

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2020

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Todd Thacker called the October 13, 2020, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed guests.

Present:

Trustees: Todd Thacker, Quentin Johnson, Greg Witbeck, Herb Snyder, Shane Frost, Dean Baker, and Tyson Murray.

Others: William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille Engineering; Aaron Averett and Benjamin Smith, Sunrise Engineering; Keith Despain, CRS Engineers; Mike Collins and Jordan Oyler, Bowen Collins & Associates; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Monty Pratt, Burns Bench; Tony George and Ken Long, Rock Point Canal; Curt Smuin, Highline Canal; Morgan Batty, Island Ditch; Bill Cook, Ashley Upper Canal; Shirley Slaugh, Ashley Water Users; Justin Whittaker and Greg Boberg, WETx.

Approval of Minutes Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the September 8, 2020, Board Meeting minutes.

Steinaker Dam Gate Modifications The contractor has been on site working with the Bureau of Reclamation to put a work plan together. They have been waiting for the canal to be shut off which happened last Friday. They will disassemble the gates and send them to California for replacement of seats and seals to correct deficiencies discovered after the original construction. The contractor has a secondary project proposal that has not yet been seen or approved by the Bureau. At the bottom of the frame where the gates seal, there is a material that is a soft metal. During their inspections, they determined that that bottom seal in the frame is contributing to the leakage through the dam. They are proposing that the seal be repaired for additional cost of \$28,000-\$30,000. They will come in with a torch, heat the material up, soften it and add more material to it, then plane it down to the exact dimensions of the bottom of the gate so when the gate comes down in contact with that material, it provides a water- tight seal. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve sponsoring this modification proposal pending approval by the Bureau.

**Vernal Unit
Efficiency
Project
Watershed Plan**

Bart Jensen reported they are working with the economist on the Rock Point and Steinaker Service Canal portions of the economic analysis. The FONSI for the Upper/Highline project is now complete. We have flood modeling as part of the economic as well as hydrology on the Rock Point Canal from the highway on over to the east. The draft documents are ready to go, just waiting on the economic analysis to plug into it then put it out for public comment. We are looking at late Winter, early Spring for the funding to be available. The flood control portion of the project is re-shaping of the existing canals.

**Uinta River
Bifurcation**

They did another Ute Ladies Tress survey and found flowers where the structure is supposed to go. The BIA is having discussions with the Fish and Wildlife to figure out what to do with them. The BIA put the agreement out for the right-of-way to put the structure where we want to put it, the business committee came back with a counter-agreement that has some terms the BIA could not accept in terms of control of the structure. The BIA rejected that and are waiting for advice from their attorney. It looks like it is at a stalemate. Plan B is to install the new structure at the current structure location. The Board wants to look at the agreement to see where the sticking points are. As long as the project is proceeding, they will continue to extend the WaterSMART grant.

**Ashley
Upper/Highline
Canals Pipe
Project**

The EA is finalized and the FONSI is signed as well as the construction contract with BHI. They began clearing for the project yesterday. They should be able to starting putting pipe in the ground November 1. They are going to concentrate mostly on the Highline to start with.

Cloud Seeding

They decided to postpone the study on cloud seeding until next year so we will put the \$6,100 in our 2021 budget. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed by all except Quentin Johnson and Tyson Murray to participate with Central Utah, Duchesne Water Conservancy as our partners in the 2020-2021 cloud seeding program in the amount of \$12-13,000.

Master Plan

Mike Collins requested comments from the Board. The reason to have a Master Plan is to look and plan for necessary expenditures and how to pay for them. We just spent a big portion of our annual budget and reserves to repair the Steinaker Dam gates. We have aging infrastructures and need to set up reserves to cover future repairs.

**Set 2021 Rates
for JU and VU**

The proposal was to put the rates into a five-year plan so they don't impact the water users so hard in the first year. William went over the current rates and the proposed additions. After much discussion, Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck to leave the rates as they are and table the discussion. There were NO AYES and ALL NOS on that motion. After much more discussion, Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to accept the following rates and put together a different five-year plan for discussion next year:

VU Irrigation O&M - from \$4.42 to \$5.50
VU Irrigation Reserve - from \$0 to \$.50
VU O&M M&I - from \$6.50 to \$9.00
VU M&I Reserve - from \$5 to \$6
JU Irrigation O&M - from \$1.50 to \$2
JU Irrigation Reserve - from \$0 to \$.50
JU O&M M&I - from \$5 to \$9
JU M&I Reserve - from \$5 to \$6

After much discussion, it was determined that Conveyance of non-project water through Steinaker would remain at the current cost.

Bond Re-funding

David Robertson is looking at the possibility of taking all of the District's current debt and re-funding at today's low market prices. Interest rates hit all-time lows in September. We would be looking at a low 2% interest range. After advice from David, Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to hold off for a few months to see where the market goes and look at what debts to combine.

**Flood Control-
Rock Point**

Aaron Averett gave an update on the Rock Point canal. About all the flood water it can take is 35 CFS. Runoff from the hills above it is substantially more than that. They need to enlarge the canal channels or build retention basins. The next step is to find out what is really going on with the water coming off the hills. They are looking for additional funding for that study.

**Flood Control-
Highline/Upper**

The report needs to go to the NRCS national level for review. It has been checked by the Utah state people. The intent is to put pipe in the banks and leave the channels open.

GIS

Benjamin Smith showed maps indicating all the GIS points in our system and progress being made toward completing this project.

**Green River
Rates**

After discussion, Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to set M&I rates at \$150 if Duchesne will come down to that and leave at \$5 for agriculture.

**Green River
Water Shares
Dispersal**

There should be a one-time up front application fee of \$12.50/share paid to the District. The contract with participants should be \$32.38/share per year for the period 2021-2046. We cannot guarantee the water. The petitioners need to know up front that there is additional risk. They would be on the hook for ten years longer. Shane made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to advertise to canal companies that there is water available.

**Financial
Statements**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Quentin Johnson and passed unanimously to approve the September 2020 financial statements.

Invoices

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$6,134.50; Henrie Engineering \$3,420; Jones & DeMille \$16,383.78; PdM \$3,950; Snow Christensen \$208.50; Sunrise Engineering \$2,032.25 for a total of \$32,129.03.

Fleet Program

This was tabled until next month's meeting.

UASD

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve John Hunting to represent the District and also be the voting member.

Manager Report

William reported that all conferences this year have been cancelled. The Board instructed him to go ahead with the Uinta Basin Water Summit in January.

Three of our employee Pilot gas card were hacked and used in Florida, Georgia and Ohio for big rig diesel fuel for about \$6,200. Those cards were cancelled and we have a detective working on this for us. We have set state and usage limits on all cards. Dean Baker suggested that we look into using State gas cards.

It was also suggested that we put a cloud seeding poll on our website.

Adjourn

Dean Baker made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.