

# Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 13, 2022

Approved

**Conducting:** Chairman Quentin Johnson called the September 13, 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, Greg Witbeck and Mitch Phillips.

**Others:** William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille; Wayne Simper, Central Canal Co.; Scott Elliott, Bureau of Reclamation; Bart Batty, River Commissioner; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; Matt Foley, V6 Media.

**Approval of Minutes** Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the August 9, 2022, Board Meeting minutes.

**Operations Updates**

Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5477.27 with an active capacity of 8,339 acre feet and an inflow of 9 CFS with 60 going out. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5562.14 with an active capacity of 8,379 acre-feet and inflow of 10 CFS with 33 going out. We are pumping 15 CFS out through the pumping plant for culinary. Brough is at elevation 5087.78 with an active capacity of 443 acre feet with 9 CFS coming in and 3 CFS going out. We are pumping 8 CFS up from Green River. Cottonwood is at elevation 5231.93 with an active capacity of 936 with 11 feet going to Brough. The Green River pumps have pumped 5,475 acre feet with 1438 of that going to Brough.

Releases are down in Ashley Creek. We had stored about 400 acre feet of water that should have been released down Ashley Creek. We released for two days at 30 CFS then cut back to 20 CFS for nine days for a total of 400 acre feet. About four second feet made it to the Union Canal and River Irrigation. We recommend next year lowering the set point where we need to release it down to lower Ashley. Twenty feet would make it there in Spring because the creek is wet.

**Service Canal Enclosure Project**

William gave a project update. Trucks are bringing pipe every day. Over 100 have already been delivered and we are expecting 280. There are two different storage areas. We finalized the funding contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. It is limited to purchase of pipe only. We are trying to make sure we spend the money before September 30 since that is the end of the Bureau's fiscal year and interest will be higher then. The canal was shut off September 1 below 500 North. The contractor will need to de-water portions of the canal. One fusing machine will be here September 22. The plan is to fill the canal in completely then re-escavate the trench to fuse the pipe.

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The number of fittings has been increased with the largest being 15° so there is added contingency into the cost of the project built into the budget. The Bureau is doing inspection as well as the Contractor having their own inspector. He will be on site five days a week. We may need sand for compacting in the pipe zone, but there should be enough soil in the embankment to take care of that.

Our applications for FY2022 Water Optimization Grants were accepted in the amount of \$1,794,938. We will re-submit the application for the Bifurcation project in the name of Ouray Park Irrigation Company. We re-submitted the other District project applications on September 1. We signed the contract and returned to the state so \$500,000 should be made available for our project.

Discussion was held about the best way to document the process of construction of this project. Matt Foley with V6 Media has developed a scope and fee to do that. They would provide a platform where we can show updates of the project to share with media outlets. The Board felt that the pipe supplier and contractor should pay for that. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to have William talk to the other parties involved to partner in the video but we retain control. The cost would be divided four ways with the District participating in an amount up to but not to exceed \$5,000.

**Red Fleet MOA Project**

Replacing the toe drain at Red Fleet is continuing. This is paid by MOA funds. The Bureau is very pleased with the outcome. We have new ways to measure flows. We will continue with daily inspection until the project is completed.

**VU Efficiency Project Watershed Plan**

Bart Jensen reported the Plan EA document has been updated as requested by the NRCS. The project is approximately 98% complete.

**Uinta River Bifurcation**

Bart Jensen reported the Water Optimization Application has been turned in. They mapped routes through private property so the project does not go on tribal land. We are waiting for funding to be in place before we have a shareholder meeting. The cost estimate is \$1,650,000 to build and there should be about \$1,200,000 in grants. The remainder is to be shared.

**2022 Rates**

William Merkley presented the rates for 2022-2023. We need to re-negotiate our contract with the BIA for Ditchrider services. Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve the rates as presented.

**Financial Statements**

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

**Invoices**

Mitch Phillips made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$11,064.88; PdM Professionals \$720; for a total of \$11,774.88.

**Green River  
Pumping Project**

Ouray Park Irrigation Company has petitioned for 200 additional shares. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve that petition.

**GRPP District  
Held Shares**

Ouray Park Irrigation Company has requested the use of District-held Green River Pumping shares to finish out the 2022 season. If the pumping project works, Moffat and others will buy more shares. Ouray Park will pay \$9.85/share plus pumping. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to allow shareholders in OPIC to use extra water for the remainder of the 2022 season.

**Cloud Seeding**

After discussion, Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed by all except Greg Witbeck to discontinue the District's participation in the Cloud Seeding project.

**Manager Report**

William Merkley requested a leave of absence for the week of October 10-14 which will include the October Board Meeting. That would move his evaluation to November.

The Colorado River Water Users Commissioner made a statement that users of Colorado River would have to reduce use by 2-4 million acre feet. In response two Lack of Action letters were written. There are no real plans to do any significant reductions. Water is being released out of Flaming Gorge and that probably happen again next year. The Upper Basin States have an obligation to release 75 million acre feet over ten years to the Lower Basin States. Releases of Lake Powell are 93 million feet.

William will be meeting with the Commissioner at the NWRA and will request that the Green River Block Exchange Contract fee structure be renegotiated. Tyson Murray will be going to NWRA also.

**Closed Session**

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to go into/out of closed session to discuss personnel issues.

**Adjourn**

Greg Witbeck made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.