

Dickinson County Board of Supervisors & DC Emergency Management Commission
June 29, 2024

2:00 P.M. Present are Supervisors Kim Wermersen, Steve Clark, Jeff Thee, Tim Fairchild Vice-Chairperson, and Chairperson Bill Leupold. Also in attendance were members of the Dickinson County Emergency Management Commission, Mitch Watters (City of Okoboji), Doug Frederick (City of Milford), Dan Sanders (City of Okoboji), Bill Maas (City of Orleans), James Tendal (City of Superior), Julie Thiesen (City of Terril), Carol Chicoine (City of West Okoboji), Bill Leupold (BOS Rep), Phil Johnson (City of Wahpeton), Greg Baloun (Sheriff), and Mike Ehret (Emergency Management Director).

Chairman Leupold called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Emergency Management Director Mike Ehret gave an update locally on the present conditions. Ehret stated that the river level is falling, and area lakes have crested and are starting to fall as well. Volunteers have been matched to those that need help cleaning up and/or stabilizing structures. Ehret met with the Army Corp of Engineers and stated that nothing would happen until the water recedes further both locally and downstream and that the timing must be right.

Several representatives from the Army Corp of Engineers gave opinions on the current situation and its potential impact on our neighbors downstream. It will be imperative to watch the level changes downstream.

County Engineer Cole Budach was also part of the conversations with the Corp. He went on to say that any form of breaching with the water levels so high would not be an option at this point. Dr. Larry Weber recently did a study of Lower Gar modeling a full breach of the structure. A full breach would see an impact downstream in 24-36 hours and result in up to four inches of additional water. But with the levels being the way they are, a breach, when safe to do so, should be done in steps. He also went on to say the future forecast models an increase in precipitation, so it is important to take this into consideration with any plans going forward.

Engineer Budach invited Jacob Altfillisch from Michels Construction who has expertise in full and partial breaches. He stated that he would be very leery of taking the road out. His option would be to do a controlled release on the south side of lower Gar Outlet with the construction of a special structure adjacent to the existing culverts, this would be for emergency relief only and again reiterated that the timing must be right. Any plans for a temporary or permanent structure will need to be sent to the Rock Island Office for approval.

Residents from Spencer and adjacent communities voiced that they could not take on more water at this time until the river came down significantly. They are still very much in the recovery stages from the flooding and need additional time before the possibility of additional water is released.

Dickinson County Supervisors and Emergency Management Commission feels deep empathy for our area neighbors. They have suffered and endured the imageable over the past ten days. The major priority is public safety, and nothing will be done to jeopardize that stated Thee.

After further conversation, it was moved by Wermersen, seconded by Thee to form a Task Force Committee of local players, including, but not limited to county engineer, members of the DNR, 2 Dickinson County Supervisors, Clay County Supervisors, Clay County City Officials, and Emergency Management. The committee's goal will be to develop a short-term (emergency plan) and then a long-term goal/action plan. The members of this committee will be identified by Monday July 1. Roll call vote: Wermersen-aye, Thee-aye, Clarke-aye, Fairchild-aye, and Leupold-aye.

Okoboji City Councilman Dan Sanders looking to the board of supervisors for monetary/leadership help for funding of debris cleanup, shore stabilization, and water safety sampling. The Chamber of Commerce is funding additional testing through Lakeside Laboratory. Emergency Management Director went on to say that there are resources for shore and lake clean-up. Dickinson County has currently been approved for Category A and B for FEMA, he is certain that the additional levels will be reached shortly and that we will be added to the Governor's Proclamation, leading to more area funds being received.

There being no further items presented to the board, moved by Clark, seconded by Fairchild, to adjourn. All voted aye. The meeting adjourned to the call of the Chairperson at 3:35 p.m.

_____ William Leupold, Chairperson

_____ Lori Pedersen, Auditor