

Metro Flood Study Work Group Meeting
Thursday, March 18, 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, March 18, 2010 in the Fargo City Commission Room.

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

Work Group Members absent: None.

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.

Others present: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Aaron Snyder, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Planner & Project Manager Craig Evans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District Engineer and Commander Col. Jon Christensen, Fargo City Attorney Erik Johnson, Moorhead City Attorney Brian Neugebauer, Southeast Cass Water Resource District Attorney Sean Fredricks, Cass County Attorney Birch Burdick, Buffalo-Red River Watershed Attorney Tami Norgard.

Commissioner Mahoney opened the meeting with introductions.

Col. Jon Christensen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the successful preparation for the 2010 flood is a testament to the community's model of good teamwork. He said the Metro Flood Study Work Group members are also an example of good teamwork for long term flood protection. He said Corps' staff needs a clear picture of which project the local entities want in order to meet the December 2010 deadline.

Aaron Snyder said the cost to complete the study on the MN and ND diversions will be an additional \$2.6 million. He said there may be additional federal funds for the study but he is unsure about availability. Once the Locally Preferred Plan is decided, he said, the Corps will work to meet the December 2010 deadline.

There was discussion regarding the additional funding needed to study the North Dakota diversion plan. Kevin Campbell said discussions should continue among the entities to secure the money needed as soon as possible.

Approval of March 11, 2010 Minutes

Diane Wray-Williams moved the minutes from the March 11, 2010 Metro Flood Study Work Group meeting be approved. Nancy Otto seconded the motion. All members voted aye and the motion was declared carried.

Locally Preferred Plan

Darrell Vanyo said he would like to thank Commissioners Mahoney and Campbell for all the work they have done chairing the Metro Flood Study Work Group.

Darrell Vanyo moved the selection of the ND 35k cfs option as the "Locally Preferred Plan", based upon the following:

1. provides 500-year flood protection to the FM metro area for the Red, Wild Rice, Sheyenne, Maple, Rush and Lower Rush Rivers;
2. meets the objective of this Work Group in that it provides protection for the greatest amount of land for the greatest number of citizens;
3. has received strong support from the citizens on both sides of the river and from local and state leaders;
4. reduces the risk to the loss of life;
5. provides greater protection for the economic base of the area;
6. mitigates the cost, and reduces the need, for construction of levees and other temporary measures;
7. provides regional benefits that are not included in the required analysis by the Corps;
8. is the plan that provides the least amount of residual damage; and
9. meets the cost/benefit criteria.

Nancy Otto seconded the motion. All members of the Metro Flood Study Work Group voted aye and the motion was declared carried.

Kevin Campbell said the motion will go to each governing body within the next week for ratification.

Cost Sharing on Locally Preferred Plan and Increased NED

Craig Evans said the last hydrology runs indicated the NED could be larger than the MN 20k option. He said the newest hydrology analysis, based on the recommendations of an expert panel, will be used for the final NED analysis. He said the benefit/cost ratios look as if they will improve but the Corps does not know yet which plan will be the NED.

There was discussion regarding possible funding sources. Scott Wagner said Moore Engineering has studied possible special assessment districts under the MN and ND options regarding preliminary funding from North Dakota. He said, depending on the NED, the costs will vary but special assessments and sales tax would be considered. Cass County Auditor Mike Montplaisir said the Moore Engineering figures are based on assumptions regarding assessment district size. Tom Fischer said he recently met with a state legislative committee and there is support for flood protection at the state level. In response to a question from Kevin Campbell regarding financial commitment for a project, Aaron Snyder said the Corps will need certification for funding by July 2010.

Mr. Campbell said the group needs to set goals soon for the local share of the \$2.6 million.

Tim Mahoney moved the Metro Flood Study Work Group recommend that an equitable cost sharing arrangement must be resolved. Tom Fischer seconded the motion.

There was discussion regarding financial support from the state Governors and legislatures. Diane Wray-Williams said both Governors are supportive and are talking weekly regarding the funding options. Senator Tim Flakoll said the local special assessment cost for his property would be 50% to 60% of projected flood insurance costs. He said it will be important to get statewide support for the project in order to get legislative support. Mark Bittner said the financing decisions are important to meet the December deadline and he said downstream and upstream issues need to be addressed as well.

All members of the Metro Flood Study Work Group voted aye and the motion was declared carried.

Darrell Vanyo moved the Metro Flood Study Work Group recognize and support the value and need for downstream mitigation and upstream retention. Scott Wagner seconded the motion. All members of the Metro Flood Study Work Group voted aye, and the motion was declared carried.

Pat Zavoral suggested the local entities communicate separately regarding funding and return with recommendations to the Work Group. There was discussion regarding a representative from each group and the following volunteered: Cass County - Darrell Vanyo; Clay County - Kevin Campbell; Moorhead - Nancy Otto; Fargo - Brad Wimmer.

Tim Mahoney said the Work Group will not meet for a couple of weeks due to the flooding.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.