

Metro Flood Management Committee  
Monday, February 1, 2010  
9:00 a.m.  
Fargo Centennial Hall  
Fargo, North Dakota

A meeting of the Metro Flood Management Committee was held at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 1, 2010 at Fargo Centennial Hall, Fargo, North Dakota.

Metro Flood Management Committee members present:

Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker, Fargo Commissioners Tim Mahoney, Dave Piepkorn, Mike Williams and Brad Wimmer, Moorhead Mayor Mark Voxland, Moorhead Council Members Mark Hintermeyer, Dan Hunt, Nancy Otto, Diane Wray Williams, Mark Altenburg, Luther Stueland and Brenda Elmer, Cass County Commissioners Vern Bennett, Ken Pawluk, Darrell Vanyo and Scott Wagner, Clay County Commissioners Jerry Waller, Kevin Campbell, Jon Evert, Grant Weyland and Wayne Ingersoll, Cass County Joint Water Resource District - Senator Tom Fischer and Buffalo-Red River Watershed - Gerald VanAmburg.

Committee Members absent: Moorhead Council Member Greg Lemke, Cass County Commissioner Robin Sorum.

Staff Members present: Fargo City Administrator Pat Zavoral, Moorhead City Manager Mike Redlinger, Cass County Administrator Bonnie Johnson, Cass County Engineer Keith Berndt, Clay County Administrator Vijay Sethi and West Fargo Mayor Rich Mattern.

Others present: U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan, U.S. Congressman Earl Pomeroy, Minnesota Senator Keith Langseth, U.S. Congressman Collin Peterson, MN State Representative Morrie Lanning, North Dakota Governor John Hoeven, Kent Lokkesmoe, MN Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Colonel Jon Christensen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Planner & Project Manager Craig Evans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Aaron Snyder, U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (via conference call) and U.S. Senator Kent Conrad (via conference call).

Senator Byron Dorgan opened the meeting. Senator Dorgan said, with the recent spring flood predictions from the National Weather Service, it is a reminder of the urgency to complete comprehensive flood protection for the Fargo/Moorhead area.

Rep. Collin Peterson said basin wide retention is going to be needed in addition to a diversion project. He said there needs to be give and take from both sides as well. Senator Kent Conrad reported that President Obama is clearly committed to North Dakota and Minnesota flood protection by including 15 million dollars in the recently announced Federal budget for planning, engineering and design. He said there will need to be consensus in the near future for a comprehensive flood plan to occur.

Senator Amy Klobuchar said she is impressed with the teamwork shown by the legislative people on both sides of the Red River. She agreed that the 15 million dollars from the President's budget is key and is hopeful there can be local support to get flood protection completed.

Governor Hoeven said the partnership between local/state/federal is needed to bring the project together. North Dakota, he said, is committed to helping get the project completed. He said 75 million dollars was set aside during the last legislative session and will be paid out over several biennium's.

Colonel Christenson, USACE, said this project has been a true cooperative effort and the work accomplished so far should be a model for the rest of the country.

Craig Evans, USACE, gave some background on the Corps' presentation for the diversion proposals. He said the Corps needs consensus from the sponsors by April 15, 2010 for a Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) in order to stay on schedule. He said today's information is still considered preliminary and will provide facts so the local group can make a decision regarding the LPP alternatives. Until the internal and external reviews are completed, he said, the results will remain preliminary. He said today he and Aaron Snyder will provide the facts on the alternatives being considered, describe the options and risks involved, give the Corps' view on the best path forward and present future efforts and schedules with the goal of recommending a project to Congress. The Corps recently concluded analysis for potential loss of life from a catastrophic flood event, he said. Mr. Evans said the numbers show a realistic risk in the event of anticipated and unanticipated flood events. A panel of experts met to discuss local hydrology cycles, he said, and the data will be used to develop modified flow/frequency curves and will be used for sensitivity analysis of the selected plan. He outlined the details for North Dakota diversion plans (30K and 35K cfs) and the Minnesota plans (20K, 25K, 30K and 35K cfs) including tie back levees, years of construction and structures needed.

