

Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2022

Approved

- Conducting:** Vice-Chairman Tyson Murray called the March 8, 2022, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office and welcomed guests.
- Present:**
- Trustees:** Tyson Murray, Dean Baker, Todd Thacker, Shane Frost and Mitch Phillips. Greg Witbeck attended electronically and Quentin Johnson was excused.
- Others:** William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Craig Nebeker and Clint Allen, CRS Engineers; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille; Jeremy Larsen, Sunrise Engineering; Scott Chew, Utah State Representative; Quinn Bennion, Doug Hammond, Keith Despain, Vernal City; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Scott Wall, Jensen landowner; Rodger Ames, Clyde Watkins, Duchesne County Water Conservancy District.
- Approval of Minutes** Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve the February 8, 2022, Board Meeting minutes.
- Operations Updates** Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5480.4 with an active capacity of 9,706 acre-feet and an average inflow of 20 CFS. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5572.38 with an active capacity of 11,343 acre-feet and an average inflow of 9 CFS. Red Fleet is at the lowest ever since it was filled the first time. It is coming up but we need more water to give a full allotment. We are releasing just enough to provide stock water and keep fish alive.
- VU Efficiency Project Watershed Plan** Bart Jensen reported they got comments back Friday from the State NRCS and are addressing them this week after which they need to be reviewed by the National Watershed Center after which the public comment period can start.
- Uinta River Bifurcation** Eric Major has been coordinating efforts to get other funding sources. One of those is the Water Optimization Program through the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. Projects may receive up to \$500,000 in grant assistance. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to let Uintah Water Conservancy District pay for Eric's time not to exceed \$2000.

**Steinaker Dam
Gate Repair**

William reported that the people from Weeminuchee came a week early so we contacted the people from the Bureau of Reclamation and they mobilized early. The gates are in and Reclamation is satisfied with their performance. Keith Ferguson, a local machinist, helped. The dam is operational.

**Service Canal
Enclosure
Project**

We discovered there is a second supplier of HDPE pipe located in Oregon. If they are able to meet the specs, the freight would be considerably less than from South Carolina. David Robertson is looking at the District's debt capacity which will determine how far we can go with the project this Fall. We have applications for a loan from the Utah Board of Water Resources, an infrastructure loan from the Bureau of Reclamation, and will send an application to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food for a grant. The cost is at \$31 million for the project right now. We will bring a cost estimate to the next board meeting. Bowen Collins will continue like the project is going to happen so we should have the design completed. Reach II would go to just north of Breitenbachs. Reach IIIA would go to Hoopes and Reach III would go as far north as Main Street.

**Red Fleet MOA
Project**

The pumping plant has been shut down since February 28. The regulating tank has been drained and sand-blasted and is ready for paint. All the old gears in the pumping plant have been replaced with new gears. New wire has been run from the new gears to the pumps. We will make the final connection tomorrow. We are ahead of schedule with John working 12-hour shifts. WAPA is planning to reconnect the power in the next couple of weeks but we don't know the exact date. We need to re-furbish the valves since they are in worse condition than expected. We may purchase new ones instead. We have three good crews working on it and John has been putting in long hours. We have gone through about \$1.4 million. We were just informed that the Bureau is planning to replace the toe drain on Red Fleet this summer (July-September). The estimate for all projects is \$3.46 million which will probably not be enough but they are in talks with the Bureau of Reclamation financing people.

**Jensen Unit
Pumping Plant**

The Bureau of Reclamation has agreed to do the first level of analysis. We need to come up with a purpose and needs statement. This is a M&I project even though we will be pumping irrigation water. They had questions on the population projection so we may need to defend project numbers.

**Green River
Pumping Plant
Expansion**

Shane Frost reported they could sell 795 acre-feet to OPIC Shareholders. There are two existing pumps. We will see if they are operational and maybe use them for the project this year or see how they work. We are moving forward to sell the rest of that water. Hopefully we will get the pumps in before water gets delivered this year. There are people who want water but for new, only direct-delivery Ouray Park Irrigation Company shareholders can apply.

**Green River
Water**

It looks like this project is going to happen since SITLA is expected to sign the lease very soon. Water will need to be acquired either from Uintah Water or Duchesne County Water Conservancy District. The Board wants to approve water that is for agriculture purposes only. The new application is just over 3,300 acres. The numbers of grazers impacted has decreased. Both boards need to get together to discuss the project. Since no business plan or engineering drawings have been produced the board tabled it until those are in place and an actual plan is presented.

**Financial
Statements**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the February 2022 financial statements.

Invoices

Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$2,226.88; George Weldon Construction \$5,494.75; Jones & DeMille \$15,412.94; J-U-B Engineers \$1,750; PdM \$725; Sunrise Engineering \$6,134.00; Talon Field Services \$6,134; Uintah Farm Bureau \$200 for a total of \$32,138.57. Along with the donation for Farm Field Day, the board approved John Hunting spending the day there with his water presentation.

**Resolution 2022-
03-08**

Quinn Bennion gave an update on the Vernal Downtown Community Reinvestment Project Area. The Resolution was submitted to the District's attorney and he had no issues. Vernal City wants to increase property values by developing and renewing the downtown area between 500 West-500 East and 200 North - 200 South. There are six taxing entities involved. The estimates are that their tax base would increase from this project and that increase would be shared with the project over the next 20 years in increments. Vernal City will be getting a loan for the amount projected to come in over the next twenty years. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Mitch Phillips and passed unanimously to approve the Resolution.

**Hydrology
Report**

William showed the latest SnoTel reports on the District's website. While we have received good moisture in the past few days, we still need more.

Manager Report

Scott Chew reported on the bills presented in the Legislature that affect the District. He said water was a big issue with Secondary Water being one of the biggest—specifically that it all needs to be metered. He also reported on a bill stating that when Fish and Wildlife transplant game to an area, they need a mitigation plan. Another bill was presented to educate hunters and ATV owners about property owners' gates and respect for private property. William invited all the board to the Colorado River Symposium March 17-18 in Salt Lake City.

Adjourn

After a request from Shane that the meeting time be put on the agenda, Todd Thacker made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.