

Renville County Water Resource Board

Minutes of Renville County Water Resource Board Special Meeting, October 5, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., held in the Commissioners Room of the Renville County Courthouse, 205 Main Street East, Mohall, North Dakota.

Managers Present:

Chair Peter Gates

Vice Chair Dan Steinberger – arrived at 9:10 a.m. (via video conference)

Manager Guy Solemsaas

Others Present:

Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (via video conference)

Engineer Jennifer Malloy (via video conference)

Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout

Call to Order:

Chair Gates called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Agenda:

Chair Gates called for corrections or additions to the agenda. Hearing no objections, and no further corrections or additions, the Chair declared the agenda approved as presented.

Approval of July 13, 2026, Minutes:

The Board reviewed the minutes of its July 13, 2026, regular meeting. Manager Solemsaas moved to approve the minutes as presented. Chair Gates seconded the motion. After opportunity for discussion, the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report and Claims:

Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout presented the claims for payment and reported receipts since the prior meeting. Manager Solemsaas moved to approve payment of claims as presented. Chair Gates seconded the motion. Roll-call vote: Chair Gates – AYE; Vice Chair Steinberger – ABSENT; Manager Solemsaas – AYE. Motion carried.

Manager Dan Steinberger arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout reported the following account balances: Drain No. 1 Bond Fund, \$18.65; Checking Account, \$50.83; and Savings Account, \$35,670.46.

Old Business:

Proposed 2027 Budget – 9:00 a.m. Public Hearing: At 9:12 a.m., the Board Chair opened the floor for public comments on the noticed Proposed Budget Hearing for the Renville County Water Resource District. No members of the public appeared to provide comment during the public-comment portion of the hearing. The Chair declared the public comment portion of the public hearing closed.

Moved Manager Solemsaas / Seconded Vice Chair Steinberger

That the Renville County Water Resource District approves the proposed budget as presented, and directs Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout to certify the approved budget to the Renville County Auditor and the Renville County Board of Commissioners as required.

Roll-call vote: Chair Gates – AYE; Vice Chair Steinberger – AYE; Manager Solemsaas – AYE. Motion carried.

Culvert – Sections 22 and 23, Township 158 North, Range 86 West: No new information was reported. The Board agreed to retain the item under Old Business until Farden Construction can complete the work. No further action was taken.

Proposed Assessment Drain: No new information was reported. The Board agreed to retain the item under Old Business until additional information is shared by landowners or landowners express that the proposed assessment drain is not moving forward. No further action was taken.

Stream Crossing Study: (1) NE¼ Sec. 14/NW¼ Sec. 13 (47th Ave. NW) and (2) SW¼ Sec. 13/NW¼ Sec. 24 (81st St. NW), Township 159 North, Range 86 West (Ivanhoe Township): Engineer Jennifer Malloy, P.E. (Apex Engineering) reported that the Stream Crossing Study in Ivanhoe Township has been submitted to the Department of Water Resources. Malloy reported that it could be approximately 6 months before the study is complete. The study will be distributed to the Board of Managers once received by the District. Chair Gates will ensure the requesting landowner notifies the Township Board that this request has been made; if not, Chair Gates will notify a representative of the Township Board.

2027 Legislative Issues: Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (Rinke Noonan Law Firm) provided the Board with an update of three draft bills being considered for introduction during the 2027 North Dakota Legislative Session relating to agricultural drainage and coordination between water resource districts and state, county, and township road authorities. Van Bruggen explained that sponsors are being identified on the bills addressing permitting for ag drain tile road crossing and stream crossing determinations. The NDWRDA has requested a meeting with NDDOT, County, and Township associations to address conflict issues between road authorities and water resource districts on culvert crossings and assessment drain management. The Board expressed general support for continuing to work on the proposed legislation.

