BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD M I N U T E S

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the Board held at the Offices of the Board on 7th February 2020 at 10am

Members

Chairman - * Mr K C Casswell

Mr W Ash * Cllr T Ashton Mr J Atkinson Cllr R Austin * Cllr P Bedford * Mr V Barker * Mr J Fowler Cllr M Cooper * Mr P Holmes * Cllr F Pickett * Cllr P Skinner Mr R Leggott * Mr P Robinson Cllr M Head * Cllr C Benn Mr M Rollinson * Mr N J Scott * Cllr S Walsh * Mr M Brookes Mr J R Wray

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)

Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager) Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)

1570 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 1

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Rollinson, Cllr M Head and Cllr M Cooper.

Mr P Holmes expressed his apologies for the confusion around the calendar appointment for the meeting and it being mistakenly deleted.

(a) IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL ASSETS

Although unable to attend the meeting, Cllr M Head had sent a message prior that he wished to be presented at the meeting. The email sent was circulated amongst Board Members, Cllr M Head's point being about his appal at the lack of understanding around the importance of agricultural assets in relation to flood prevention.

The Chief Executive added that he recently met with the Environment Agency's Lincolnshire Flood & Coast Manager who has been shown this message from Cllr M Head. Following this meeting and the approval of Cllr M Head, this will be sent to the Lincolnshire Flood & Coast Manager. However, the Chief Executive also noted that this is being addressed by the RFCC and their revenue stream for protecting agricultural land and the Board's work in obtaining grants and funding for various schemes to protect the agricultural land. The Chairman added that he feels that Black Sluice IDB is very proactive in trying to gain funding.

Cllr T Ashton joined the meeting, apologising for his lateness. He added that in this county particularly, all of the risk management authorities are very good at communicating with each other, which builds a good relationship and leaves the county in a positive position.

1571 <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 2</u>

There were no declarations of interest received.

1572 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE 2019 QUARTER FOUR RAINFALL EVENTS

The Chief Executive introduced the quarter four rainfall event by displaying a telemetry trace of the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) levels from October - December 2018. An additional telemetry trace was shown on screen, for comparative purposes, of the SFFD levels from October - December 2019. It highlighted that the lowest point it reached during 2019, was the highest level it rose to in 2018.

The Chief Executive further noted that although the SFFD level exceeded the level of 2.3 metres five times during quarter four of 2019 (2.3 metres = the level at which the emergency plan is enacted), the emergency plan was only actually implemented twice because the officers, with their experience and reviewing predicted weather forecasts, could identify that the SFFD levels were on a downward trend and so enacting the emergency plan wasn't necessary. Mr P Holmes commended the officers for not implementing the emergency plan, when not actually necessary, consequently saving the Board the cost that would have been associated with enacting the plan i.e. workforce callouts. He also noted that the newly formed WhatsApp group worked well and enabled an objective view to be taken.

The Environment Agency (EA) have also now been opening the navigation doors as an additional fluvial emergency gravity channel at Boston. The Chief Executive felt that these events have shown that the catchment is more resilient than what was previously believed. A Met Office map showing resilience from flooding was displayed, with the Black Sluice IDB catchment area being a lighter colour - meaning that it is currently more resilient to rainfall.

Mr R Leggott questioned the possibility of another gravity outlet at Boston? The Chief Executive responded that he feels it will always be on the agenda of the EA until it is either approved or declined.

Mr V Barker raised his concern that the gravity sluice doors at Boston are not adjusted to a winter level, adding that it is not at a level where gravitation is achieved at Black Hole Drove. The Chief Executive noted that he will mention it to the EA, but at this very moment in time the water is gravitating. The Finance Manager further added that Cooks Lock is currently at -0.50 ODN, which is winter level.

The Finance Manager presented a graph showing the pump hours of all of the pumping stations apart from six, which don't have monitors that measure electric current. The graph showed the hours pumped during 2018 and the hours pumped during 2019. During 2019, 94 billion litres of water were pumped by the pumps of Black Sluice IDB, with 80% of that being pumped during the final quarter of the year.

The Operations Manager added that, from an operational point of view, the workforce were very busy, covering 24 hours of the day. One of the significant consequences of these events is the number of slips that have occurred as a result. There are slips in various areas of the catchment including Great Hale, Boston West, the North Forty Foot Drain (NFFD), Dowsby Lode and so on. The Operations Manager made further reference to Dowsby Lode noting that the operations team will be attending site in the following week, with the opinion that if any more soil was to be removed then there would be a slip to repair. The repairs required as a result of the rainfall events will be completed on a priority basis.

