

Renville County Water Resource Board

Minutes of Renville County Water Resource Board Regular Meeting, July 13, 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 9:08 a.m.)
Manager Guy Solemsaas

Others Present:

Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (via video conference)
Engineer Jennifer Malloy (via video conference)
Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout
Mike Miller (via phone conference - arrived at 10:22 a.m. and departed at 10:39 a.m.)

Call to Order:

Chair Gates called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Vice Chair Steinberger was absent at the call to order while attending a meeting of the Souris River Joint Board.

Agenda:

Chair Gates called for corrections or additions to the agenda. Chair Gates stated that Item 3, Election of Officers, should be removed from the agenda. Engineer Malloy stated that the attachment on page 16 of the board packet concerning the proposed assessment drain was incorrect. Hearing no objection and no further corrections or additions, Chair Gates declared the agenda approved as corrected.

Open Mic:

No members of the public appeared to provide comment during the public-comment portion of the meeting.

Approval of April 13, 2026, Minutes:

The Board reviewed the minutes of its April 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.

Treasurer Victoria Klingbeil-Trout reported the following account balances: Drain No. 1 Bond Fund, \$18.65; Checking Account, \$15.30; and Savings Account, \$39,957.86.

Old Business:

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 is able to complete the work. No further action was taken.

Scophammer Dam – Sections 4 and 5, Township 158 North, Range 85 West: Engineer Jennifer Malloy (Apex Engineering) reported that the Scophammer Dam is classified as a low-hazard dam and that the North Dakota Department of Water Resources generally inspects low-hazard dams upon request, rather than under the routine inspection schedule applicable to medium- and high-hazard dams.

Vice Chair Steinberger arrived at 9:08 a.m.

The Board agreed to remove this item from future agendas unless further action or information warrants its return.

Dam Jurisdiction & Liability – Attorney Consultation and Executive Session: Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (Rinke Noonan Law Firm) presented a legal memorandum concerning the District's jurisdiction over dams, potential liability, insurance coverage, and related risk-management considerations. The memorandum was prepared by the District's attorney for guidance concerning the legal risks, strengths, and weaknesses of potential District action and was identified as exempt attorney work product under North Dakota Century Code, section 44-04-19.1.

Attorney Van Bruggen advised that an executive session was authorized for attorney consultation under North Dakota Century Code, sections 44-04-19.1 and 44-04-19.2 because public discussion of the identified legal risks and potential liability could have an adverse fiscal effect on the District.

Vice Chair Steinberger moved to enter executive session for attorney consultation with the District's legal counsel concerning legal advice, legal risks, potential liability, insurance coverage, and risk-management considerations relating to dams within the District. Manager Solemsaas seconded the motion. The announced legal authority was North Dakota Century Codes, sections 44-04-19.1 and 44-04-19.2. Roll-call call vote: Chair Gates-AYE; Vice Chair Steinberger-AYE; and Manager Solemsaas-AYE. Motion carried.

DRAFT/UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

The executive session began at 9:11 a.m. Managers Gates, Steinberger, and Solemsaas attended, together with Attorney Van Bruggen, Engineer Malloy, and Treasurer Klingbeil-Trout. The executive session was electronically recorded as required by North Dakota Century Code, section 44-04-19.2(5). Discussion was limited to the announced attorney-consultation topics.

The executive session adjourned at 9:39 a.m., and the Board reconvened in open session at 9:39 a.m. No final action was taken during the executive session or upon reconvening in open session.

Proposed Assessment Drain: Attorney Kale Van Bruggen (Rinke Noonan) discussed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service waterfowl production area easements and the related pilot program. Attorney Van Bruggen and Engineer Malloy will provide information concerning the pilot program to the petitioners when the information becomes available. The Board took no action on the proposed assessment drain.

New Business:

2027 Legislative Issues: No new information was reported.

Proposed 2027 Budget: Treasurer Victoria Kleinbeil-Trout presented the preliminary proposed 2027 budget for the Renville County Water Resource District. The Board reviewed and revised the preliminary budget for presentation at a public budget hearing.

Vice Chair Steinberger moved to make the preliminary proposed 2027 District budget available for public inspection and to set the public budget hearing for October 5, 2026, at 9:0 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, in the Commissioners Room of the Renville County Courthouse. Manager Solemsaas seconded the motion.

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

District legal counsel was directed to prepare and arrange publication of the required budget-hearing notice.

Mackabee Coulee: Chair Gates reported that Mike Miller had raised concerns about wind erosion and obstructed waterways affecting the Northeast Quarter of Section 14, Township 159 North, Range 86 West.

Mr. Miller joined the meeting by telephone at 10:22 a.m. He described the condition of road crossings, waterways, and watercourses extending downstream from the Northeast Quarter of Section 14 to the next natural watercourse.

The Board discussed the District's statutory authority and available procedures concerning maintenance of natural watercourses, one-time snagging and clearing assessment districts, and establishment of assessment drains.

Mr. Miller requested that the Board seek a stream-crossing study from the North Dakota Department of Water Resources concerning the crossings on 81st Street Southwest between the Southwest Quarter of Section 13 and the Northwest Quarter of Section 24, Township 159 North, Range 86 West, Ivanhoe Township, and the crossing between the Northeast Quarter of Section 14 and the Northwest Quarter of Section 13, Township 159 North, Range 86 West, Ivanhoe Township, across the prairie trail.

Mr. Miller left the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

The Board discussed the requested stream-crossing study and the study's potential limitations in addressing conditions between the road crossings and the downstream natural watercourse.

Vice Chair Steinberger moved to direct Apex Engineering to request that the North Dakota Department of Water Resources conduct a stream-crossing study for: (1) the crossing between the Northeast Quarter of Section 14 and the Northwest Quarter of Section 13, Township 159 North, Range 86 West, Ivanhoe Township, across the prairie trail; and (2) the crossing between the Southwest Quarter of Section 13 and the Northwest Quarter of Section 24, Township 159 North, Range 86 West, Ivanhoe Township. Manager Solemsaas seconded the motion. After opportunity for discussion, the motion carried.

Items for Discussion and Information:

October 2026 Meeting and Budget Hearing: The Board agreed to cancel its regular quarterly meeting previously scheduled for October 12, 2026, and to hold a special meeting and public budget hearing on October 5, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Renville County Courthouse, 205 Main Street East, Mohall, North Dakota. District legal counsel will prepare the special-meeting notice and budget-hearing notice. The meeting agenda will be posted in accordance with North Dakota open-meetings law.

Regular Meeting Location: The Board agreed that future regular meetings will be held in the Commissioners Room rather than the Community Room. The District's annual meeting schedule and individual meeting notices will identify the applicable meeting location.

Souris River Joint Board Update:

Vice Chair Steinberger reported on bridge construction and the status of the Souris River flood-control projects.

Engineer's Report:

No report was presented.

Letters of Complaint:

No written complaints were filed with the Board.

Adjournment:

Vice Chair Steinberger moved to adjourn. Manager Solemsaas seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote, and Chair Gates adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Minutes approved by the Board on October 5, 2026.

Peter Gates, Chair

Kale R. Van Bruggen, Secretary

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