin conference, which provided a lot of information, and it was good to get back there and take advantage of the networking possibilities with water leaders across the Red River Basin. He noted that at the Ramsey County Extension Round-up, he had the opportunity to meet Rob and Emily Sharkey, also known as the Shark Farmer, as the national host of an agricultural podcast and host of a YouTube Channel and a show on the RFDtv channel. Frith stated that he was asked to do the Shark Farmer podcast about Devils Lake today at noon and will air on SiriusXM radio, channel 147, at 3 and 6 pm today. He said tomorrow he'll be in Bismarck for the State Water Commission meeting.,

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 AM.

Approved March 12th, 2025:

Mike Tweed, Chairman

Jeff W. Frith, Manager