

# Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2019

Approved

- Conducting:** Chairman Todd Thacker called the September 10, 2019, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed guests.
- Present:**
- Trustees:** Todd Thacker, Quentin Johnson, Greg Witbeck, Dean Baker and Tyson Murray. Herb Snyder and Shane Frost were excused.
- Others:** William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Jay Kalafatis and Gordon Bell, Bureau of Reclamation; Aaron Chubbuck and Sam Dils, Weeminuche Construction; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille Engineering; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; Wayne Simper, Central Canal; Mike Collins, Bowen Collins & Associates; Henry Allred, Anthony Lowe and Mike Batty, Simplot.
- Approval of Minutes** Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the August 13, 2019, Board Meeting minutes.
- Steinaker - Safety of Dams** Jay Kalafatis reported that the construction work on the dam is complete. They are working on clean-up work, roadways, seeding and borrow-pit. There was appreciation expressed by Weeminuche Construction, the Bureau of Reclamation and Uintah Water Conservancy District for how quickly the project has been completed and the cooperation by all parties. William Merkley presented Jay, Gordon, Aaron and Sam with Dowdle puzzles of Vernal to say "thank you" for all the work they have done. Aaron expressed appreciation for the cooperation of the people in this area and to the people who operated the borrow pit.
- Vernal Unit Efficiency Project Watershed Plan** Bart Jensen reported they are working through the remaining NEPA. The surveys are done. They are getting feedback from other Watershed plans they have been working on. That will help them in the process. They are waiting for the Bureau of Reclamation NEPA on the Upper and Highline Canals.
- Uinta River Bifurcation** Eric Major will draft a formal extension request to extend at least a year. They have not heard yet what the BIA will ask for right-of-ways. The BIA is working on the NEPA. The cost of the gates keeps going up so they are looking into having a local machine shop fabricate a gate and see if that will work for this project. It takes a long time to get them built. They are still waiting on right-of ways. If the Ute Tribe will not cooperate, we may need to drop this project. The Bureau is cooperating and being very understanding. There has been progress made but it is still slow. They still need to send letters to the water users who have invested in the project.

**WaterSMART  
SCADA grant**

A WaterSMART water efficiency grant in the amount of \$75,000 for UIIP and SCADA will pay for flow meters and SCADA and allow us to manage the water better. We need meters to individuals on tribal ground to solve problems we have been having. The grant is a 50-50 match. The total cost is \$197,000. The BIA will pay the other portion. We will have to have a conversation on how to operate and maintain the system. We can run it but repairs and upkeep should be paid by them. We are renewing our contract with Uintah Indian Irrigation Company. We need to do something to cover overtime spending on their projects. We are proposing an increase in ditchrider services over the next three years. If they don't use us, they would have to hire an independent operator who would work in conjunction with Devin.

**Ashley  
Upper/Highline  
Canals Pipe  
Project**

William had our attorney draft a services agreement with the canal companies. Quentin Johnson made a motion that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to authorize the signing of the agreements with Ashley Upper and Highline Canal companies.

**Central Canal  
Pipe/Pressure  
Upsizing**

Wayne Simper reported that the NRCS will pay 75% cost share in the upsizing. He is putting all the numbers together for a funding package. Uintah County, Vernal City, and Naples City want to go as a combined group to get money from the CIB. The water users are on the hook for 14% of the project. For every \$100,000 the District participates, it reduces the water users share by 1%. After recommendation by William Merkley, Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to participate in the project in an amount not to exceed \$400,000. That would be justified by cost savings to the District's Service Canal Enclosure Project. When the Service Canal is piped, we would have to install a PRV that would cost \$70,000-\$80,000. Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to make sure the vault has enough room for a PRV when they do the engineering for that section of piping the Service Canal.

**Ashley Creek  
Diversion  
Structure**

The diversion structure used by Rock Point, Dodds Ditch, Island Ditch and Central Canals has deteriorated and is in need of repair. We need to do something to help the canal companies and since we use it to deliver water from the Island Ditch Pump Station, it is critical to meet our exchange responsibilities. JUB Engineering met with representatives from the canal companies and everyone was in favor of participating in this project. Greg Witbeck made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Quentin Johnson and passed unanimously to pay engineering fees not to exceed \$40,000. That amount will need to be put into the 2020 Budget.

