

Minutes of Meeting  
Of the Board of Managers  
Of the Lower Heart River WRD  
January 28, 2025  
2:00 p.m. – Veteran’s Room  
Mandan City Hall

Attendees: Bill Robinson, Chairman; Mitch Bitz, Manager; Ryan Jockers, Manager (virtual); Luci Snowden, Manager (virtual); Alan Kemmet, Manager (virtual) and Carol Beechie, Secretary/Treasurer.

Also in attendance: Dennis Reep, HDR Engineering; Karli Frohling, HDR Engineering; Vicki Twerdochlib, HDR Engineering (virtual); Jim Froelich, Mayor City of Mandan; Cole Higlin, Mandan Park District Executive Director; Patrick Martin, Morton County Emergency Manager; Greg Welch, City of Mandan; Justin Schulz, City of Mandan and Jordan Singer, City of Mandan.

The minutes of the December 17, 2024, Board Meeting were presented. Mitch Bitz made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alan Kemmet. Motion passed unanimously.

The financial report for December 2024 and monthly bills were reviewed. Alan Kemmet made a motion to approve the financial report and the monthly bills as presented, seconded by Mitch Bitz. Motion passed unanimously.

Vouchers approved for payment:

HDR Engineering, Inc.	General Engineering Services-Task Order 3 December 1, 2024 to December 28, 2024	9039	1,153.75
HDR Engineering, Inc.	Flood Risk Design Phase 2 – Task Order 5 December 1, 2024 to December 28, 2024	9040	50,199.10
Morton County Treasurer	2024 Taxes and Specials	9041	5,076.33
ND Water Resource Dist Assoc	2025 Membership Dues	9042	675.00
City of Mandan	Dike Maintenance – Auto Fuel	9043	66.47
ND Tax Commissioner	State Payroll Taxes	9044	40.00

**Operations and Maintenance:**

Manager Mitch Bitz stated he has been in communication with Colten O’Neill, a potential candidate for the Lower Heart River maintenance position. Chairman Robinson has emailed Wendy, Morton County Human Resources, to go ahead and engage with Colten. Mitch will follow-up with Wendy.

Mitch Bitz asked about the regrading and resloping of the dredging area by the C-Store. FEMA and the Corps feel this area should be detached from our flood risk reduction project for environmental and funding reasons. The board discussed putting this project as a maintenance activity.

**Memorandum of Understanding with Mandan Park District:**

Cole Higlin, Mandan Park District, and the Lower Heart Board discussed the draft of the Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate construction and expectations. Item 6: how would the park district submit their expenses on redoing the temporary green. Dennis Reep will visit with the Water Commission regarding if this cost is eligible for reimbursement. Mayor Froelich suggested that Garret Schultz’s name

should be replaced with his position title. Item 11: Mandan Park District can provide the golf tournament schedule to the contractors so they can schedule their construction dates on Fridays. Cole Higlin will contact their attorney, Arlyn Ruff, to update the MOU. The MOU will be discussed at the February MPD Board Meeting. MPD would like attendance from Lower Heart at this meeting.

**Interim Financing of Flood Risk Reduction Project:**

Representatives from the City of Mandan were present to discuss the interim financing of the flood risk reduction project. Currently House Bill 1020 (funding bill for the Department of Water Resources) is in the legislative process. Dennis Reep also met with Kylee Merkel, Bank of North Dakota, regarding a water infrastructure loan. After discussion, a joint call will be scheduled between the Bank of North Dakota, City of Mandan and Lower Heart to discuss financing.

Dennis Reep had prepared a three year cash flow forecast and will share that information with the City of Mandan.

Also mentioned was that all federal funds have been put on a temporary delay by the current Presidential administration (which could include the FMA grant).

**Update on Mandan Flood Risk Reduction Plan:** Dennis Reep, HDR Engineering, provided a written update for the board.

**Coordination:** The East half of Memorial Highway project was bid and awarded. Construction to start this spring.

**Design:** Utility inventory is being completed that may have impact on SWIF actions.

**Funding:** Discussions were held with Bank of North Dakota to investigate potential operating loans. Cash flow spreadsheet has been drafted to plan for construction funding scenarios.

**Right of Way:** Dan Vander Vorste stated that Mr. Johnson has approved and accepted the counteroffer presented by Lower Heart River WRD and Dan is planning on talking with Mr. Johnson on Thursday, January 30 to obtain signatures. Dennis Reep will visit with Dan Vander Vorste this week.

**Environmental/Permitting:** A meeting was held on December 20, 2024, to discuss the suggested elimination of the oxbow maintenance area(s) from the project which will enhance and expedite the permitting process. The board discussed this area and decided to discuss in more detail at the next meeting.

**Update on O&M and SWIF Plan:**

Karli Frohling, HDR Engineering, provided a written update for the board. The next deadline for a SWIF plan submittal is December 2025. Highlands Engineering, representing the Heart River Women's Correctional Center, submitted a utility application on December 18, 2024. As part of the project, a new 8-inch water connection is proposed to connect to an existing 12-inch water main. The proposed 8-inch water connection terminates approximately 60-feet from the toe of the levee, confirming it is outside of the levee's right-of-way, but within the levee's critical area (500-feet landward of the levee's centerline). No issues have been noted with this part of the application.

Karli will follow-up with Highlands Engineering regarding the sanitary line that is being proposed.

**Other Business:**

Farmland Lease for 2025: Last year's renter had a question on the option to do a 3-year lease with a one-year renewable option. The Board discussed this question. Luci Snowden made a motion to move forward with advertising for a one year rental due to the potential that this farmland would become a borrow site for when construction begins, seconded by Mitch Bitz. Motion passed unanimously. Chairman Robinson will put the advertisement together and get into the paper.

The Board adjourned at 3:45 p.m. Next regular meeting is February 25, 2025, at 2 p.m.

---

Chairman

---

Secretary/Treasurer