

**GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL**

**Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Carrington, ND
April 30, 2020**

A meeting of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District was held by conference call at the Garrison Diversion headquarters, Carrington, North Dakota, on April 30, 2020. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cook at 9 a.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Board Chairman Ken Royse
Committee Chairman Mark Cook
Director Rick Anderson
Director Norman Haak
Director Kelly Klosterman
Director Jim Pellman
Secretary Kip Kovar

DIRECTORS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Steve Metzger, Director, Foster County, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Carrington, North Dakota
Duane DeKrey, General Manager, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Carrington, North Dakota
Ryan Anderson, Engineer, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Carrington, North Dakota
Kimberly Cook, Communications Director, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Carrington, North Dakota
Lisa Schafer, Executive Assistant, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Carrington, North Dakota
Blaine Schatz, Director, NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center, Carrington, North Dakota
Lance Gaebe, Executive Director, ND Irrigation Association, Bismarck, North Dakota

The meeting was recorded to assist with compilation of the minutes.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Director Klosterman to approve the January 9, 2020, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee minutes as distributed. Second by Director Haak. Upon voice vote, motion carried.

OAKES IRRIGATION RESEARCH SITE UPDATE**2021 Proposed Budget**

Blaine Schatz, Director, NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center (CREC), Carrington, North Dakota, referred to the Oakes Irrigation Research Site (OIRS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget proposal as well as the FY2021 vs FY2020 budget comparisons, copies which are attached to these minutes as Annex I.

Mr. Schatz stated the current OIRS 2020 budget represents the whole hyperextended reduction for the previous annual request, which was \$167,875. The proposed projection for the 2021 budget is \$178,000.

Mr. Schatz said in looking at the overall budget for the site, the budget is actually going to be less than what it has been in recent years. Some of that is represented by the fact that we have addressed a series of expenses over the course of the last series of years, and they have worked hard to introduce other efficiencies. In particular, our operating expenses. Looking at the revenue section of the budgets, five different resources are identified in order to achieve the proposed budget. There is still an appropriation that will be coming through the CREC in the amount of \$95,000. In the past, \$100,000 has been received from the CREC per FY toward the OIRS. The issue they are trying to address is, as conversations have taken place within the Agricultural Experiment Station Extension Service and other state agencies, they are likely to be expected to submit a budget reduction of at least two and a half percent. That is going to be a kick back even though it is nearly a year into the biennium. When and if that budget allotment comes through, it will be representative of the total amount for the biennium, which would be the equivalent of \$5,000.

Mr. Schatz added other specifics within the revenue stream are research grants getting more challenging. He is expecting approximately \$15,000 less in grant funds for 2021. There has also been a trend of downward resources coming in from the private sector, in particular, the consolidations that have occurred in both the seed and chemical companies.

Mr. Schatz added if the proposed OIRS 2021 budget is influenced by the current biennium, but the latter half of the year is going to be influenced by the legislature, and if economy continues as it is, they will be fortunate to have that much coming in for the OIRS.

Motion by Director Haak to recommend approval of the proposed FY2021 budget for the Oakes Irrigation Research Site in the amount of \$178,000 to the full board. Second by Director Klosterman. Upon roll call vote, the following director voted aye: Anderson, Cook, Haak, Klosterman, and Royse. Those voting nay: none. Absent and not voting: Pellman. Motion carried.

Rinsate Pad/Storage Facility

Mr. Schatz reported the contractor for the rinsate pad/storage facility backed out in January. Another bid was accepted, and the contractor has started work. Next week it is expected to get pretty busy on the base foundation.

NDSU Land Use Agreement

Duane DeKrey, Secretary, referred to a copy of the Land Use Agreement between Garrison Diversion and NDSU. This agreement allows NDSU to enter the property to construct a wood framed building, concrete rinsate pad and sidewalk at the OIRS. Utilities may also be installed relating to the foregoing known as improvements. This is provided for the committee's information.

Mr. DeKrey said there is no action required today by the committee since the Agriculture Committee and full board, at their January 2020 meetings, authorized the general manager to enter into an easement with NDSU regarding the construction of a pesticide rinsate facility and associated storage facility at the OIRS.

Mr. Schatz said he will verify with the authorities at the NDSU Campus that the agreement has been signed and have a copy forwarded to Garrison Diversion.

OAKES TEST AREA TITLE TRANSFER

Mr. DeKrey reported to the committee that Garrison Diversion was informed on April 29 that Dickey-Sargent Irrigation District (DSID) will not be required to pay the capital repayment costs for power at the Oakes Test Area (OTA). This makes the OTA Title Transfer look much better for DSID and it appears the title transfer will take place.

MCCLUSKY CANAL IRRIGATION UPDATE

Irrigation Map - - Ryan Anderson, Engineer, Garrison Diversion, referred to the most recent irrigation map showing the location of the current 2020 irrigated acres that are contracted with the Bureau of Reclamation for canal side irrigation via the McClusky Canal.

Irrigation Summary - - Mr. Anderson also referred to the table providing a breakdown, including project name, acres involved per project and landowner names. As of now, these are the acres that are signed up for the 2020 irrigation season.

