

INFORMAL PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING OF THE SARGENT COUNTY WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE COGSWELL COMMUNITY CENTER, COGSWELL ND

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Drain No. 11 Improvement Project No. 2016-01 to explain the Project, the right of way the District must acquire to accommodate the Project, how the District will fund and finance the Project, and other Project-related issues.

Approximately 63 interested people attended the meeting. (A copy of the sign-in sheet is attached to the official minutes) Chris Gross, Project Manager-District Engineer; Josh Hassell, Project Engineer; and Pat Downs, Project Coordinator from Moore Engineering, Inc. conducted the meeting and discussed the various items that are pertinent to the eleven (11+/-) mile section of the drain that comprises the "Project".

The Board provided post card notices of the meeting to landowners from whom the WRD will likely need to purchase right of way; the Board must acquire channel right of way, berm easements, and temporary easements to accommodate the Project. The Board also published notice of the meeting twice in the *Teller*. This meeting is not a statutory or mandatory "hearing" or meeting; rather, this meeting is informational in nature, and the Board wanted to conduct the meeting to provide as much information as possible to the public regarding the Project and to landowners from whom the Board will have to obtain right of way.

Moore Engineering has completed the Preliminary Design, and the State Water Commission has approved cost-share for the project. In addition, the Surface Drainage Permit for the Project has also been approved. Final Design is underway, and the Board is now ready to commence right of way negotiations. In addition, Moore Engineering is administering utility relocations to accommodate the Project and working with NRCS to ensure wetland compliance; similarly, Moore is working with NDG&F and USFWS to ensure the Project complies with relevant wetland easements. Other items that will be completed include: USACE permit, project bond/financing, project bidding, and NRCS mitigation plan (if necessary). The anticipated construction start date is 2020 with the project substantially complete in 2021 and final completion in 2022.

The ND State Water Commission will provide 35%-45% of eligible items, depending upon the item. Sargent County will provide cost-share on culverts where roadways cross the drain, and the Drain 11 assessment district will pay the remaining costs. The Project will not result in any new assessments or taxes; rather, the Board already assesses an annual Drain 11 maintenance levy, and will continue to do so. Those dollars will fund local Project costs. By law, the maximum the Board can assess as a maintenance levy is \$4.00/acre/year by state law. If a parcel is at the 100% benefit level and the Board assesses the maximum of \$4.00 in a given year for the Drain 11 maintenance levy, the maintenance levy for that property will be \$4.00 per acre. If a parcel is at the 50% benefit level, and the Board assesses at the \$4.00 maximum, the maintenance levy for that parcel will be \$2.00 per acre.

Josh Hassell provided a detailed analysis of the Project design. The Project will provide adequate channel gradient, will include side slope modifications, and culvert crossing improvements. The Project will improve flow and function, and will allow for better drainage in the Project watershed. In addition, the Project design will minimize any impacts downstream. Josh explained the Project modeling that demonstrates little to no impacts downstream. Further, the State Water Commission permitting process would not allow the Board to proceed if the Project resulted in adverse impacts downstream.

The existing right of way width varies from 25-80 feet and it is estimated that there are 92 acres of existing right of way. There are 34 directly impacted parcels (at this time) regarding right of way where the Board will have

to physically construct the Project. When the Project design is complete, the Board can finalize the right of way needs. Pat Downs will serve as the Board's right of way agent; Pat has been in touch with landowners already, and will reach out again to commence negotiations and to provide purchase agreements.

An appraisal Consultation Report from Farmers National Company has been completed and the Water Resource District has approved the following purchase prices:

<u>Fee Simple</u>	<u>Berm Easement Acres</u>	<u>Temporary Easements</u>
Cropland/CRP - \$4,500/acre	Cropland/CRP - \$2,250/acre	Cropland/CRP-\$750/acre
Pasture - \$1,800/acre	Pasture - \$ 900/acre	Pasture - \$300/acre
Non-Cropland - \$400/acre	Non-Cropland - \$200/acre	Non-Cropland -\$75/acre

Moore has updated the landowner information, and approximately 60% of the NRCS 1026 forms have been received. There will be review of CRP, including new or expiring contracts, and Pat Downs and Project designers will conduct individual landowner meetings to discuss individualized project details.

A copy of the power point presentation is attached to the official set of minutes.

The meeting closed at approximately 7:30 p.m.

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LUKE SIEMIENIEWSKI, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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SHERRY HOSFORD, SECRETARY-TREASURER