

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2021

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Todd Thacker called the February 9, 2021, 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; Spencer Strand and Randy Green, Bureau of Reclamation; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; Keith Larson, Bowen Collins & Associates; Bart Jensen and Eric Major; Jones & DeMille Engineering; Keith Despain, CRS Engineers; Tyler Dow, Eric Kellems and Jesse Empey, WETx; Wayne Simper, Ashley Central Canal; Monty Pratt, Burns Bench.

Approval of Minutes Herb Snyder made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the January 12, 2021, Board Meeting minutes.

Steinaker and Red Fleet Inflows John Hunting reported that Steinaker is currently at elevation 5470.92 with an active capacity of 5815 acre feet and inflow at 18 CFS. Last year it was at elevation 5473.12, capacity of 6654 and inflow at 22. There is no way Steinaker will fill because of the required hold for Safety of Dams. If we get a couple of storms things could change.
Red Fleet is currently at elevation 5585.94 containing 16038 acre feet with inflow at 9 CFS. Last year it was elevation 5597.54 containing 20864 and inflow at 15.

Steinaker Dam Gate Modification Spencer Strand and Randy Green showed pictures about what the gates looked like before and after the repair. They got them installed and did a test. The frame seats on the original were brass while the new ones are made of Orcot which is synthetic composite material that is more durable. When the contractor installed them, they did all the seatings at the machine shop in California. The leak tests were performed after they were installed at the dam, but after one season of use at the dam, they no longer were passing the use test. The seats were not installed properly. Spencer and Randy will do an inspection today and get with Weeminuche. Repair may consist of removing stainless steel seats, removing epoxy and replacing it, then putting the stainless steel back. All repairs are covered by warranty. The seats with the babbitt now is liveable and we don't want to make it worse.

Vernal Unit
Efficiency
Project
Watershed Plan

Bart Jensen reported they were operating on the wrong assumption that there was no need for an economic analysis. RCPP will need to go through a full economic analysis that will push the project into the summer months. They are doing everything they can to expedite the schedule. Estimates put the plan into December. The contract expires in July. We are anticipating having this money available to start construction this fall. The financial advisor wants to price bonds in June so construction needs to start in fall. They will meet with the economist today. They are hoping to submit in July of 2022.

Uinta River
Bifurcation

The last extension request expired on December 31, 2020. When we requested another extension, the Bureau of Reclamation was concerned about our progress. We are at an impasse between the Ute Tribe Business Committee and the BIA. The Bureau suggested that we cancel the current contract and re-apply. Then the award could be larger than the original \$300,000. Our current request would extend six months to get agreements and then additional time for construction. BIA has refused to sign right-of-way agreement for the planned structure. Another plan will use current money but also get more funding. One plan is to rebuild the existing structure but that would not help Ouray Park Irrigation and they are a large portion of the stakeholders. Moving the structure upstream would be ideal for everyone. They looked at the option to build on private land but there was a problem with the grade difference. Building two structures, one at the current location and another just upstream on private land, would handle current needs. Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to cancel the current contract and move ahead with applying for funding to do two structures as presented.

Ashley
Upper/Highline
Canals Pipe
Project

To date, they have 60,400 feet of pipe buried and 64,600 feet of pipe fused. The final cleanup is 45,000 feet. 750 feet of pipe was left to be fused and buried at the diversion structure. Then they will install the turnouts and connections. They are right on schedule. They will be able to deliver water in the Highline Canal pipeline this season. The canal channels look better than they have in years. The Board (weather permitting) would like to go tour the project as part of the March board meeting.

Steinaker Reach
II and III

William and John are going to Salt Lake City to meet with the project team. They plan to have the final design ready in the next two months and have contractors bid in Spring. Contractors will be part of the decision on the kind of pipe to use. The plan is to get II finished and do the rest later. The biggest issue they are facing is still prices going up. HDPE is not too bad but steel is at an all-time high.

Master Plan

We are required to provide a Conservation Plan every five years. Keith Larson went through a synopsis of the plan and the reasons behind it. This plan does not take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic. We will make adjustments in five years. Dean Baker asked about the cost of landscaping around the District Office.

WETx

Tyler Dow talked about the value of “institutional memory” and preserving it. Phase I of this project is discovery—looking at history and looking at foundational documents. Phase II is putting it all together into a database. Phase III is coming back with recommendations and proposals regarding a water bank and trying to help the District make good decisions about how we manage our water. Eric went over grants available to conserve water. WETx will then go out and find funding for water infrastructure. It gives us more choices for water funding.

Financial Statements

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the January 2021 financial statements.

Invoices

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$30,469.01; McKeachnie Law Office \$310; Sunrise Engineering \$2,772.93 for a total of \$33,551.94.

New Hire

William presented a job description and job announcement for a new employee. Board members suggested we list benefits. William asked that the board be represented on the interview and selection committee. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the job listing as discussed.

Manager Report

William reported on the Colorado River Authority of Utah Act. We need to have a voice in how the River is run. A representative will be appointed jointly by the Boards of Trustees of the Uintah and Duchesne County Water Conservancy Districts. This could be voted on and approved by the end of the current legislative session. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to write a letter to formalize our opinion to recommend that two representatives be appointed to represent Uinta Basin.

Adjourn

Shane Frost made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.