



James River Water Development District

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JAMES RIVER WATER DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MAY 14, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Wiese called the meeting of the James River Water Development District (JRWD) Board of Directors to order at 9:30 AM on May 14, 2026 at the District Office in Huron, South Dakota, with some members participating via Zoom.

ROLL CALL: The following people were in attendance:

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Dan Klimisch – Utica (via ZOOM)

LeRoy Braun – Mellette

Mike Wiese – Aberdeen

Dennis Bennett – Huron

Robert Braun – Aberdeen (via ZOOM)

Pat Cerry – Yankton

Randy Stanley – Grotton

Carol Willan – Mitchell

John Rubendall – Mitchell

DIRECTORS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Rocky Knippling, District Manager/SCWP Coordinator

Judy McDonald, CFO

Dave Bartel, Project Coordinator

Shane Deranleau, Watershed Coordinator

Matt Cavane, Watershed Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT: Sheri Kogel-Sanborn County Highway, Jamie VanZee-Brosz Engineering, Todd McAloon and Gina Breck-Lake Byron Development Association, Mike Sedlacek-Yankton County Highway Superintendent, Chris Brozik-Civil Design Inc, Dalin Fast-Foster Township, Jay Gilbertson-EDWDD (Via Zoom), Paul Muth-Mitchell (Via Zoom)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: **Motion** by Director Cerry, seconded by Director Stanley, to approve the agenda as amended in include a discussion and approval on the South Dakota Public Funds Investment Trust (SD FIT). **Motion carried.**

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Chair Wiese asked if any Directors had a conflict of interest regarding any agenda item. Director Klimisch acknowledged his role as a Yankton County Commissioner and stated he would be abstaining from the vote regarding the Yankton County Johnson Bridge Riprap funding and the application from Harold Klimisch to repair two dams. No other conflicts were noted for the current agenda. The following standing disclosures are ongoing until otherwise disclosed:

- Director Mike Wiese is currently a Brown County Commissioner
- Director Dan Klimisch is currently a Yankton County Commissioner

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Paul Muth (Mitchell) expressed serious concerns regarding potential water contamination and downstream environmental impacts resulting from the planned drainage of Lake Mitchell into the James River. Mr. Muth also extended his gratitude to the Board for their decades of

commitment to water quality; having lived along the river for over 30 years, he remarked that the improvements achieved during that time exceeded his expectations.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 12, 2026 MINUTES: **Motion** by Director Bennett, seconded by Director Cerny to approve the Minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

YANKTON COUNTY JOHNSON BRIDGE RIPRAP: Mike Sedlacek, Yankton County Highway Superintendent, presented a request for \$21,695 in project assistance funds for riprap at Structure No. 68-134-120 (Johnson Bridge). The project involves installation of 227 tons of Class B riprap to stabilize the bank. **Motion** by Director Millan, seconded by Director Cerny, to approve \$21,695 in funding assistance for Yankton County Highway Department. **Motion passed.** Director Klimisch abstained from the voting, citing his conflict of interest as a Yankton County Commissioner. These funds will expire on May 14, 2028.

LAKE BYRON DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION: Todd McAloon presented a request for \$30,000 in project assistance funds to support shoreline stabilization efforts for seven landowners at Lake Byron in Beadle County. The association noted that additional funding may be requested in the future as more residents express interest. Following a discussion, the Board requested further documentation, including contractor cost estimates and photographs of the proposed project sites. **Motion** by Director L. Braun, seconded by Director Cerny, to defer the request until the July meeting to allow for the submission of the requested information. **Motion passed.**

SANBORN COUNTY BRIDGE RIPRAP: Jamie VanZee, Brosz Engineering, on behalf of Sanborn County presented a request for \$38,405 in project assistance funds for drainage fabric and riprap at Structure No. 56-174-210. The project involves installation of drainage fabric and Class C riprap to stabilize the bank. **Motion** by Director Millan, seconded by Director L. Braun, to approve \$38,405 in funding assistance for Sanborn County Highway Department. **Motion passed.** These funds will expire on May 14, 2028.

DAVISON COUNTY BRIDGE RIPRAP: Chris Brozik, Civil Design Inc, representing Davison County presented a request for \$19,805 for project assistance funds. The funding will support engineering, drainage fabric, and riprap installation as part of a larger \$662,179 project to replace Structure No. 18-130-183 and Structure No. 18-170-053. **Motion** by Director Bennett, seconded by Director Stanley, to approve \$19,805 in funding assistance for Davison County Highway Department. **Motion passed.** These funds will expire on May 14, 2028.

FOSTER TOWNSHIP RIPRAP: Dalin Fast presented a request for \$17,200 for project assistance funds on behalf of Foster Township in Beadle County. The Township is replacing a bridge on 199th Street and stabilizing the road banks and creek bed with fabric and riprap to prevent erosion into Pearl Creek. The project provides a crucial economic benefit by lifting a restrictive 10,000 lb load limit that currently severely limits agricultural access to nearby fields. **Motion** by Director Millan, seconded by Director R. Braun, to approve \$17,200 in funding assistance for Foster Township for riprap. **Motion passed.** These funds will expire on May 14, 2028.

