

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2021

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Todd Thacker called the March 9, 2021, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed guests.

Present: **Trustees:** Todd Thacker, Greg Witbeck, Herb Snyder, Shane Frost, Dean Baker, and Tyson Murray. Quentin Johnson was excused.
Others: William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; Mike Collins, Bowen Collins & Associates; Troy Ostler, CIVCO Engineering; Clint Speirs, BHI; Wayne Simper, Ashley Central Canal.

Approval of Minutes Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the February 9, 2021, Board Meeting minutes after a change to the Bifurcation portion and clarification on the Highline and Upper Canal project.

Steinaker and Red Fleet Inflows John Hunting reported that Steinaker Reservoir is currently at elevation 5473.67 with an active capacity of 6,877 acre-feet and an average inflow of 19 CFS. Last year it was at elevation 5476.31 with an active capacity of 7,937 acre-feet and an average inflow of 23 CFS. We will be lucky to get things up to the next required hold at elevation 5500. We will not be able to give a full allotment. We may want to look at pumping from the Burns Bench. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5586.79 containing 16,361 acre-feet with an average inflow of 9 CFS. Last year it was at elevation 5598.78 containing 21,427 acre-feet with an average inflow of 13 CFS. Red Fleet Reservoir should be able to support a full allotment.

Vernal Unit Efficiency Project Watershed Plan Aaron Averett reported that the economic analysis is underway. There are many questions. Jones & DeMille has been receiving comments from the NRCS on other draft watershed plans. These comments will be used to improve our submission.

Ashley Upper/Highline Canals Pipe Project The board will go on the tour of the project today. They will be able to discuss the progress on-site.

**Steinaker Reach
II and III**

Mike Collins and William reported on potential funding sources for Reaches II & III. Reach III will be divided into three parts and completed as funding becomes available. The NRCS has committed nearly \$4.6 million through the RCPP program. We have a request in to the State of Utah and Bureau of Reclamation for \$1.75 million in MOA funds. The State has indicated that they are preparing a letter of support. An additional \$1.5 million has been made available by the Bureau of Reclamation through the WaterSMART program for Reach IIIA. Pipe prices are down but resin availability is limited due to recent Texas storms. We will have the final design drawings by the end of April. If we are going to pre-bid the pipe, we need to decide by the third week of April. Only one company in the country makes HDPE pipe in the sizes we require. Reasons we are piping include water savings, public safety, and operational efficiencies. It is anticipated that 5,500 acre-feet of water savings will be realized with the canal entirely enclosed. Reaches II and III go up to about Main Street. There was discussion about water rights and secondary water deliveries as more land goes out of agriculture. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to authorize William to submit an application to the CIB Board for consideration at their June 1 meeting. After considering the status of our project funding package, it was determined to not bid pipe, continue with design, and plan for construction in Fall 2022.

WETx

They will make a more thorough report in next month's meeting.

**Green River
Pumping Plant
Shares**

We have sent out letters advertising the availability of additional Green River shares. We should hear back from the canal companies by March 15. After review, we will prepare official petitions. There has been a request to use District shares on a one-year conditional basis without an actual petition. Shane Frost reported that Ouray Park Irrigation Company Green River users are protesting that we are selling more water, when we cannot deliver what has already been petitioned. He asked if the Board would be willing to allow the delivery of additional water from District-held shares in an effort to demonstrate our ability to fulfill current commitments. Water users would pay the pumping costs, O&M and Replacement Reserve rates, but the District would continue to pay the capital costs. Concern was expressed that if such an arrangement was allowed on the west side, irrigators in Ashley Valley wishing to use Green River water (via Red Fleet Reservoir) should be treated equally. This would involve the irrigators paying pumping fees associated with both the Burns Bench and Tyzack Pumping Plants, O&M and reserve fees, and the District covering the \$3.26/acre-foot capital fee. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to allow irrigators access to additional Green River water for one year by paying pumping costs, O&M and reserve fees, and the District covering the capital costs.

**Financial
Statements**

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

Invoices

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$49,708.75; Sunrise Engineering \$214.50 for a total of \$49,923.25.

Joint Resolution

Regarding H.B. 297, Gene Shawcroft has been invited to visit with water users on March 25, 1:00pm, at the Uintah Conference Center. He is the new Colorado River Commissioner for the State of Utah. We need to be unified with the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District (DCWCD). They agreed with us that there should be one representative from Uintah County and one from Duchesne County. It was decided that rather than protest the legislation, and push for additional representation, we needed to secure the position that had been offered. We will have one representative from the two Districts. The bill sponsors added language about advisory councils, but the authority stayed at six members. We sent a joint resolution with DCWCD to Representative Chew and Senator Winterton stating that we support H.B. 297, but if the authority is opened up to more members, we would like to be considered. Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to ratify Resolution No. 20210217. If the appointee from the Central Utah Water Conservancy District is not representing our area, we should reach out to our local trustees. That representative needs to be someone who understands the Colorado River.

Manager Report

William reported that we have seven candidates that look good on paper that we are planning to interview next Tuesday or Wednesday. Dean, Tyson, Todd and maybe Shane could participate with the interviews.

Adjourn

Shane Frost made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.