The Chief Executive added that the EA are starting to commence silt level surveys, in preparation for desilting works, at Boston in the SFFD. These surveys have found that there are huge balls of weed at the Boston end of the SFFD that have been ripped off from all the additional flow during the rainfall events. This therefore means that it has been self-cleansing on gravity flows that have been introduced because of the navigation and gravity lock. The EA will now be faced with the task of moving this weed.

Mr V Barker wondered whether it would be possible to monitor, whether it be physically or visually, the silt levels as he has noticed that there are visible silt deposits in the bank at Dowsby. The Operations Manager responded that this information has already been requested; to know what the profile looked like on completion of the de-silting and what it looks like now.

1573 MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on the 30th October 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

1574 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING - Agenda Item 4

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1575 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 5

(a) DYKE FEN PUMPING STATION - Minute 1527

It was noted that at the previous meeting of the Board approval was given for the expenditure of £11,524 to repair the pump at Dyke Fen. Following the removal of the pump, it has been found that it is in worse condition than initially thought and so with the additional time and more extensive repairs required the estimated cost is now C£25,000+. Mr R Leggott questioned whether it would be cheaper to simply buy a new pump? The Operations Manager did not believe so, but will investigate.

(b) ADA MODEL OF LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS - Minute 1532(a)

The Finance Manager noted that a query has been raised by Defra regarding Byelaw 2 in relation to whom the byelaws apply to. No further updates have been received since.

(c) DAMAGE TO CONCRETE FARM YARD AT CLAYDYKE, HOLLAND FEN

- Minute 1532(b)

Mr R Leggott questioned if the agreement has been signed? It was confirmed that it has been signed by the landowner.

1576 TO RECEIVE THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE JOINT WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING - Agenda Item 6

The Chairman of the Northern Works Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Joint Works Committee meeting held on the 21st November 2019, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(a) MATTERS ARISING

(a)(i) WASTE ISSUE - ALBAN RETAIL PARK - Minute 1544(b)

The Chief Executive noted that the offender has been informed that the Boards team will be removing the rubbish from the site and that they will invoiced for this work until more trash fencing has been erected on the sites from which rubbish is coming from.

Mr M Brookes questioned whether it was the Board's team he had seen there cleaning up last week? The Operations Manager noted that the team has been once, but that it wouldn't have been them most recently, so perhaps it was the offenders trying to clear it up.

1577 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - Agenda Item 7

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on the 4th December 2019, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(a) REPORT ON FINANCE & BUDGETS

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 4th December 2019, which has since been updated, as included in the following minute; 1578(a).

(b) QUARTER 2 FORECAST - SUMMARY

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 4th December 2019, which has since been updated, as included in the minute 1580.

(c) QUARTER 2 FORECAST - DETAILED

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 4th December 2019, which has since been updated, as included in the minute 1580.

MATTERS ARISING:

(d) NAVIGATION LOCK USED AS AN EMERGENCY FLUVIAL CHANNEL - Minute 1556

Mr P Robinson questioned the notion that the Chief Executive believed if the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) was still functioning during the recent rainfall events, that nobody would have thought to open the navigation lock as an emergency fluvial channel.

The Chief Executive acknowledged that he is still of the opinion that nobody in the South Forty Foot Steering Group would have thought to use the navigation lock as an additional fluvial channel if the pumping station had still been in use.

Mr V Barker made reference to the sea facing doors at the Grand Sluice, noting that he was under the impression that the guillotine had been kept up on one of the pairs of doors so that there wasn't as much water coming out of the Witham. It was confirmed that there was no 'hidden agenda' to prove that the rain could be coped with without the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston).

1578 TO RECEIVE THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - Agenda Item 8

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on the 23rd January 2020, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(a) 2020/21 BUDGET & TEN YEAR ESTIMATES REPORT

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(i) BUDGET WITH 10 YEAR ESTIMATES

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(ii) 2020/21 SUMMARY BUDGET BY MONTH

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(iii) 2020/21 DETAILED BUDGET BY MONTH

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(iv) 10 YEAR CAPITAL SCHEMES

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(v) 2020/21 WAGES ON-COST RESERVE BUDGET

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; there were no questions or comments from Board members.

(vi) 10 YEAR PLANT REPLACEMENT BUDGET

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020. The Finance Manager highlighted to the Board that, as per the Period 10 Management Accounts, we are £20,000 ahead of where we last year on the plant reserve, resulting in, at the end of the financial year 2020/21 a positive balance carried forward of C£17,000 if it is maintained.

