

# Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees  
Board Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2022

Approved

- Conducting:** Chairman Quentin Johnson called the December 12, 2022, Board Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. at the District Office and welcomed guests.
- Present:**
- Trustees:** Quentin Johnson, Tyson Murray, Dean Baker, Shane Frost, Todd Thacker and Mitch Phillips. Greg Witbeck was excused.
- Others:** William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Bart Jensen and Eric Major, Jones & DeMille; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; John Laursen and Sonja Norton, Uintah County Commission Elect. Jordan Oyler, Bowen Collins & Associates, attended electronically.
- Approval of Minutes** Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Mitch Phillips and passed unanimously to approve the November 15, 2022, Board Meeting minutes.
- Operations Updates** Steinaker Reservoir is at elevation 5484.07 with an active capacity of 11,413 acre feet and an inflow of 22 CFS. Red Fleet Reservoir is currently at elevation 5564.06 with an active capacity of 8,896 acre-feet and inflow of 12 CFS with 30 going out. Brough is at elevation 5,101.83 with an active capacity of 1,817 acre feet. Cottonwood is at elevation 5235.4 with an active capacity of 1,290 acre feet. Pelican was half full December 1—should be full February 1.
- Service Canal Enclosure Project** Jordan Oyler reported that 5,400 linear feet have been back-filled and 6,800 linear feet are excavated and ready for pipe. They are 500 linear feet south of 2500 South and will close that street later this week to do the crossing. They are installing about 200 linear feet per day. BHI brought on additional crews after the slow start and are now on schedule. A separate crew is taking care of stabilizing soft spots. They got materials from different locations with some good clean concrete from Sun Roc. On really wet locations they are sinking wells to drain the trench. They are just managing ground water to stabilize the trench. They are still looking for material for native trench backfill that can be re-seeded. About one-third of the pipeline is installed. They have not started installing any turnouts or turnout structures. Those will be installed in Spring.
- Uinta River Bifurcation** Bart Jensen and Eric Major distributed a handout. They reported that this project was awarded a \$750,000 WaterSMART grant as well as a Water Optimization Grant in the amount of \$500,000. That leaves a balance of \$400,000 to split within the group of irrigation companies. They are planning on putting a

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structure where the current one is and then another structure further upstream. That will bring water back to one channel or another. The existing structure is on tribal land and the new structure is on private property. The second structure can be reduced in size. They will move forward with getting both structures designed and then out to bid. They will work on one structure at a time. They found more Ute Lady Tresses that may cause restrictions during the flowering season. They want to give the contractors as big a window as possible to be able to work around the ULT's. They still need to solidify the contract with the private land owners. The environmental work on the existing structure is in place. They need to get the environmental work done on the upstream structure. They had a meeting with the stakeholders December 8. There will be a meeting January 23 at 2:00 to update the stakeholders.

**Watershed Plan**

Bart Jensen reported that they are going to explore submitting a waiver on the Watershed Plan. They want to prepare a memo and send it to National to make sure they know what is happening.

**Financial Statements**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the November 2022 financial statements.

**Invoices**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve paying BHI \$1,501,861.91; Bowen Collins \$16,661.88; Snow Christensen \$2,076.63; Sunrise Engineering \$6,122.75; Talon Field Services \$380 for a total of \$1,527,103.17.

**Golden Shovel Award**

Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Shane Frost and passed unanimously to add Boyd Kitchen to our nominations for the Golden Shovel Award.

**Wolf Creek Reservoir**

Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District is in the process of creating an off-stream reservoir in Colorado. The District has been invited to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. The Bureau of Land Management will have to create a resource management plan. We have undeveloped rights in the White River so it would be good for us to be a cooperating agency. The reservoir would be just east of Rangely right on the county line and would have a capacity of 65,000 acre feet. We should be aware of what is going on and this way we will get notice of everything that happens. Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Mitch Phillips and passed unanimously to authorize Quentin Johnson to sign the MOU with the BLM on the Wolf Creek Reservoir project.

**2023 Schedule of Public Meetings**

Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve the 2023 Schedule of Public Meetings as presented.

**Christmas Bonus**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve a Christmas Bonus of \$500 for all employees.

**Hydrology  
Report**

The December totals are looking really good. The center of the state is still struggling with extreme drought.

**Manager Report**

In response to the ongoing drought, the Upper Basin States have requested reauthorization of the System Conservation Pilot Program. Individual water users will have to decide whether to divert less water on to their places and be compensated. We don't know how much they would pay yet. Individual water users can ask for more if necessary. They are trying to reduce consumptive usage in the Colorado River Basin drainage. Proposals are due February 1. The money for this program is coming from the Inflation Reduction Act.

Tyson Murray, William Merkley and John Hunting are attending the Colorado River Water Users Conference in Las Vegas.

Todd Thacker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve a \$200 Sponsorship to the Uinta Basin Water Conference in Roosevelt in January.

January 12 Utah State University Extension will host an information meeting on the System Conservation Pilot Program.

**Budget Hearing**

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously that the Budget Hearing commence at 6:00 p.m.

**2022 Amended  
Budget**

William commended John Hunting and Mary Searle for the time spent preparing the budget and keeping track of expenditures. One of the line items showed that the seasonal worker worked longer than we intended. He filled in for Heath so he could go to Denver for Dam Safety Training and worked every other weekend. Gas was higher than planned for in the budget. We backed off some projects because of cost escalations. Winter stock water in Jensen was higher because a meter was not working. We negotiated about \$5,000 less than what they charged us. Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the 2022 Revised Budget as presented.

**2023 Budget**

The Uintah Indian Irrigation Project ditch rider contract needs to be renewed so we requested a 15% increase for the three-year contract. Green River water rights lease fees for 450 acre feet are held in reserve for Red Leaf. Interest received from reserve accounts and debt service accounts is higher. We have a truck ordered for Heath but it has not come in yet so we will move that money from 2022 to 2023. There is a 6% increase in wages included in the budget.

We are working with David Robertson on finding new sources of income so that budget item will be higher. We have added an additional \$10,000 to project assistance fund. There is \$22,000 in the contingency fund.

Shane Frost made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously to approve the 2023 budget in the amount of 4,048,291.

**Adjourn**

Shane Frost made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Todd Thacker and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.