

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2021

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Quentin R. Johnson called the August 10, 2021, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present:

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

Others: William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, O&M Manager; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Bart Jensen and Eric Major, Jones & DeMille; Troy D. Ostler, CIVCO Engineering; David Gurr and Derk Murray, River Irrigation; Randan Vincent, Brush Creek Water Users; Ken Asay and Dan Larsen, UIIP; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Jeff Heartly, Red Leaf Resources.

Approval of Minutes

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the June 8, 2021, Board Meeting minutes after making a change reflecting that Greg Witbeck was in attendance. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve the June 22, 2021, Special Board Meeting minutes.

Steinaker and Red Fleet Inflows

Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5460.70 with an active capacity of 2,451 acre-feet and an average inflow of 33 CFS with 51 CFS going out. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5573.50 with an active capacity of 11,694 acre-feet and an average inflow of 9 CFS and outflow of 34 CFS to Brush Creek and pumping about 15 CFS across to Ashley Valley Water Users. We pumped 757 acre-feet over to the treatment plant. We have pumped 2,258 acre-feet over to Ashley Valley Water Users for the Central and Highline and the Upper is shut off. There is about 2400 acre-feet left in Steinaker above the conservation pool. We will deliver all of it.

Green River pumped 6458.2 acre-feet and 1387.3 acre-feet was pumped up to Brough Reservoir and 646 acre-feet pumped to Pelican. There is an ongoing problem with trash build-up.

Red Leaf Resources

Jeff Heartly, consultant for Red Leaf, requested approval of a Water Lease Option for White River water. The Board felt that \$150/acre-foot was too cheap. The lease agreement is for ten years. William suggested that the rate be set at \$150/AF for five years and then increase to \$300/AF. If they do not exercise the option during the first 3-year period, we would need to re-negotiate. We want to incentivize use, so the water shouldn't be priced out of reach. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to

increase the price of the option from \$5/AF to \$10/AF and enter into the lease option with Red Leaf at \$300/AF for five years and then re-negotiate after five years. As soon as they exercise the option it ties up the block of water and we move forward to develop it.

**Lower Ashley
Pumping Project**

William reported that a letter had been sent to Ken Kofford at the Bureau of Reclamation asking how to proceed with the Burns Pumping Project. It has been assigned a Project Manager, Jay Kalafatis. They are coming out on the 13th. We are getting started to see what it will take to get a larger pump built. Dave Gurr said that lower Ashley Creek is going down every year so we need to plan to see about getting water from Green River over to the Creek. There is an existing pipeline to the treatment plant that has not been used and we are trying to get more information on it. The pipeline runs from the bottom of the Sadlier Draw Dam over to Sunshine Ranch. We would need more information before deciding to use the existing pipe or use the existing right-of-way and lay new pipe (about 4.5 miles). Derk Murray suggested we come across Shon Massey's pump station and come into the existing pipeline, then run another line up the north side of Highway 40 to back up other users. Randan Vincent said another option is to come around the Vincent place and tie into their lines then we would not have as much lift. We should be able to stay on private land for this project. Scott Chew is looking at what we can do with the \$19 charge associated with Flaming Gorge. We need a two-rate system. We just need to make sure we have customers for the Green River water. Brett Prevedel is trying to get costs and options.

**Vernal Unit
Efficiency
Project
Watershed Plan**

Bart Jensen reported they are getting to the last of the engineering on the economics. They hope to have the EA draft completed and submitted to the NRCS within the week. They need to put a value to salt reduction. They will go through the comment period and have the FONSI by December of this year.

Bifurcation

Eric Major went over the background of this project. They met with the Bureau of Reclamation to try to change the scope and go back to the original structure but the west channel still needs a structure. The Bureau recommended that we submit costs and reapply for a WaterSMART grant that is due in November. We would submit the proposal with structures—rebuild the existing structure but build a new one to get water back to the channel. We don't know the costs yet. We need to get owners' permission before we go after the grant. Ken Asay said the right-of-way has been reserved for construction of canals. The right-of-way exists and is reserved and the owners should be paid. The next step is to call a stakeholders' meeting and decide who takes the lead in applying for the grant. This is not on tribe land so they would have no control. Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously that we look into this and set a \$10,000 limit and get agreements to apply for WaterSMART grant and make sure we have right-of-ways and everything in agreement.

**Vernal Unit
Contract
Amendments**

There are two amendments: (1) 2016 District entered into a contract with the Bureau of Reclamation for the carriage of non-project irrigation water. This contract was irrigation only and M&I users may want to exercise this right also. Rates associated with passing water through District facilities would be \$1.70 per acre-foot for irrigation and \$30 per acre-foot for M&I. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve this amendment as proposed and authorize the District Chairman to sign it. (2) The original 1958 Vernal Unit repayment contract between the District and the Bureau of Reclamation was for service use. The M&I side was set up as a 40-year service contract. After 40 years we would renegotiate the contract. We have been operating under the radar since 2003. This amendment would change the M&I side from a water service contract to a repayment contract which has additional \$14,860 principal paid which will be credited to the project. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve this amendment as presented and authorize the District Chairman to sign it.

**Jensen Unit
MOA Projects**

Projects needed to upgrade the Jensen Unit include replacing the switchgear at the Tyzack Pumping Plant and recoating the regulating tank and bypass pipeline. The toe drains at Red Fleet also need replaced. The winning bid for upgrading the pumping plant came in at \$1,367,931 which is well over the original MOA funding approval of \$888,000 which was also to cover design and contracting/overhead. We will need to apply for more funding in order to complete all three projects. We will wait until both of the Tyzack projects are finished to see exactly how much extra we will need to finish the toe drains. Greg Witbeck made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve the Jensen Unit MOA Projects as presented.

**Steinaker Service
Canal**

We were approved for additional MOA funds in the amount of \$1.75 million for the next phase of the canal. We have \$4.5 million from NRCS.

Drains

The drain which starts east of Walmart and goes to and follows the curve of the Steinaker Service Canal through private property needs to be replaced.

**Financial
Statements**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the June and July 2021 financial statements.

Invoices

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve paying BHI \$7,400; Bowen Collins \$34,008.50; GrayMatter \$8,000; Jones & DeMille \$33,160.68; PdM Professionals \$3,485; Sunrise Engineering \$11,136.75; Talon Field Services \$18,573.30 for a total of \$115,764.23.

**Snow
Christensen rates**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the rate increases requested by Snow Christensen.

**District
Boundary
Realignment**

Since Herb Snyder has asked to be replaced in January, we want to take a look at the District boundaries. Vernal City's boundary has changed substantially since 1956 when the District was first created, so it would be good to have the entire city from which to choose a trustee. When this was presented to Gayle McKeachnie, he suggested that a committee be put together to re-examine all the boundaries and look at adding the Moon Lake Exclusion. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to look into expanding the boundary for the trustee representing Vernal City and look at recovering the Moon Lake Exclusion.

Manager Report

We secured 1000 acre-feet of Stewart Lake water for the Central Canal and are pumping it over. They have been billed (and have paid for) 700 acre-feet to this point.

William listed conferences that are coming up and noted that several of them conflict with our board meetings. We may need to change our meeting schedule.

Troy Ostler responded to questions about the flood that resulted from the heavy rainfall. The Uintah County Commission has been meeting with canal companies, engineers to try to figure out what caused the flooding so we can prevent it in the future. The canals are in the middle of a project and retention basins have not been built yet that could have helped with the problem.

Adjourn

Shane Frost made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.