Cllr T Ashton questioned how many miles / hours the Unimog has done? The Chief Executive noted that an additional column on the plant replacement budget had been added showing the hours / miles of each machine, however, unfortunately, at the last few meetings the older format of spreadsheet has been used which doesn't include this column; it will be reintroduced at future meetings. It was noted that the Unimog has done 267,034km (165,927 miles).

The Chief Executive also confirmed with the Board members that a new Unimog has been purchased, to be licensed in March 2020. It was also requested at the last meeting of the Executive committee for the £18,000 included in the financial year 2020/21 for a new low loader to be brought forward to the current financial year if the appropriate low loader was located.

(vii) SOLAR PANEL CUMULATIVE REPORT

This report was included for information as it was presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January 2020; it being highlighted that the Swineshead Pumping Station solar installation has now paid for itself.

Mr V Barker noted that it would be useful to have the kilowatts included in the table.

MATTERS ARISING:

(a) 10 YEAR PLANT REPLACEMENT BUDGET - Minute 1567(f)

Mr V Barker made reference to the Unimog and his concern that the Board is tied into a specific system too much with the Unimog, therefore resulting in the Unimog having a very high workload, subsequently meaning that machines may not be able to be moved when required.

The Operations Manager responded that in regard to moving the plant, the only predominant restriction is the weight constraint applicable. To carry the additional weight then an articulated HGV lorry would be required. The Operations Manager also made reference to the fact that the Board are commercially licenced and obtaining this type of licence can be difficult with other possible alternative vehicles such as tractors.

The original idea of looking into a Fastrac rather than a Unimog was the cost difference, however, having looked into it there is not a big difference in price. There is also difficulty with requiring a class one licence with particular types of vehicles.

Mr V Barker concluded that he just felt that the Unimog is worked too hard with too much reliability on the one machine. The Operations Manager responded that he will consider alternative ways in which material can be moved from site.

1579 <u>FINAL BUDGET WITH 10 YEAR ESTIMATES (AMENDED PENNY RATE) - Agenda</u> Item 9

The Finance Manager presented the final budget which includes the final penny rate calculations as at 31st December 2019.

The Finance Manager pointed out the highlighted yellow expenditure figure in 2020/21 noting that it is below the target figure of 20% due to receiving a number of grants in this financial year, but not being completed until the following financial year. The long term showing that at the 10 year mark, the reserve will be at 26.02% of expenditure and a balanced budget with reserves of £787,516.

The Finance Manager also explained to the members of the Board about the penny rate calculations, which drives the agricultural rates and special levies paid by the councils. The breakdown of the product of one penny rate was displayed on screen, with the spilt between special levy (49.98%) and agricultural rate (50.02%) being highlighted. The Finance Manager noted that April 2020 is the year for the makeup of the Board to be reviewed (every three years from 1993) and so, unless there are any major changes between now and then, it is expected that the agricultural income will exceed the special levy income and so the makeup of the Board will be able to stay as it currently is for another three years.

The Chairman made reference to other Boards who have decided to increase their rate by a significant amount, noting that, he feels, because the Board has this long term budget, it can be seen that the increase can come over a number of years, giving those with large amounts to pay an advance idea of what is to come, rather than hit them with a big increase next year.

The Finance Manager also drew the Board Members attention to the amount of development that has occurred within the catchment; with 40 acres of land having been developed in the borough of Boston, which has therefore been transferred from agricultural rate to special levy. This information will also be included within the letter sent to the councils detailing their special levy, as whilst the Board is increasing the rate by 1.9%, their payment will actually increase by more than 1.9% due to the increased amount of land being developed. It was also noted that this includes the substation development at Bicker, which the Boston Borough Council have been notified about. Cllr P Bedford noted that it has been previously proposed that all national infrastructure, such as the development at Bicker, will no longer have to pay rates, however, it has not materialised as of yet.

(a) REVISED 10 YEAR CAPITAL SCHEMES

The Finance Manager informed the members of the Board that the Capital Schemes Budget has been updated and therefore included. He highlighted the Sempringham Fen Pumping Station refurbishment scheme and Dowsby Lode Improvements scheme in 2020/21 as the grant was received for these schemes this financial year but the works will be completed in the following financial year.