ND IRRIGATION ASSOCIATION REPORT

Summary of Activities - - Lance Gaebe, North Dakota Irrigation Association (NDIA), referred to and reviewed his written report of various NDIA activities and work items, a copy which is attached to these minutes as Annex II.

Mr. Gaebe brought up project pumping power and the fact that irrigation projects within the Garrison Diversion Unit are fortunate enough to be eligible for wholesale electricity. There are some projects that are not. He questioned the ability to use project pumping power in other areas of the state, such as Horsehead Flats.

Mr. Gaebe added that Senator Cramer has been engaged in helping with project pumping for other projects. Water Strategies, who publishes the *Irrigation Leader* and is the contractor for NWRA, has been asked to assist with policy issues regarding project pumping power. The quote to retain Water Strategies came back at \$2,500 per month. The Irrigation Association is willing to help with a portion of the fee and they are wondering if Garrison Diversion would be able to provide any funding toward this effort. Cavendish Farms and Horsehead Flats Irrigation District will also consider helping with some of the cost.

Director Anderson asked the general manager if Garrison Diversion could look within Garrison Diversion's budget to determine if there are any funds available to help the NDIA with the cost of retaining a lobbyist to assist with the project pumping power issue.

Mr. DeKrey stated Garrison Diversion has basically already committed to its consultant, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck (BHFS), to adding project use power as one of their work items in Washington, DC, to be completed for Garrison Diversion. This request could be added to that.

Mr. Gaebe stated he appreciates the suggestion and offer to forward the idea of adding to Garrison Diversion's existing arrangement with BHFS. These are all workable solutions. In respect to Water Strategies' proposal, does it work for the National Irrigation Association and the NWRA. He thinks they have an interconnection with Reclamation having background experience and previous employees within the organization.

Director Klosterman asked how many partners the NDIA has.

Mr. Gaebe said he has had a lot of interested parties, but no funding has been confirmed. He is going to prepare a proposal for Cavendish. The proposal from Water Strategies started out with one topic, which was project pumping power and has now evolved into other federal initiatives. He hopes to expand into a water users perspective helping in other areas, such as MR&I, water resource district projects and flood control projects.

Mr. DeKrey commented the committee could come up with a dollar figure to recommend to the full board contingent upon the remainder of the money being raised.

Mr. Gaebe said Garrison Diversion's seed money would help him raise the rest of the funding.

Director Klosterman suggested Garrison Diversion provide funding for up to three months and other entities can be looked at to provide the remaining funds.

Motion by Director Klosterman to recommend approving up to \$7,500 for the North Dakota Irrigation Association to retain a Washington, DC, lobbyist contingent upon the NDIA raising the remaining funds to the full board. Second by Director Anderson. Upon roll call vote, the following directors voted aye: Anderson, Cook, Haak, Klosterman, Pellman and Royse. Those voting nay: none. Absent and not voting: none. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

(SEAL)

Mark Cook, Chairman

Kip Kovar, Secretary

Oakes Irrigation Research Site - Robert Titus Research Farm
NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center
Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2021

Budget Category	Proposed 2021 Budget
Personnel	
Salaries	195,000
Fringe Benefits	92,000
Total Personnel Cost	287,000
Operating	
Travel	10,000
Utilities	10,000
Repairs	13,000
Supplies	18,000
Miscellaneous (Misc:Communications, fees, insurance, printing, etc)	14,000
Total Operating Cost	65,000
Other Direct Costs	
One-Time Expenses	
Soil Finish Implement	8,000
Heavy Harrow	6,000
Administration	9,000
Total Other Direct Cost	23,000
Total Expenses	375,000
Revenues	
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District	178,000
ND State Appropriation via CREC	95,000
Research Grants and Contracts	70,000
Expected Carryover Available	25,000
Other	7,000
Total Revenues	375,000
GDCD Budget Request	178,000

Oakes Irrigation Research Site - Robert Titus Research Farm
NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center
Budget Comparison: Proposed FY2021 vs FY2020

Budget Category	Proposed 2021 Budget	2020 Budget
Personnel		
Salaries	195,000	191,200
Fringe Benefits	92,000	89,500
Total Personnel Cost	287,000	280,700
Operating		
Travel	10,000	12,000
Utilities	10,000	12,000
Repairs	13,000	14,000
Supplies	18,000	20,000
Miscellaneous (Misc:Communications, fees, insurance, printing, etc)	14,000	14,000
Total Operating Cost	65,000	
Other Direct Costs		72,000
One-Time Expenses		
Soil Finish Implement	8,000	8,000
Heavy Harrow	6,000	6,000
Used Tractor		25,000
Bobcat attachments		900
Administration	9,000	9,000
Total Other Direct Cost	23,000	48,900
Total Expenses	375,000	401,600
Revenues		
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District	178,000	167,875
ND State Appropriation via CREC	95,000	100,000
Research Grants and Contracts	70,000	85,000
Expected Carryover Available	25,000	35,000
Other	7,000	5,000
Total Revenues	375,000	392,875
GDCD Budget Request	178,000	167,875

North Dakota Irrigation Association – update

April 2020

Regular communication during COVID-19 shut-down. Association work and Agriculture continue.

