

**Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners
Ditch #53 Public Hearing
Otter Tail City Community Center
March 4, 2003**

Call to Order

Chairman Lee, who made introductions, called the Ditch #53 Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from the public on the redetermination of benefits for the drainage system. Present were the County Board, County Attorney, David Hauser; County Auditor, Wayne Stein; Ditch Inspector, Randy Wasvick; County Coordinator, Larry Krohn; and Ditch Viewers, Howard Goese, Eldor Kugler, and Richard Carlund.

David Hauser presented background information on the work previously completed on this ditch and explained what county ditches are, and how the redetermination process works.

Randy Wasvick presented information regarding the original benefited area, as determined in 1915, and the expanded area determined by the viewers. He also listed many of the factors involved in determining if a property receives a benefit from the availability of the ditch and to what degree.

Public Comment

Rick Guck and Ron Doll questioned the flowage as determined by the viewers. Andy Klinnert concurred that the drainage is actually greater than the viewers determined and that water flows a considerable distance from the northwest. Greg Keil stated that he is working with the DNR to install dikes to create wetlands for wildlife. He said that the ditch does not benefit his property because his intent is to retain water and he should not be assessed for drainage. Rick Guck questioned why the repair costs were so high and wanted to know why the job wasn't bid. Terry Wageman wanted to see the actual costs and bills. Auditor, Wayne Stein, provided that information. David Hauser addressed the factors involved in trying to obtain a bid and noted that contractors are reluctant to give bids when they don't know the scope of the work. Ron Doll asked why the township didn't share in the costs. Wayne Stein reported that the township is being assessed for their percentage. Andy Klinnert gave a brief history of events from the township perspective and stated that abandonment of the ditch was not a possibility. He asked if the Board actually expects the few landowners to pick up 100% of the costs. Rick Guck questioned who would stand the costs of maintenance in the future. Jim Hammers questioned whether the Rush Lake Town Board could contribute to the project. Rick Guck asked what the actual assessments would be. Figures distributed showed costs for both benefits and for maintenance. Commissioner Sydney Nelson asked Leo Doll if runoff comes from further to the northwest. He said it does and that the project had been mishandled. Rick Guck presented information from 1955 indicating that the township was responsible for 15% of the costs. Missy Keil felt that there should have been a meeting before any work commenced and the viewers should have had more knowledge about local conditions. Rick Guck asked how long the assessments could run. Wayne Stein explained that the original, 1915 determination would have to be used for assessing the cost of the repairs. He presented the current assessments for repairs based on the 1915 determination for the repairs as well as redetermination costs for the expanded costs.

Public Hearing Adjourned

Chairman Lee declared the hearing closed at 9:10 p.m. The Board will consider the input they received at their next County Board meeting on March 11, 2003.