1580 PERIOD 09 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS & QUARTER 3 FORECAST - Agenda Item 10

The Finance Manager focused on the Quarter 3 Forecast, noting that the officers have tried to identify where savings can be made. The Finance Manager drew particular attention to Pumping Station Maintenance, with it being £228,590 over budget. The Chairman noted that this expenditure has been covered without using any invested money so far.

1581 REVIEW THE RISK REGISTER - Agenda Item 11

The Finance Manager made reference to risk 1.1 with a risk score of 6, noting that the Audit & Risk Committee have put forward a plan to split the risk into coastal and fluvial flooding based on the authority that is responsible for each type of flooding, which will be looked into at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting in May 2020.

The Chairman also noted that the Audit & Risk Committee will be looking into Health & Safety requirements at their next meeting, following a big 'push' from ADA around this topic, and so more training for Board Members may be required.

Mr V Barker made reference to risk 1.8, loss of senior staff, raising his concern about the high work load of some of the senior staff members recently due to the rainfall events and vacancy of the Works & Engineering Manager. The Chairman felt that the risk level was correct with the given situation. All Board Members showed their thanks for the work and effort put in by the senior members of staff recently.

The Operations Manager added that the Works & Engineering Manager job has been offered to somebody, who has accepted, and will start subject to his notice period, which is believed to be a start date of w/c 16th March 2020. The Chairman added that the Board has been without anybody in this role for twelve months and so thanked the Operations Manager, Operations Supervisor and Pump Engineer for the extra workload taken on to cover the vacancy. Mr P Holmes added that the newly formed WhatsApp group was a big help in keeping everybody informed during the recent rainfall events.

The Board RESOLVED the Risk Register be accepted.

1582 REPORTS ON THE FOLLOWING: - Agenda Item 12

(a) MONTHLY ACCOUNTS (OCTOBER 2019 - DECEMBER 2019) The Board's monthly accounts, inclusive of October 2019 - December 2019, were circulated. The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

It was noted that the monthly accounts presented at the last meeting of the Board, inclusive of June 2019 - September 2019, have now been signed by the Chief Executive.

(b) <u>SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS (OCTOBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020)</u> The Chief Executive presented the Schedule of Consents, consisting of October 2019 - January 2020, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

Mr V Barker questioned if consent is required for outfalls into private drains and why? The Chief Executive responded that consent is required, even for private drains within the catchment, in order for the Board to build up knowledge of the details of the catchment where water is running into riparian drains and then into board maintained watercourses. The Board have a responsibility of general drainage in the entire catchment area, not just the board maintained watercourses. It was also confirmed that consent is required for the replacement of drains.

Mr R Leggott questioned if the fee of £50 per consent was being left as it is? The Finance Manager confirmed that there is no choice in how much is charged for consent, it is written within the Land Drainage Act. It was noted that it would be ADA that would have to look into to it to get it changed.

(c) RAINFALL

The rainfall figures at Swineshead and Black Hole Drove were presented, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether the accuracy of the Black Hole Drove rainfall gauge has been checked, given the consistently lower values than Swineshead that had been noted at the previous meeting.

The Chief Executive responded that the rainfall gauge has been cleaned and maintained and will now be monitored. However, he also noted that, as part of the South Lincs Water Partnership (SLWP), a bid has been put forward for C£900,000 to commence works in June 2020 in relation to capturing data within the catchment including factors such as gravity flow, rainfall, fresh water feeds, gauge boards, telemetry updates and so on, which will include the replacement of the three rainfall gauges at Black Hole, Swineshead and Cooks Lock. It was also noted that if nothing else goes forward following this, then the equipment will be passed over to the Board.

Mr V Barker noted that he has got rainfall figures from a farmer at Stainfield which suggests that whilst there may be a 40:60 split in the highland water and fen water in terms of catchment water, the actual volume of water during a storm may be nearer a 50:50 split. He also noted that a farmer at Walcott has an official rainfall station, which would cover the catchment running out to Billingborough.

1583 AUTHORISE THE SEALING OF THE RATE FOR 2019/20 - Agenda Item 13

The Finance Manager noted that the rate shown in the agenda has 2019 on the date, and so this has been corrected to 2020 for signing.

