

**WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY
DISTRICT**

Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees

February 7, 2018

Minutes of a public meeting of the board of trustees of the Washington County Water Conservancy District, held on Wednesday, February 7, 2018, at 533 East Waterworks Drive, St. George, Utah beginning at 5 pm. Those board members present for the meeting were: Chair Ed Bowler, Zachary Renstrom, Howard Bracken, Kevin Tervort, Ken Neilson, Chris Hart and Jon Pike. Also present were district staff including General Manager Ron Thompson, Associate General Managers, Barbara Hjelle, Corey Cram, Brie Thompson, and Secretary Roberta McMullin. Other guests at the meeting are set forth on the attached sign-in sheet. Ed Bowler conducted the meeting and welcomed those present.

The first item on the agenda was *approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between The Redevelopment Agency of the City of St. George and the Washington RDA with St. George City.* This MOU is for clarification purposes as the Agency desires to update the numerical value of the ILA Base Year Value to reflect the 2016 Taxable Value. It does not change anything in the original agreement.

Zach Renstrom moved to approve the MOU between the Redevelopment Agency of the City of St. George and the Washington County Water Conservancy District. Chris Hart seconded the motion and all voted aye.

The next item on the agenda was status reports on the following projects:

Lake Powell Pipeline – Barbara told the board that FERC has a meeting on the 15th of Feb. They may or may not make a decision on the jurisdictional issue which has put the project on hold for a certain period. If they decide on February 15, there will be a 60-day deadline for initial comments. She said they expect the Department of Interior (DOI) to weigh in with a neutral statement to FERC. She said they have had some opposition from some known special interest groups and some new ones. None of their arguments have been persuasive to our counsel and some appear accurate. Whether FERC rules on Feb. 15 or not remains to be seen. In the meantime, the staff is working on various comments, enhancements,

clarifications or corrections that will help environmental consultants or agencies understand what they are dealing with.

Ron added that they had a constructive meeting with Kristen Cox and Phil Dean and other members of the governor's staff a week ago and some of the concerns expressed there have been addressed. He said they also met with the state treasurer this week and he assured them he is on board and will help us make sure this project gets financed. He feels we should follow the statute unless it is amended.

Sand Hollow Regional Pipeline – Corey Cram reported they are making some progress on this project. They have the conservation measures finalized for the tortoises which has been passed on to the environmental consultants. Also, the biological assessment is moving forward. They have yet to get the biological opinion from US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Ash Creek Project- Corey said they will be meeting with the BLM tomorrow and they are going to address some of the archaeological and cultural resource issues on that project. A major kickoff meeting is scheduled for next week and they are looking for some progress on that as well

La Verkin Hot Springs update – Corey provided a summary of the District's efforts to better characterize and understand the LaVerkin hot springs. The hot springs provide over 5,000 gpm of water to the river which is 108 F and contains 10,000 ppm dissolved minerals, the equivalent of 100,000 tons per year of salinity to the Virgin and Colorado Rivers. The salinity impacts our local agriculture and potential municipal use for the water; has a dramatic temperature impact on the Virgin River fish habitat; and, is the second largest point source of salinity to the entire Colorado River basin. In 2013/2014 the district worked with the Salinity Control forum/USGS to conduct a pumping test. The pumping put a local 'stress' on the system, that is pumped down the water table enough, to see a measurable change on the surrounding seeps and springs. A thermal imagery video of the pumping test was shown.

More recently in 2017/2018 the district has continued efforts and has done some investigative drilling at the hot springs, one 400-foot hole near the entrance of the springs area and a second 50-foot hole on the north side of the river where the old stone building stood. The results were limited, but still insightful. Corey will be requesting additional funding from the Salinity Control Forum to continue the work.

Sand Hollow Well 10 – Brie Thompson reported that they had previously pump tested the Sand Hollow Well 10 up to 1200 gallons a minutes, but when gravel pack was installed, production decreased significantly. Over the last several weeks, the drillers removed the gravel pack and have been developing the well and today they got up to 2300 gallons per minute and cleared up. They drilled to about 600'. Drawdown was about 109'. They will continue to raise pumping rate until they get to the maximum rate. They are continuing to look at how to maximize production and deal with the sand that is produced in this Navajo sandstone. They are hoping to find a good balance.

Brie said that the district now has 15 wells and will have 16 with this Well #10. She showed a map with the locations of these wells and also showed a dewatering system adjacent to the golf course next to a home that was experiencing water in the basement. They showed a graph that showed the results of that dewatering and how the water has gone down significantly.