Attorney Van Bruggen also reported on a draft bill prepared by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) related to ownership of dams constructed by federal agencies that are not maintained or operated by federal agencies being owned by the county water resource district where the dam is located unless the title records show otherwise. Van Bruggen noted concerns about constitutionality of the proposal, impacts on county water resource district budgets, and liability concerns.

New Business:

2027 Meeting Schedule Resolution: Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (Rinke Noonan Law Firm) reviewed a draft Resolution Setting Regular Meeting Schedule for the Year 2027. After Board review and discussion, Manager Guy Solemsaas moved to approve the Resolution Setting the Regular Meeting Schedule for the Year 2027. Vice Chair Dan Steinberger seconded the motion. Roll-call vote: Chair Gates – AYE; Vice Chair Steinberger – AYE; Manager Solemsaas – AYE. Motion carried.

Vice Chair Dan Steinberger requested that Manager Compensation be added to the January 4, 2027, meeting as an item of New Business. Attorney Van Bruggen reported that the Century Code allows for at least \$75/day, but no more than the compensation rate established for members of the Legislative Assembly under N.D.C.C. § 54-03-20 while performing duties as a member of the water resource board, plus certain reimbursements for meals, lodging, and other necessary travel expenses. Section 54-03-20 was amended by the 2025 Legislature and effective July 1, 2026, Legislative compensation is \$226 per calendar day. Chair Gates directed Attorney Van Bruggen to include “Manager Compensation” on the January 4, 2027, meeting agenda as an item of New Business. The Board discussed whether increasing the 2027 Manager Compensation would require an increase to the 2027 Proposed Budget approved. After discussion, it was determined that an increase to the approved 2027 Proposed Budget was not needed.

SWC Cost-Share Policy Update: Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (Rinke Noonan) shared a report from the North Dakota Water Users Association that the State Water Commission continues to work on updates to its cost share policy. After receiving significant feedback from the water community, the Department of Water Resources revised the proposal, which Van Bruggen reviewed with the Board. Top line changes include: (1) Cost share continues to be allocated based on priority, with the goal of the reformulated percentages being that no project type would be cut more than 10%; further, it was noted that changes were made in priority categories with irrigation remaining a high (Tier 1) priority, whereas drainage has fallen back to a medium (Tier 2) priority; however, any project that has been approved for planning dollars already will be grandfathered into existing cost share percentages with guardrails to prevent drastic scope changes; (2) professional services costs (legal, environmental, engineering) will be eligible for 40% cost share; (3) No caps are included in this proposal; and (4) keeping the Basic Asset Inventory and Analysis requirement for water supply projects. The Department of Water Resources has asked for feedback on the revised proposal. Water Resource District feedback can be channeled through Dani Quissell at the ND Water Resource District Association.

Items for Discussion and Information:

January 2027 Calendar: The regularly scheduled first quarterly meeting of the Board for 2027 will be held on January 4, 2027, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Renville County Courthouse, 205 Main Street East, Mohall, North Dakota. The agenda for the meeting will be made available the week prior to the meeting.

Souris River Joint Board Update:

Vice Chair Steinberger provided an update regarding the Souris River Joint Board and construction of the Mouse River bridge. He reported that the bridge design allowed approximately one inch of variation between spans at the piers, which resulted in uneven transitions on the bridge deck. IBI subsequently ground portions of the bridge surface to improve the transitions and make the bridge safely passable, particularly for motorcycles and bicycles. Steinberger reported that HDR developed a proposed corrective measure consisting of a membrane with an asphalt overlay on the bridge deck. Concerns remain that the bridge configuration may allow water to collect in low areas, potentially resulting in increased long-term maintenance needs. At this stage of construction, however, there do not appear to be additional practical measures available to further improve the bridge.

Engineer's Report:

No report was presented.

Letters of Complaint:

No written complaints were filed with the Board.

Adjournment:

Manager Solemsaas moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Steinberger seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote, and Chair Gates adjourned the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

Minutes approved by the Board on January 4, 2027.

Peter Gates, Chair

Kale R. Van Bruggen, Secretary