Aaron Snyder, USACE, continued the presentation with the cost and schedule risk assessment results. The purpose of the assessment was to identify areas of risk impacting cost and schedule of the ND and MN alignments, he said. Costs went up on all the plans with the assessment data, he said, and the B/C ratios also were all over 1. But the main differences, he said, were the concerns with the Dilworth rail yard on the Minnesota side and differences on the North Dakota side including natural resource issues, additional project features and control of water during construction. He said the preliminary results without the cost and schedule risk assessment figures placed the six alignments over 1 on the benefit/cost ratios but were lower. Mr. Snyder presented the data comparing the effectiveness of the diversions using readings at the Fargo Gage location in relation to the 50, 100 and 500 year flood levels. He said the data will continue to be refined which will improve the numbers. The downstream effects, based on the MN 35K diversion and 100 year event, he said, are higher on the North Dakota side than the Minnesota side. Recreational facilities have not been discussed much but will be implemented into the plans and discussed more at upcoming meetings.

Mr. Snyder closed the presentation by outlining the decisions that the local groups need to focus on:

- Level of tolerable risk.

- Locally preferred options (LPP) to be retained.

- Develop consensus on LPP.

- Written request for LPP by April 15, 2010.

- Identify sponsors for construction and ongoing operations and maintenance.

- Define non-federal cost sharing arrangements.

He stated the Corps will continue to work on whatever the Metro Flood Management Committee recommends and the Corps will push hard to meet the deadlines. Mr. Snyder said at this point the NED plan is the Minnesota 20K but that could change. The Corps, he said, will continue to do more refinement and would like to optimize the MN 35K plan. Mr. Snyder outlined the recommended path forward for the Corps to take as the process progresses. He outlined the project timeline.

Mayor Walaker said he would like to see a project recommendation from the Technical Staff in the next two weeks. He thanked everyone for their input.

Mayor Voxland said he is encouraged after the Corps' presentation today. He said as soon as the recommendation comes forward, the group should work on the governance structure.

In response to questions from Commissioner Vanyo regarding the NED plan, the MN 35K diversion and the reason a ND plan is not recommended for the NED, Mr. Snyder said the Corps recommends the MN side because of the optimal net benefit.

In response to a question from Senator Klobuchar regarding the funding amount if a ND plan is picked, Mr. Snyder said the cost share from the NED would determine the amount.

Congressman Peterson said there needs to be more focus on the downstream impact and the effect on the farmers should be considered as well. He requested the Corps supply any downstream impact information to his office.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mahoney regarding cost overruns and the possibility of the reviews affecting the ratios, Mr. Snyder said local funding covers 100% of overruns. He said whatever comes out of the reviews can change the analysis.

In response to a question from Governor Hoeven regarding an increased federal share if the MN 35K becomes the NED, Mr. Snyder said the NED is by definition the plan with the most net benefits, which can change if additional information justifies that.

Craig Evans said the Corps' perspective is the Federal perspective and the Corps' role is to make a good investment. He said if the local decision is different from the NED, the locals will need to pick up the difference. Any deviation from policy, he said, will make it difficult to budget.

Senator Langseth said, if the ND diversion is selected, Minnesota will come up with \$100 million.

Commissioner Campbell said it is important for the Corps to focus on the downstream impact. The locals, he said, also need to work on the operations and maintenance portion. He said the Work Group will meet Thursday, Feb. 4 at 3:30 in the Fargo City Commission Room.

In response to a question from Council Member Otto regarding the possibility of a ND project, Mr. Snyder said natural resource issues are problematic on the ND side.

Mr. Evans said if the local group wants the Corps to focus on a North Dakota diversion, it may be difficult to meet the schedule.

In response to a question from Council Member Hintermeyer regarding additional funding from North Dakota if a ND diversion is selected, Gov. Hoeven said North Dakota looks at the funding as a partnership. He said 75 million dollars was appropriated for flood protection at the last session.

In response to a question from Rep. Lanning regarding responsibility for ongoing operations and maintenance of a project, Mr. Snyder said whoever signs the contract is responsible but there is a possibility that could change.

Commissioner Wimmer said the deal breakers for this project is the cost and the DNR.

Director, Division of Water, MN DNR Kent Lokkesmo said the DNR is not the only entity involved with the natural resource issues. He said a letter was sent to the Corps outlining their concerns and the DNR will be meeting with the Corps this week. Minnesota, he said, is committed to flood protection.

Congressman Pomeroy said working in multi-jurisdictional areas is complex and he said his office will also talk to the Corps about policy issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.