It was RESOLVED that the Chairman and Finance Manager be authorised to seal the Drainage Rate and Special Levies for the year 2020/21 as follows:

(a) DRAINAGE RATES

	Rate in the £	Estimated Amount of Drainage Rates Payable
Sub-District No 1 – Being so much of the said Internal Drainage District as comprises the area of the Borough of Boston as constituted and in existence immediately before 1 st April 1974.	6.42p	
Sub-District No 2 – Being the remainder of the Internal Drainage District.	12.84p	
		£1,073,912.82

(b) SPECIAL LEVIES

Boston Borough Council	£ 813,156.42	
South Holland District Council	£ 131,037.08	
North Kesteven District Council	£ 69,496.10	
South Kesteven District Council	£ <u>59,220.12</u>	
	£1,072,909.72	

1584 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 14

(a) CFE PICK N MIX EVENT - 4 MARCH 2020

The Chief Executive informed the Board members of the CFE Pick 'n Mix event taking place on Wednesday 4th March 2020 at St Mary's Church Hall, Pinchbeck, which unfortunately clashes with the Southern Works Inspection Tour and meeting. This will cover topics inclusive of soil carbon, carbon accounting, water quality, benchmarking, managing our water resources and funding. It was also noted that the funding aspect of the meeting will be lead by Lesley Sharpe, who is about to be employed by the Board through RFCC funding, to investigate the upper catchments in relation to natural flood management (low cost water retention). She will do this with a Farm Engagement Advisor and write up business cases for each catchment assessed.

(b) NFU MEETING - 11 FEBRUARY 2020

The Chief Executive reminded the members of the upcoming Black Sluice IDB / NFU Members South Forty-Foot Catchment Update Meeting on Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 10:00am. A show of hands was given to indicate who would be attending, five members showed interest.

(c) RIPARIAN DRAINS NEXT TO HOUSING ESTATES

Cllr R Austin referred to riparian drains next to housing estates, noting a particular riparian drain next to a housing estate, where the property owners are not concerned at all with maintaining the dyke. Cllr R Austin added that there is another case he has spotted which is covered in Japanese Knotweed.

He questioned whether an arrangement was put in place when consent is given for the housing development about the upkeep of the riparian dykes? The Operations Manager confirmed that the Board would be within their rights to clear such a drain and charge the appropriate property owner for the work. It was also explained that as part of the application for the development, there has to be a management plan for the water leaving the site in place. If it was found that this was not being carried out then the Board would carry out enforcement procedures.

Mr R Leggott questioned whether mechanical access is always available on housing development estates? It was noted that byelaws don't apply to riparian drains.

The Finance Manager also noted to Cllr R Austin that the drain he referenced previously covered in Japanese Knotweed needs reporting to the Environment Agency (EA) or Boston Borough Council (BBC) as it is an invasive species, who can then ensure something is done about it with the responsible owner.

(d) BLACK SLUICE PUMPING STATION (BOSTON)

Mr P Robinson explained that he had been asked to introduce the topic of concern around the closure of the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) given the recent rainfall events experienced, noting that it is felt that riparian and board maintained water courses have been used more to hold the water due to being unable to pump it away, therefore leaving the land more saturated than it would have been should the pumps have been functioning.

The Chairman responded that he felt it wouldn't have made any difference if the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) was operational, with the Board's pumps only having had to be turned off once during the quarter 4 rainfall events. It was also noted that it has previously breached when the pumps were functioning and hasn't breached in the recent rainfall events. The Chairman added that the navigation lock has 1.5 times the capacity that the pumps had.

The Chief Executive added that the there was no way of keeping the water level any lower, even if the pumps had of been functioning. The Chief Executive also added that when the pumps were functioning, following a typical rainfall event, it would take the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) three weeks to recover to the level it was before it started raining, however, it now takes only one week when the navigation lock is incorporated with the gravity channel. He further made reference to land with water still stood on it, arguing that, in his opinion, that may not solely be the result of the recent rainfall events but may also be as a result of other factors such as soil structure, maintenance, the amount of rainfall received in June 2019 etc.

Mr P Robinson accepted that, yes, all of these factors would make for a complex scenario, but also noted that the free flow only works when the tide is out. The Chief Executive added that the pumps would only have been used as the last method and would only have been able to pump against the tide.

The Chief Executive also added that one of the purposes of the NFU meeting being held on Tuesday 11th February, is to address those who want the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) reinstating by demonstrating the capability of the new system.

Mr V Barker made reference to reports by F H Toms (1936 & 1938), noting that he was always aiming to get the water out by gravity where possible.

Cllr P Skinner additionally drew attention to the importance of desilting and the proper maintenance of channels, noting that the importance of this needs to be reinforced to the EA.

Cllr T Ashton raised the concept of the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) being used as heritage tourist attraction. The Chief Executive added that Lincolnshire Heritage have produced various plans and ideas for the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston), with a favoured possible plan of it being a Fen Land Drainage Heritage Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:41.