

# SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Minutes-March 2,1992

**1. Attendance:** Roland Gullekson, President, called the March 2, 1992 meeting to order at 8:07 a.m. District Managers present were Roger Hanson, Orley Jevning, Francis LaVoi and Daniel Wilkens. Robert Remark-Attorney for City of Fertile, Dan Thul-MN DNR/Bemidji, Paul Stolen-MN DNR/Bemidji Environmental Services, Willis Mattison-MN PCA/Detroit Lakes, Lawrence Woodbury—SHRWD Consulting Engineer and Wayne Goeken—SHRWD Executive Secretary were also in attendance.

**2. Minutes:** Motion by LaVoi and seconded by Jevning to adopt the minutes of the February 4,1992 Sand Hill River Watershed District as mailed. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Treasurer's Report:** SHRWD Treasurer Hanson reported no new activity over the past month. Motion by Wilkens and seconded by LaVoi to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay current vouchers as follows. Motion carried unanimously.

Fertile Journal-Meeting Notice	3.17
Pierson's Hartz-Janitorial Supplies	12.97
Eide Mercantile-cleaning supplies	5.59
Fertile Sand & Gravel-snow removal	75.00
Coast to Coast-De-icer	5.58
Mac's Cafe-SHRWD lunch	45.00
U.S.Postal Service-100 29 cent stamps	29.00
Otter Tail Power Co. - Electric billing (1/2/92-1/31/92)	297.43
Garden Valley Phone Co.	32.14
Lois Plante-custodial	41.56
Wayne Goeken-Secretarial & Expenses	323.22
Roland Gullekson-Meetings & Expenses	211.10
Roger Hanson-Meetings & Expenses	114.35
Orley Jevning-Meeting & Expenses	118.20
Francis LaVoi-Meeting & Expenses	59.97
Daniel Wilkens-Meetings & Expenses	156.40

**MONTHLY TOTAL**

**1,530.68**

**4. Fertile West Mill Project:** Robert Remark, Attorney for the City of Fertile requested estimates of possible costs that could be incurred related to the City of Fertile's West Mill Project and what phases the project could be broken down into. Woodbury noted that the first step would be to compile any existing data that has already been prepared related to the project. As needed additional information would then be collected to determine first if it is physically possible to build a dam at the proposed site. An estimate of costs that could be incurred to get through this stage would be for soil borings-45,000, site survey and write-up--\$1,500 and preliminary dam design analysis--\$1,000. If topographic maps of the site or some soil borings already exist, the above costs

**4.) West Mill (continued):** would be reduced accordingly. No formal written report would be drafted by the SHRWD engineer. The SHRWD would review the above findings with the Fertile City Council. It was suggested that governmental permitting agencies such as the MN DNR and MPCA be involved in discussions in the early stages of this project to determine permit needs as the project progresses.

If determined to be physically feasible, then environmental factors would need to be assessed including water quality, wildlife and wetlands issues. If environmental conditions can be met, then specific design and operational plans would need to be developed for the reservoir. It was proposed that if the City is interested in pursuing the project that review be made at the above major checkpoints along the way with the petitioner (City of Fertile) deciding at each point whether to proceed further or discontinue the project.

Background information on the project was reviewed with the MN DNR and MPCA representatives that were in attendance. Stolen of the DNR noted that preliminary review could be done now by the DNR to provide a preliminary determination of the class of dam, dam operations, fisheries and wildlife impacts. It would be best to identify possible weak links in the system now and address them before expending a great deal of resources in other areas. It was suggested that all available information on the project be gathered including maps, histories, interested parties and other relevant data. Motion was made by Hanson, seconded by Wilkens directing SHRWD Engineer Woodbury to proceed with an initial discovery of the project including calls to find out what information was already available. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **5. Winger Dam:**

Thul noted three issues that need to be resolved relating to the Winger Dam project: 1) dam safety permit, 2) mitigation plan, and 3) operation plan. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was prepared by the MN DNR provided recommendations related to the above issues including inflow/outflow recommendations under various scenarios. The overall priority that has emerged for the DNR is maintaining the downstream flow whereas the SHRWD is also concerned with balancing pool maintenance with downstream flow. It was noted that the operating plan needs to be consistent with the EIS in protecting downstream wetlands and downstream water appropriation rights.

