

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2021

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Quentin R. Johnson called the September 14, 2021, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present: **Trustees:** Quentin Johnson, Tyson Murray, Dean Baker, Greg Witbeck, Herb Snyder and Todd Thacker. Shane Frost was excused.
Others: William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, O&M Manager; Bart Jensen and Eric Major, Jones & DeMille; Dan Larsen, UIIP; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Garrett Cammas, North American Weather Consultants, Doug Larsen.

Approval of Minutes Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the August 10, 2021, Board Meeting minutes.

Colorado River Dan Larsen reported on the Colorado River meeting that was held August 30 with a panel from the Bureau of Reclamation. They talked about the drought and how dire it is. We had a decent water year but the soil was too dry and didn't allow run-off. They are pulling water out of Flaming Gorge to attempt to keep Lake Powell up to functional levels. It will drop 16-18 feet this year.

Steinaker and Red Fleet Inflows Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5457.75 with an active capacity of 1,607 acre-feet and an average inflow of 18 CFS with 25 CFS going out. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5566.14 with an active capacity of 9,477 acre-feet and an average inflow of 10 CFS and outflow of 33 CFS to Brush Creek and pumping about 11 CFS across to the Sand Mine. We are no longer pumping to Ashley Valley, only to the sand mine. Green River pumped 8469.4 acre-feet with 7,815.8 to Ouray Park Irrigation with 1,935 acre-feet of that pumped to Brough, and 653.6 acre-feet to Pelican. Ouray Park has been using extra water below the pumps. We will shut off in another week or two. The storms received helped.

Cloud Seeding Garrett Cammas stated that the drought in the Western United States is very severe. The Colorado River levels are lowest in history and Lake Powell is at a 40-year low. There is concern that there are going to be federal mandates that will impact water rights. He explained how cloud seeding works and also explained how it is set up. They are looking to see why there is less producing and ending up in the Uinta Basin than other areas. After much discussion, Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to support the cloud seeding project for one more year and pursue funding from the State of Utah to set up more stations.

**Green River
Water Request**

Jeff Crozier and Doug Larsen want to try and help the district to develop Flaming Gorge water to protect that water right. They are looking at SITLA ground and looking at integrating the water to that ground with the Burns Bench Pump Project. They would like to apply for 6,000 acre-feet of water with a 10-year window to put the water to use. They would need to file a change application to the State of Utah to change the point of diversion out of Green River. Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve their application in the amount of 6,000 acre-feet of water.

**Lower Ashley
Pumping Project**

William Merkley showed a map that was provided by Brett Prevedel that shows cost and alternatives update.

**Vernal Unit
Efficiency
Project
Watershed Plan**

Bart Jensen reported the National Water Center has hired new staff so return times on applications are getting faster.

Bifurcation

Eric Major reported that 111 Ute Lady Tress plants were found. They need to route the project to avoid those, fence off the areas and keep equipment out of them. They are working on solutions for this problem. We need to get something in writing that we are going to cover it. Doug Prescott said the landowner would be open to allowing an access road to get into the project so we would not have to cross any tribal land. We need a letter from the landowners that we have a right-of-way in place. We also need a MOU for easements. We need to meet with the landowners and have a stakeholder meeting. We need to get updated prices. We are looking at \$1.5 million for the project.

**Jensen Unit
MOA Projects**

The Bureau of Reclamation has contracted with Burke Electric. They will require one day of shut-down at the pump plant. We are getting everything ordered and looking at March or April 2022 for the construction period. We do need to deliver water to the sand plant so we need to communicate that we would be shut down for about three weeks. They use about 12 acre-feet a month.

**Aquatic Invasive
Species.**

Utah Natural Resources has set up a boat wash station on Highway 191 just east of the District Offices.

Rates

William reported that the rates he presented are the same as last year. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously that this be tabled and a work session be held before the October Board Meeting.

**Financial
Statements**

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve the August 2021 financial statements.

Invoices

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$41,640.50; Jones & DeMille \$59,041.09; PdM Professionals \$290; Sunrise Engineering \$8,603.50; Talon Field Services \$490 for a total of \$110,065.09.

**District
Boundary
Realignment**

Gayle McKeachnie prepared a Petition to expand the boundaries of District 5 to match the current boundaries of Vernal City. He will file the petition on behalf of the District, advertise in the Vernal Express then put it before a judge. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to request Gayle McKeachnie to do that. The Moon Lake Exclusion is more complicated. We need to get a representative from the area to promote this.

Public Meeting

Since we changed the dates of our next three board meetings, we need to hold them at 9:00 a.m. because of some schedule conflicts. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously that October 19, November 16 and December 22 meetings be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Uintah Conference Center.

**UASD
Representative**

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously that John Hunting be appointed to represent the District at the Utah Association of Special Districts Annual Conference.

Manager Report

William sent two brochures with Trustees' packets showing impacts to watersheds by irrigation and impacts on water supply.

William and John Hunting will be attending the Utah Water Summit in October. Board members who wish to attend the Trustee training in November and the Colorado River conference in December need to let Mary know.

Adjourn

Tyson Murray made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.