

# Uintah Water Conservancy District

Board of Trustees  
Board Meeting Minutes  
March 12, 2019

Approved

**Conducting:** Chairman Todd Thacker called the March 12, 2019, Board Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed guests.

**Present:**

**Trustees:** Todd Thacker, Quentin Johnson, Herb Snyder. Greg Witbeck attended via telephone. Dean Baker and Vern Richens were excused. Tyson Murray was sworn in as a new Trustee.

**Others:** William Merkley, UWCD General Manager; Mary Searle, UWCD Clerk; John Hunting, UWCD O&M Manager; Dave Rasmussen, UWCD Consultant; Gawain Snow, UWCD Consultant; Jay Kalafatis, Bureau of Reclamation; Bart Jensen, Jones & DeMille Engineering; Aaron Averett, Sunrise Engineering; Mike Collins, Bowen Collins & Associates.

**Approval of Minutes** Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Herb Snyder and passed unanimously to approve the February 12, 2019, Board Meeting minutes. William Merkley gave the Board an update on Vern Richens' condition.

**Steinaker - Safety of Dams** Jay Kalafatis reported that the final concrete for the intake structure and outlet works will be completed soon. They are working as much as possible on materials at the borrow pit in Ouray. Construction on the dam is at the mercy of the weather and frost in the ground for any other construction. Two gates have been pulled out and the others will be out this week. They have found a new contractor to refurbish the gates and are negotiating a cost. They are still on schedule to pass through water June 1. The reservoir can be filled to within five feet of the construction.

**Vernal Unit Efficiency Project** Bart Jensen and Aaron Averett reported on the progress of the Environmental Assessment. The final plan should be completed by November 19. There was a meeting last week with the NRCS people. They wanted to see the project. They first met with Uintah County Commissioners and Central Canal people. The County agreed to take on more of the Central Canal project and will sign the agreements.

**Uinta River Bifurcation** Bart Jensen updated the Board on the progress. The environmental work is completed with the FONSI waiting final signatures. The old structure has an easement but we need a new one for the new structure. We are still waiting for right-of-way and access permits from the BIA business committee. Because of the delays, they will do a regular design build-bid. They are still hoping to do this project right after high water. The WaterSmart grant expires in October.

**Flood Control**

A meeting was held with the NRCS to get updates on the Highline and Upper Canals. As much flood-water as possible will go into the canals. Uintah County is in charge of Ashley Creek.

**Financial  
Statements**

Herb Snyder made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Quentin Johnson and passed unanimously to approve the February financial statements.

**Invoices**

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously to approve paying Jones & DeMille \$6,306 and Brett Prevedel \$746.34 for a total of \$7,052.34.

**Farm Field Day**

Herb Snyder made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to approve a \$200 donation to Farm Field Day and John Hunting presenting.

**GRPP**

William Merkley said he has talked to Josh Horrocks about the issues on the old Mary Nielsen property. He is concerned about the damage that he feels is being caused by the District on that property. When the Pumping Plant was built, the agreement was between the District, Mary Nielsen and Eric Fisher. The plant and existing power line was moved to the present site to better facilitate pumping. The contract allowed their existing pump to be placed in the District's plant with the District paying the costs to do so. That pump is not providing the water that Josh feels is necessary. He wants the District to assist with the cost of \$17,000 to provide power to a new pump. After discussion, the Board felt that it was not the District's place to do that. William provided pictures and went through a history of the Green River channel and subsequent erosion patterns. The area at issue is upstream from the pumping plant. It appears to be an area of active erosion and then the river has healed itself with new vegetation. We had to get a stream alteration permit to re-channel the river to get water to the plant in 2012 in order to continue to operate. Those efforts have also provided water to the property in question. Josh has indicated that he is not willing to provide any money to assist with reinforcing the river bank. To do so, we would have to get a stream alteration permit and go through the Army Corp of Engineers. Bowen Collins submitted a proposal with a rough estimate of costs. There could be 50-50 match funding through the State Forestry and Lands for \$30,000. After discussion of alternatives, Quentin Johnson made a MOTION that was SECONDED by Tyson Murray and passed unanimously to have William Merkley, Gawain Snow and Tyson Murray meet with the Green River water users and get direction from them before taking any action. There will be a steering committee meeting before the end of the month.

**Part-time  
Seasonal  
Employee**

Gordon Merkley has been our part-time seasonal worker in the past and has been an asset to the District. However, he is William Merkley's uncle and there was concern about nepotism. Tyson Murray made a MOTION that was SECONDED

by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously that Gordon continue to be employed part-time and that he will be supervised by John Hunting and not by William Merkley as stated in the Administrative Code.

**Manager Report**

William Merkley has been spending valuable time with Gawain Snow to learn his duties as General Manager.

There will be a Retirement Party for Gawain Snow Thursday, April 11, from noon-3:00 at the District office unless the response make a change of venue necessary.

William Merkley, Greg Witbeck, John Hunting and Gawain Snow will be attending the Utah Water Users Workshop in St. George March 18-20.

**Adjourn**

Quentin Johnson made a MOTION to adjourn which was SECONDED by Greg Witbeck and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.