Considerable discussion followed regarding stream flow. Stolen explained that a spring flow needs to be maintained to approximate annual flooding conditions which provides downstream wetland recharge. Stolen also noted that the annual flooding also helps maintain the natural river channel downstream. Woodbury noted that accepting the current proposed operating plan would not allow control of water levels to guarantee any stability of the reservoir's water level. Modification options to the operating plan were discussed. This would likely involve adding an addendum to the EIS. Thul noted that data would have to disprove assumptions in the EIS from which DNR's recommendations are based. A decision would not be made locally as this information would be used by the in-stream flow specialists in St. Paul to make a decision. Opening up the EIS process is not viewed as a desirable option by the DNR or the SHRWD.

Various "what-if" scenarios were discussed involving assuring low flow conditions during drought years and the frequency of such occurrences. It was decided that any available data will be collected regarding the frequency of dry flats occurring during drought years. This information will be reviewed along with existing data to help assess what elevation the reservoir could be drawn down to before water would not be passed through. Conditions could be put in the operating plan relating to augmentation of stream flow.

Stolen noted that the DNR could put together a team to evaluate the SHRWD's mitigation plans. Stolen also noted that the Army Corps of Engineers would be issuing their notice for public comment on the Winger Dam within the next week.

#### **6. Reports on Recent Meetings and Activities:**

a.) Jevning and Wilkens staffed the booth for the Red River Water Management Board at the Red River Valley Winter Show on February 15, 1992.

**6. Reports on Recent Meetings and Activities (continued):**

- b.) LaVoi reported on a DNR public input meeting that he attended in Fosston.
- c.) A Fertile Sand Hills Winter Celebration was held on February 16. A naturalist led a winter nature hike along the trail cleared by the SHRWD last year. Youth activities were enjoyed and a campfire was set up along the river with refreshments served. Wilkens and Gullekson assisted with the event which attracted approximately 75 people.
- d.) Gullekson reported on a meeting held with Norm Moody, Local Government Coordinator from DNR Central Office. The meeting was held at the SHRWD office and attended by Gullekson, Dan Wilkens, two members of the Red Lake River Watershed Board, Dan Thul and Norm Moody. Moody conveyed that the DNR is issuing a mission statement directing the MN DNR to help with local project efforts with more decision making to take place at the local level.

**7. Permits:**

The one permit that came before the board for review was approved.

- 1992-1 Polk County Highway Department. In the City of Fosston. Regrade the right ditch at a 10% grade from Sta. 6+00 to approximately 1000' west to match the existing grade. The road is currently deficient and drainage will be improved from construction.

**8. Other Business:**

- a.) The Buffalo-Red Watershed District requested that the SHRWD send them an activity report for presentation at the March 12-13 Red River Water Management Board meeting in Thief River Falls. Gullekson will write up a short summary of activities to send to the Buffalo-Red Watershed District.
- b.) The Red River Water Management Board's next monthly meeting will be at the SHRWD office in Fertile on March 17 at 9:30 a.m.
- c.) On motion by Jevning and second by LaVoi, Daniel Wilkens was appointed to serve as the SHRWD delegate to serve on the Red River Water Management Board for a three year term which began January 1, 1992 with Gullekson appointed as alternate. Motion carried unanimously. A signed authorized statement needs to be prepared and sent to the Red River Water Management Board.
- d.) SHRWD representatives were requested to be guests on Fosston's KKCQ radio talk program "Food For Thought" to discuss the Winger Dam on March 5. Gullekson will represent the SHRWD with others invited to attend also if their schedules would permit.

**9. Adjournment:** The next regular meeting date of the Board is scheduled for April 7, 1992. As there was no further business to come before the Board, motion by LaVoi and seconded by Jevning to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.



Daniel B. Wilkens, Secretary



Wayne R. Goeken, Executive Secretary