

METRO FLOOD STUDY WORK GROUP MEETING  
Thursday, February 4, 2010  
3:30 p.m.  
Fargo City Commission Room

A meeting of the Metro Flood Study Work Group was held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2010 in the Fargo City Commission Room.

Work Group Members present: Fargo City Commissioners Tim Mahoney and Brad Wimmer, Moorhead Council Members Nancy Otto, Diane Wray-Williams and Dan Hunt, Cass County Commissioners Darrel Vanyo and Scott Wagner, Clay County Commissioners Kevin Campbell and Grant Weyland, Cass County Water Resource District Manager Tom Fischer, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Manager Gerald VanAmburg.

Staff Members present: Fargo City Administrator Pat Zavoral, Fargo City Engineer Mark Bittner, Moorhead City Manager Mike Redlinger, Moorhead City Engineer Bob Zimmerman, Cass County Administrator Bonnie Johnson, Cass County Engineer Keith Berndt, Clay County Administrator Vijay Sethi.

Others present: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Planner & Project Manager Craig Evans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Aaron Snyder, Fargo City Attorney Erik Johnson, Moorhead City Attorney Brian Neugebauer, Clay County Attorney Michelle Lawson, Southeast Cass Water Resource District Attorney Sean Fredricks, Buffalo-Red River Watershed Attorney Tami Norgard, Fargo Finance Director Kent Costin; Red River Basin Commission Executive Director Lance Yohe.

Commissioner Mahoney opened the meeting.

Brad Wimmer moved the minutes from the January 15, 2010 Metro Flood Study Work Group meeting be approved. Tom Fischer seconded the motion. All members of the Metro Flood Study Work Group voted aye, and the motion was declared carried.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Aaron Snyder distributed an updated Fargo-Moorhead Metro Feasibility Study. He said the Corps continues to need verification from the local groups on important local decisions that need to be made so that a Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) can be selected and authorized by the end of 2010. He said the NED is the best investment for the nation with the best net benefits. The NED, he said, will cap the investment on the LPP and if the MN 35K can be optimized, the LPP cannot be changed to North Dakota and still stay within the Corps' policy.

Craig Evans, USACE, said had the Work Group not suggested the North Dakota plans, the Corps would not have kept them in the study because of the costs.

Mr. Snyder said there are common risks to both the ND and MN alignments but the North Dakota plans are more complex. He said the Corps is meeting with the railroad

representatives February 19th to discuss the concerns with the Dilworth rail yard. He said the preliminary results of the cost and schedule risk assessment have been modified to reflect the changes to the MN 35K pending the Corps' recommendation. The downstream effects are being studied, he said, and will continue to be discussed with technical assistance being given for the affected Minnesota communities. In order to remain policy compliant, he said, the Corps can only move forward with one recommended plan and then even that is not guaranteed because of the necessary approvals from Corps Headquarters and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

In response to a question from Kevin Campbell regarding options if the cost share does not go through on the MN 35K, Mr. Evans said the cost share could fall back to the NED 20K cfs plan. He said the Corps would not make a recommendation for a larger plan if the Corps did not think there was enough rationale for the MN 35K.

Scott Wagner said one of the concerns regarding the larger project is the funding options. He said there is an issue of asking voters for additional funding and the fact that the legislature only meets every two years.

Mr. Snyder said the upcoming tasks for the Corps are to continue working with the natural resource agencies, meeting with the local communities and landowners and continuing to analyze the downstream impacts.

There was discussion regarding the risks of either state plan. Mr. Snyder said there are more environmental impacts on the North Dakota side as opposed to the Minnesota plan. From the Corps' experience, he said, the best path forward is the Minnesota side.

In response to a question from Darrel Vanyo regarding the ability to review the information before a decision is made for an LPP, Mr. Snyder recommended a report detailing the methodology be given in two weeks and a summary be given at the Work Group meeting on February 18, 2010.

Kevin Campbell said before funding is discussed, the legal teams from the local entities should meet regarding possible ownership structures. He said Erik Johnson would coordinate a meeting before next Thursday.

There was discussion regarding the areas not protected by the diversion and the possibility of reducing the downstream impacts as well as retention possibilities.

Scott Wagner moved authorization be given to hire an engineering group to do analysis for unprotected areas within the metro study area, downstream protection and upstream retention. Dan Hunt seconded the motion. All members of the Metro Flood Study Work Group voted aye, and the motion was declared carried.

Kent Costin submitted a cost analysis comparison sheet for local costs for the North Dakota and Minnesota 35K diversions. He said the sheet lays out the cash requirement needed to fund the project.

Lance Yohe distributed reports from the Red River Basin Commission regarding updates from recent public meetings and efforts to decrease downstream impact and flow reduction.

In response to a question from Tim Mahoney regarding funding for downstream impacts, Tom Fischer said money is available for evaluation for projects basin-wide.

Kevin Campbell said the Work Group will meet every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. in the Fargo City Commission Room until the LPP is selected.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.