YANKTON COUNTY DAM REPAIR: Harold Klimisch submitted a request for \$18,750 in project assistance funds (representing 75% of a \$25,000 total budget) to repair two dams located approximately 1.5 miles above the James River. The project structure consists of a primary sediment dam designed to slow drainage and extend the lifespan of the bottom dam, effectively preventing sediment from reaching the James River while maintaining a vital water source for livestock. **Motion** by Director Cerny, seconded by

Director L. Braun, to approve the \$18,750 in funding assistance, subject to the conditions that all volunteer trees be removed from the second dam structure and a satisfactory final inspection be completed by District staff prior to the disbursement of funds. **Motion passed.** Director Klimisch abstained from the voting, citing his conflict of interest due to relationship with the landowner. These funds will expire on May 14, 2028.

SOUTH CENTRAL WATERSHED AND WATER QUALITY MONITORING UPDATE: Shane Deranleau provided an update on the South Central Watershed Project (SCWP), noting that 319 funding is delayed until August. He reported that approximately \$200,000 in vouchers are ready for payment and an additional \$265,000 in new project applications are pending. He also reported that our Project Officer and RBI Coordinator Tanner Clauson has accepted a new position, and the SD DANR is currently working to fill the resulting vacancy.

REPORTS: Staff, Directors, and Committees reported on the following activities of the District:

- CFO Judy McDonald reported that the 2025 fiscal year audit has been completed by ELO Prof. LLC. The District received an official letter from Russell A. Olson, Auditor General, confirming that the South Dakota Department of Legislative Audit has formally reviewed and accepted the JRWDD audit report for the year ended December 31, 2025.
- District Manager Rocky Knipling reported on a recent Water Management Board meeting regarding Lake Mitchell, where a variance was requested to drain the lake due to an insufficient spillway. Joe Schrader confirmed operational plans to begin draining the lake in late September, which will lower the water level by 16 feet. While all necessary state permits have been secured, one local permit remains pending. The Board held an extensive discussion regarding downstream environmental and water quality impacts, noting that community concerns regarding silt and nutrient accumulation have been ongoing since 1912. Concerns were raised regarding high phosphorus levels and downstream environmental impacts, as well as a reported lack of recent structural integrity testing on the concrete spillway.
 - Chairman Wiese appointed a committee consisting of Directors Klimisch, Bennett, and Rubendall, along with District Manager Rocky Knipling, to draft a comprehensive letter to project leads outlining specific questions regarding structural integrity, downstream water quality monitoring, flow control, filtration methods, and emergency protocols. Copies of this correspondence will be forwarded to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) and the state's congressional delegation.

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL REPORT: The Board reviewed the financial reports for the month ending February 28, 2026, as prepared by Judy McDonald. The reports detailed a total cash position of \$843,164.72. Significant expenditure highlights noted included a project payment to USGS \$11,460 for gaging stations (carried over from 2025) and Ducks Unlimited \$30,000 for wetland restoration in Hanson County (carried over from 2025). It was further noted that the District received \$133,858 federal reimbursements from August 2025 ARPA funds. **Motion** by Director Millian, seconded by Director Cerry, to approve the February 2026 financial reports as prepared. **Motion passed.**

MARCH FINANCIAL REPORT: The Board reviewed the financial reports for the month ending March 31, 2026, as prepared by Judy McDonald. The reports detailed a total cash position of \$1,122,579.30. Significant expenditure highlights noted included 2025 audit payment to ELO Prof. LLC and USFS payment of \$11,426.33 for rangeland management (carried over from 2025). It was further noted that the District received \$325,395.44 federal reimbursements from September 2025 ARPA funds. **Motion** by Director Cerry, seconded by Director Bennett, to approve the March 2026 financial reports as prepared. **Motion passed.**

SD FIT: RESOLUTION 2026-04: The Board discussed placing funds collected into the South Dakota Public Funds Investment Trust (SD FIT). This will allow the District to generate higher returns currently provided by local bank investment trusts, while still maintaining liquidity and immediate access to the funds when needed for project commitments. **Motion** by Director R. Braun, seconded by Director L. Braun, to adopt Resolution 2026-04, authorizing staff to invest District funds through the South Dakota Public Funds Investment Trust (SD FIT). **Motion passed.**

BOARD OF DIRECTOR AND STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS: The Board reviewed the staff travel expense submissions, which were provided for informational purposes. Directors reported on the specific meetings and activities related to their reimbursement requests. **Motion** by Director Cerny, seconded by Director Stanley, to approve all reimbursements in accordance with established District policy. **Motion passed.**

ADJOURN: Being no further business, Chair Wiese declared the meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert Braun, Secretary