

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2022

Approved

Conducting: Chairman Quentin Johnson called the May 10, 2022, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office and welcomed guests.

Present:

Trustees: Quentin Johnson, Tyson Murray, Dean Baker, Todd Thacker, Shane Frost and Mitch Phillips. Greg Witbeck was excused.

Others: William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille; Jeremy Larsen, Sunrise Engineering; Randan Vincent, Brush Creek River Commissioner; Scott Elliott, Bureau of Reclamation; Keith Despain, Vernal City; Andrew Dutson, State Engineer's Office; Derk Murray, River Irrigation Canal Co; Wayne Simper, Central Canal Co.

Approval of Minutes Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve the April 12, 2022, Annual Meeting minutes.

Green River Water Derk Murray with River Irrigation Company is requesting to lease 500 acre-feet of Green River water so they can pump into the Union Canal and exchange use of Union Canal Ashley Creek water for Green River water. After discussion, Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to lease 500 acre-feet of Green River water to River Irrigation Company for twenty years at \$5/acre-foot with the option to look at raising the \$5/acre-foot cost after ten years. After the twenty years, the lease may be extended. This will allow Union Canal to exchange 500 acre-feet of water.

Operations Updates Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5492.46 with an active capacity of 15,740 acre-feet and an inflow of 160 CFS with 62 going out. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5581.02 with an active capacity of 14,224 acre-feet and inflow of 105 CFS with 33 going out. We are pumping 6 CFS out through the pumping plant for culinary. Brough is at elevation 5108.79 with an active capacity of 2,781 acre feet with 12 CFS coming in and 5 CFS going out. Cottonwood is at elevation 5254 with an active capacity of 3,860 acre feet with 42 CFS going out and 13 CFS going in

John Hunting asked for direction regarding the operation of Steinaker at the hold. After the repair, the reservoir has never reached the hold required at elevation 5,500 ± 3 feet. If possible, he would like to raise the reservoir elevation to 5,503. The hold is to be maintained for four weeks during which time the reservoir must be monitored 24/7. This will require overtime pay for employees. Water can flow

UWCD Board Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2022

Page 1

in and out during that time as long as the elevation is maintained. That stored water belongs to the canal companies; however, the culinarities have a winter water right of 1600 acre-feet that only kicks in when Steinaker is full. If the creek stays up, it will not affect the canal companies at all. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to declare the hold at 5,503 and pay employees overtime as needed to monitor and get the hold completed. Shane Frost made a MOTION that we leave it as canal water. The MOTION was not SECONDED. After some discussion, SHANE FROST made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Mitch Phillips and passed unanimously to table the decision to declare the reservoir full until the meeting in June when we will know more.

**Service Canal
Enclosure
Project**

Pre-qualification packets have been issued to contractors. We had eight responses, six of which were pre-qualified and will be invited to bid. Those bid documents will go out this afternoon or tomorrow. Pipe material will be pre-purchased by the District. The bid for that will go out today with a due date of June 1. Contractor bids are due June 10. We will meet with the Board of Water Resources June 16 regarding funding. We have yet to hear from the State of Utah on Water Optimization Grants through the Department of Agriculture and Food. Our request for infrastructure money is going to happen—we don't know the amount but it will be a low interest loan. Jordan is working hard to get the design finished. We are considering three different material options in the bids: dual barrel 63" HDPE, single barrel 72" HDPE, and fiber-glass. All three options are acceptable so it will depend on cost when the bids come in. There are three different construction options: Reach II, Reach IIIA and Reach III. The Bureau of Reclamation would put us on a repayment contract that would extend out to fifty years.

**Red Fleet MOA
Project**

The Tyzack upgrade is complete. There are still issues with drives tripping randomly but they are still under warranty. The manufacturer has not resolved the issues. We are still operating. We have the final walk-through on the recoating project this Thursday. Everything is complete and they are doing the final cleanup. We asked the contractor to strip the coating back in seven different places where the 42" pipeline transitions in and out of the concrete wall because there was significant corrosion and re-coat those transitions. All the work to date is at \$2.4 million. That is \$1 million shy of what we had set aside so it will be spent on the toe drain replacement which will start July 19.

**Green River
Pumping Plant
Expansion**

Shane Frost reported that the pumps are mostly installed. They are trying to get the electricity done. They need to request another 80 acre-feet of water still which would bring the total to 719 acre-feet. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to give 80 additional acre-feet for a total of 719 acre-feet. The new pumping bill will only go to the shareholders served by the new pumps.

**VU Efficiency
Project
Watershed Plan**

The NRCS has informed us that they have concerns over some projects that may become ineligible for funding since they have already started construction. The canal companies have been promised some of the funding for several years now. They have already taken on the financial responsibilities. We would like all funding to be for all projects involved. One option is that we accept the money and put it toward the Service Canal and make the other companies whole. William presented options to make that happen. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to table this decision until we have more information.

**Financial
Statements**

Mitch Phillips made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to approve the April 2022 financial statements.

Invoices

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve paying Basin Irrigation \$143,496.506; George Weldon Construction \$6,019; Jones & DeMille \$7,162; Brett Prevedel \$1,012.26; Snow Christensen \$500.50; Talon Field Services \$8,820; for a total of \$167,010.26.

Health Insurance

Shane Mayberry put together comparison charts of health insurance policies equivalent to what the employees enjoy now as well as some with lower deductibles. Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to approve retaining the same health insurance coverage that will carry a 5.8% rate increase.

**Green River
Lease Rates**

There was some discussion regarding what was a fair price for M&I water. The current rate is \$5/acre-foot for ag water development. We may also consider leasing Green River water rights for environmental purposes. The cost needs to be different for people who are operating commercial businesses. The board is in favor of increasing but they would like William to come up with numbers for agriculture and M&I.

**2022 Drought
Response -
Flaming Gorge
Release**

The Upper Basin states looked at upper stream storage and approved a plan where between now and April 2023, 500,000 acre-feet of water will be released from Flaming Gorge to prop up Lake Powell. Flaming Gorge will drop between 10-15 feet from where it sits today. We will still experience high experimental fish flows. As a result, we may need to clean out the channel for the Green River pumps. High summer base flows may make it easier for us to run our pumps. We may want to wait to start pumping. By April 2023, they will protect the level in Lake Powell. After that they don't know.

**H.B. 168 - Water
Rights
Amendments**

H.B. 168 is to request the State Engineer to provide a report before the next legislative session. The discussion is based on handling emergencies. M&I water, drinking water, fire suppression and power generation would receive preferential treatment. This would disrupt priority rights and the way they have been handled for years. It may be needed on a short-term basis. It doesn't address how current users should be compensated. This would be temporary as opposed to using

condemnation procedures which is a permanent condition. They need to define what is an actual emergency and whether or not to include drought? What is loss and how is it determined? William is on the committee.

**Hydrology
Report**

The last storm left 11" of new snow at Flaming Gorge Lodge and 3" in Dry Fork. The flows are about normal.

Manager Report

We have a proposal on the table to help River Irrigation. They would like to get their own pipeline and pump system, but in the meantime we will work on the exchange. There is also the possibility of putting a third pump at Burns Bench that would put another 12 second feet in the Burns Bench and Burton pipelines. That would be another 3600 acre feet that we could put in without having the build the addition for much less cost.

The legislature asked the DNR to update the cost estimates for a pipeline taking Green River water from Flaming Gorge to the Wasatch Front. The information is on the website.

Adjourn

Shane Frost made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.