Hosted phone call with NDSU research and extension, State Water Commission, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), irrigation dealers, NDIA board, and farmers- to explore the question: What do producers need in response to health and economic crisis?

- Information
- Federal support
- Marketing guidance were all mentioned

1. Operational continuance during COVID-19

- NDSU
- NRCS
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Garrison Diversion
- State Water Commission
- Irrigation Association and Water Users Association

All continuing missions and working remotely during social distancing recommendations

2. Irrigation Updates:

- Equipment and extension personnel agree that irrigation expansion is very limited. Only 4 or 5 new systems in ND and MT market and mostly related to investment for tax purposes or to preserve/protect water rights
- Processed potato markets have collapsed as food service and restaurants have closed or curtailed operations. French fries demand has dropped estimated 85%. Cavendish is cutting 2020 contracts 10% to 12% cuts and have released all its rented potato acres.
- Fresh potato demand has increased as home food prep increased
- Liquidity challenge for local banks working to deliver Small Business Administration loans to businesses concurrent with farm operating loans.

NDSU research and extension

- Work guidelines from administration encourage remote work, but physical farm work, livestock care, and seed preparation and sales must be done onsite.
- Branch Station have probably 2/3 to 3/4 of staff working on location
- Remote communication and travel alone restrictions will increase costs
- Farm visits are limited.
- Some provisions have been ameliorated by governor's executive order, for example extended restricted use pesticide certification
- Most communications by video conference.
- Plans for field days to continue, unless health recommendations last through summer

Irrigation Association attend State Board of Agriculture Research and Education (SBARE) meetings to ensure irrigation options continue to be considered.

NRCS

- Work continues telework from home office with one NRCS and one SCD staff in office each week.
- Also limited in farm visits and no ride sharing.
- NRCS described the Provisions in the current Farm Bill Provision allow Irrigation Districts to directly apply for financial/technical assistance via EQIP
 - Projects that result in water savings, water quality, erosion control, fish and wildlife habitat improvements across multiple landowners or involving district owned infrastructure would be eligible.
 - Examples: canal lining, ditch to pipe projects in areas with high seepage; grade stabilization structures to control erosion; improvements in tailwater control or water measurements, or fish screens at district owned pump stations.
 - Cannot use for normal maintenance but can be used to convert to sprinkler systems.

Irrigation Association has sent a letter to State Conservationist in supporting an NDSU application for a Conservation Collaboration Grant to study variable-rate irrigation. Ag Engineering researchers are applying for a grant based on the objective of managing application rates and water efficiency.

State Water Commission

- Employees also mostly working from home
- Based on knowledge gained in data collection of the Ariel Electronic Survey of Dickey and Sargent Counties aquifers:
 - Canceling water permits that have not been used
 - Most irrigators are under the GDGD permit
 - Standard policy is to cancel after 10-years of no-use, but some have been much longer
- Cost-share funding is likely to be limited or reduced as oil revenue funds the Resources Trust Fund, and oil production and price have dropped

Farming and constructions operations will limited with agribusiness limiting person-to-person contact and transactions shifting largely to mail and 'stay-in-the-truck' retrieval of seed and proeducts.

Project Pumping Power

- NDIA continues efforts to support irrigation with the implementation of "project pumping power"
- Section 5 of the Dakota Water Resources Act of 2000(DWRA) authorized the use of hydroelectric power for first lift for
 - Irrigation facilities in other areas of North Dakota (such as Elk/Charbonneau, Mon-Dak, Nesson Valley, Horsehead Flats and Oliver-Mercer areas) that are not located in the Hudson Bay/Devils Lake or James River drainage basins.
 - provide irrigation benefits to the State of North Dakota to compensate for the 1.6 million acres of farmland lost to Pick-Sloan Program reservoirs.
- The DWRA authorized the use of project pumping power on about 56,000 acres.

- project pumping power on this acreage would amount 5 megawatts of power when 60,000 megawatts of power were originally envisioned in Pick-Sloan.
- Implementing project pumping power would support additional irrigation and supplement for some acreage lost to
- Bureau of Reclamation has refused to approve project pumping power since early 2000s

- Investigating retaining a Washington DC firm, Water Strategies, to help advance federal policies- specifically project pumping power.

- Proposal to assist the North Dakota Water Users Association and the North Dakota Irrigation Association with federal policy issues including project pumping power.
 - Fundraising for the \$30,000 retainer
 - asking Cavendish Farms and Emmons County Irrigators for help
 - plan to ask GDCD for \$10,000

North Dakota Irrigation Association joined 150 Western water and agriculture organization in letters to President Trump and congress asking for water and irrigation infrastructure funding and finance programs proposed spending bills

- Leaders from both parties and the President have suggested expanded funding for infrastructure investment and rehabilitation will help to renew the economy presently challenged by the COVID-19 slowdown.
- NWRA indicates there is still talk, but not solid plans for an up to \$2 trillion infrastructure bill that would rebuild America.
- The focus is on roads, bridges and transit- but water projects, aging facilities, rural water and dam safety might get a major piece too.