Chair Ed Bowler asked if there **was anybody in the audience that wanted to ask questions or make a statement regarding any of the reports on these projects.**

Ron Williams introduced himself. He said that he moved down here to Washington County and has a home here and one in Sundance. He said hot springs like La Verkin Hot Springs are considered a national treasure in most countries. He said he appreciates the information and report received at this meeting and it helps him understand the intentions of the district. He said he does not want to work against the district. He said he would like to create a possibility that the community could still have the opportunity to visit the grottos. He said he is hoping for the possibility of a win-win situation. He said the sulfur is not negative, it is positive with health benefits. He just wants to raise the question of how we can work together to reserve some piece of the hot springs for the community and even internationally.

Brian Sanderson introduced himself. He said the Pah Tempe springs have been running for a long time, maybe even a million years. They are not pointing fingers and they understand the need to help the fish and the farmers. He said pulling water out three miles higher has created some of the problems for the fish. He said for millions of years the fish have survived and farming was okay but from the hot springs downstream it has become unsuitable because we have been pulling the majority of the river water out three miles higher. Corey pointed out that we have

seen great improvements in the fish habitat. Sanderson said he would like to see a win-win solution.

Ron Williams added that he wanted to go on record that he can be a resource on this matter. He has visited Glenwood Springs and seen what they are doing with the high salinity problem. He said he wants to work with the board on this. He has a passion for the springs and he moved his family down here for the springs. He said we shouldn't rule out the possibility of reverse osmosis. He also said he is willing to put money where his mouth is.

Ron Thompson gave his manager's report – Ron indicated that the cities need to keep a close eye on HB 303. He believes it will go through some amendments. There is a strict recording requirement on cities related to this bill. It essentially says that if cities don't meet all data requirements they must keep a three-year rolling average of that data. This would apply to cities with population of 500+ or about 165 water connections.

Ron said there are some smaller housekeeping bills and some of them have already passed.

Regarding the water year, Ron said we are going to have to have some pretty significant changes to get even close to reasonable water year this year. The forecast is about 30% of normal through July and this is not a good place for us to be. The one bright spot is that our reservoirs have high carryover. Sand Hollow is about 6 inches from full and Quail Creek is moving up. Unless we get something extraordinary in the next six weeks, Gunlock Reservoir will not fill. The whole southwest is moving into a drought pattern. If these kinds of droughts continue, there must be a plan in place on how to handle it. Ron gave the example of Cape Town, South Africa and how they are headed to a significant water problem. They had plans that never got implemented and when this extreme drought hit, they are not able to deal with it. He said the problem for us is we are dependent on run-off. We can probably make it through this year, but next year could be dismal. He said he just hopes we have a wet spring.

Chris Hart asked if we don't have a wet spring this year and then this happens again next year. Ron said we'll have 90,000 a.f. of reservoir storage and they are working on a plan to help with redundancy that would get us through several years.

Staff - Ron told the board that Melodie Bundy retired as of February 1. Carly Merrill has assumed her responsibilities and is working hard and doing a great job.

Doug Wilson will be leaving the end of March. We are bringing in two field employees to work on project management and SCADA. Randy Johnson will be working with Corey on project management and take over some of what Doug Wilson was doing. Braden Curtis will be helping Mark Layton with SCADA. Ron told the board that two new employees have been hired to replace them and work in field operations. We have 36 full time employees.

Ron reported to the board that we presently have two positions open, one in accounting and the other for the deputy General Manager position. They both close on February 14. The board committee comprised of Ed Bowler, Jon Pike, Ken Neilson and Ron will meet after that to determine which deputy general manager applicants to interview and conduct those interviews and make a recommendation to the board for their consideration.

Upcoming events –

The next board meeting will be March 7, 2018.

The dinner to be held during the Utah Water Users Conference will be Monday, March 19 at 6 pm at Dixie State University, Gardner Ballroom.

The conference is March 20 & 21. All the board will be registered to attend that.

Audience comments and questions:

Ed Bowler thanked the audience members for attending the board meeting and asked if there are any further questions or comments. Kaylee Mellor asked about the Desert Color development that has recently been in the news. Where will the water come from to support that development?

Jon Pike said it really looks worse than it is. They will be doing as much as they can with secondary water for the lakes. Ron added that generally lakes use about the same amount as grass areas of the same size. There will also be ways to deal with that to minimize evaporation. Landscape requirements will be xeriscape. The nicer green areas will be common area. They will use far less water than the Sun River community. It is still early in the process but they are pledging to be very responsible. They will have to work through a development agreement that will govern that development over 24 years.

Approval of Minutes - The board minutes of January 3 and January 16, 2018 were reviewed by the board.

Ken Neilson made a motion to approve the minutes of the board meetings of January 3, 2018 and January 16, 2018. Chris Hart seconded the motion and all voted aye.

Meeting adjournment – Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned.