**Service Canal  
Enclosure  
WaterSMART  
Grant Resolution**

WaterSMART funding in the amount of \$300,000 has come available for funding smaller projects and a second pool of funding available for up to \$1.5 million for projects that could be installed within three years. Jones & DeMille helped us put together several strategies. We would like to apply for both

amounts on Reaches II and III of the Service Canal Enclosure Project. Reach II would cost about \$10 million and Reach III about \$15 million. If funding can come together it would be good to do both at the same time. Operationally it would be good to see the piping up to Main Street. That would give it access to power. We already have funding available in the amount of \$4.5 million through the NRCS as soon as the Watershed Plan is completed. There are additional NRCS and RCPP funding possibilities in the amount of \$3.5 million. We could also go through bonding to fund it. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Quentin Johnson and passed unanimously to authorize Todd and William to sign RESOLUTION No. 20190910A and Resolution No. 20191910B to apply for the WaterSMART grants.

**Set 2019 Rates**

William Merkley presented the proposed rates for 2019 that have not changed since last year. Greg Witbeck made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve the rates as presented.

**Financial Statements**

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve the August financial statements. There was some discussion about the arrangement with Devin McKee to rent his horses and trailer for maintenance on Ouray Park's high lakes.

**Invoices**

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Dean Baker and passed unanimously to approve paying Bowen Collins \$2,118.50; Jones & DeMille \$5,319.86; PdM \$7,315 for a total of \$14,753.36.

**Simplot**

Henry Allred, Engineer at Simplot reminded the Board of the history of the water Simplot receives from the District. They currently are contracted for 400 AF but are obligated to eventually have 500 AF. They also pump water from wells they own. As part of the original agreement, if they cannot pump water they can move the diversion and pump from Brush Creek directly. They were at the meeting to notify the District that they are applying for a change in the point of diversion so they can access their water through Brush Creek. Their wells are tied to other water rights. Chevron agreed to buy Red Fleet water because of protests from the District and the Bureau of Reclamation. They would like to start to pump water out of Ratliff Springs excess flows sufficient to account for the 500 AF of water currently purchased from the District. They would run it continuously year round. This would decrease water that flows back into Brush Creek and would change the point of diversion. The District needs them to have a meter to show what is being pumped. They are just notifying the District that they would be applying to the State Engineer.

**Cloud Seeding**

William Merkley presented some numbers from a study by the Utah Water Resources showing benefits from the Utah Cloud Seeding Program. We have participated in the program for the past 13 years in the High Uintas. The program has cost an average of \$10,000/year. Several board members and other districts feel our participation is based more on political reasons than actual increases in moisture to the Basin. It was expressed that the Wasatch Front gets most of the

benefit from Utah Cloud Seeding and questioned if our cost share is justified. It was suggested that bigger equipment be used to produce more moisture. It was also stated that if it works, it is pretty cheap water. Actual moisture increase is hard to prove. Quentin Johnson made a MOTION to not pay it that was not seconded. Greg Witbeck made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously (with some protest) to continue to participate with the understanding that we don't agree but feel an obligation to partner with the rest of Utah in an amount not to exceed \$12,000.

#### **Website Redesign**

We received proposals from several companies. After going through them, the committee felt that the one that suited our needs was CivicPlus. They are a large company but they specialize in municipalities and water districts. Their rates were competitive and their websites we reviewed were impressive. A concern was if we would have difficulty getting local representation. William called several companies that used their service and they received high recommendations. Our goal is to be the clearing house for all water in Uintah County. They have a partner to work with us on the SCADA. We would have a three-year contract for the design in the amount of \$4,200/year and then \$2,000/year for maintenance thereafter. They have a Utah representative but are from the Midwest. Dean Baker made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Quentin Johnson and passed unanimously to approve the agreement with CivicPlus for website design.

#### **Manager Report**

William needs board members to go with him to the NWRA conference in Houston in November to meet with the Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner.

Quentin Johnson and Tyson Murray expressed interest in attending the Colorado River Water Users Convention in Las Vegas in December.

William reported that we received the stream alteration permit to clean the sand out from in front of the Green River Pumps. The only person qualified to do it is not available until this weekend. The permit lasts until 2021. However, every time we need to go into the River, we need to get permission from the Army Corps of Engineers.

#### **Adjourn**

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.