

CASS COUNTY JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING
ORIGINATING AT THE CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JANUARY 15, 2025
9:00 A.M.

A special meeting of the Cass County Joint Water Resource District was held on January 15, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Present were Ken Lougheed, North Cass Water Resource District; Keith Weston, and Rick Steen, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Gerald Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District; William A. Hejl and Jacob Gust, Rush River Water Resource District, Melissa Hinkemeyer, Director, Secretary; Leilei Bao, Treasurer; Elizabeth Smith, Administrative Assistant; Katie Schmidt, Ohnstad Twichell, P.C.; and Di Wu, City of Fargo resident.

Office staffing

Manager Weston stated the Human Resources Committee made a motion to recommend the Cass County Joint Water Resource District accept the Director's recommendation of termination of the Treasurer, based on the independent actions of the Treasurer, conditional upon the Treasurer not notifying the Director of resignation by 5:00 p.m. CST January 14, 2025. The Director reported the Treasurer did submit a written letter of resignation following the Human Resources Committee meeting on January 14, 2025. The Director noted the Treasurer asked for a resignation date of January 31, 2025. The Director recommended the Treasurer be placed on paid administrative leave until January 31, 2025, at which time the resignation would be effective.

The Treasurer stated she did make the decision to resign and discussed the reasoning for her actions and asked to keep her position. The Treasurer then discussed issues she deemed important regarding other office staff.

A motion was made by Manager Steen and seconded by Manager Melvin to accept the Treasurer's resignation and place the Treasurer on paid administrative leave effective immediately until January 31, 2025. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Gust to authorize the Director to advertise the Cass County Water Resource Districts Accountant/Treasurer position. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Manager Steen and seconded by Manager Melvin to authorize the Director to increase the hours of part time staff and hire temporary staff, if necessary, until the conclusion of the financial audit of the Cass County Water Resource Districts.

Discussion: The Board discussed compensation in the form of paid time off or a

monetary bonus for additional work by full-time staff during this transition period as this is a very busy time of year. The Board decided to return to the topic at a later date. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion was held on asking Cass County if they can provide some support in functions such as payroll at least during this interim period.

A motion was made by Manager Steen and seconded by Manager Gust to authorize the Director to contact Cass County officials to explore options for assistance and provide the information to the Board at a future meeting. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Policy Manual

Discussion was held on updating the Cass County Water Resource Districts Personnel Policy Manual. Manager Weston stated the Human Resources Committee recommended via motion that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District engage with legal counsel Ohnstad Twichell, P.C. to review the current Personnel Policy Manual and compare the manual to Cass County's personnel manual in an effort to determine and draft updates to the Cass County Water Resource Districts' Personnel Policy Manual.

A motion was made by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Steen to engage legal counsel Ohnstad Twichell, P.C. to review the current Cass County Water Resource Districts Personnel Policy Manual, compare the manual to Cass County's personnel manual, and bring back draft recommended policies to the Board for consideration.

Discussion: Manager Weston noted Ohnstad Twichell, P.C. will prioritize the policies most-needed first. Di Wu asked the Board to make their personnel policies more transparent in regards to evaluating employee performance. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Staff job descriptions

Manager Weston stated a formal job description needs to be developed for the Director position, and this is recommended by the Human Resources Committee.

It was moved by Manager Weston and seconded by Manager Steen to authorize the Director to work with legal counsel to prepare a formal job description for the Director position of the Cass County Water Resource Districts. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, it was moved by Manager Steen, seconded by Manager Gust, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

Ken Lougheed
Chairman

ATTEST:

Melissa Hinkemeyer
Secretary