

**Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 27, 2020**

The Board of Directors of the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District conducted a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, January 27, 2020 at the District's offices, 210 West Spencer Avenue, Gunnison, Colorado.

Board members present: Rosemary Carroll, Joellen Fonken, Stacy McPhail, Julie Nania, Bill Nesbitt, John Perusek, Michelle Pierce, George Sibley, Andy Spann, and Julie Vlier.

Board member not present: Rebie Hazard

Also present:

Ashley Bembenek, Coal Creek Watershed Coalition
Sonja Chavez, General Manager
Cheryl Cwelich
Jonathan Houck
Paul Jones, Wet Meadows Program Coordinator
John McClow, General Counsel
Greg Peterson
Bob Robbins
Jill Steele, Office Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

Board President Michelle Pierce called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Michelle Pierce said that the board received additional packet materials this evening, including a revised list of non-operating expenses for approval, updated Aspinall Unit release information, and a Draft 2020 education strategic action plan.

Joellen Fonken moved and Rosemary Carroll seconded approval of the agenda with the additional items as mentioned. The motion carried.

3. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Rosemary Carroll moved and Andy Spann seconded approval of the consent agenda items. The motion carried.

4. LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

John McClow said that negotiations of a modification to the stipulation in the Taylor Park Reservoir case have gotten one step closer. Most of the elements of the proposal from Mr. Cockrell's attorneys have been accepted, and, along with additional modifications, the proposal is now before the DOJ for their approval.

Julie Vlier asked John if he would be able to provide an update to the TLUG group when it meets in April, even if it is not finalized. John said he will do so. He said that our counter to the suggested March through October monthly meetings was to meet in April, May, June, and July.

John said that there have been 13 water bills so far this year, and the Legislative Committee has been meeting weekly. Last week, the CRWCD sponsored a bill aimed at resolving the stock watering issue. The compromise bill proposes that if there is administration of an instream flow water right in the wintertime, and there is an un-decreed use which the water user claims was existing at the time of the appropriation of the instream flow right, he can go to the state engineer to have this verified, rather than having to go to water court. The CRWCD thought the existing statute was adequate, but the state disagreed. The instream flow bill we supported last year has been improved significantly and now has the CRWCD's support.

John said that the board has received a request for support in 2020 of its Stewardship Project. The overall project budget for 2020 is \$50,000.

Bill Nesbitt moved to authorize \$2,000 as a contribution to the CWC's Stewardship Project in 2020, and for Sonja and John to determine the appropriate budget line item. The motion died for lack of a second.

Michelle said that the board will discuss this again at the next meeting.

5. MANAGER'S REPORT

Sonja Chavez asked the board if they want to continue to contribute to the Spencer Avenue reserve, which currently has \$30,000, representing three, annual contributions by the District. This will be discussed in conjunction with the 2021 budget.

Sonja said that parking lot congestion issues are being addressed and clarified with the BLM.

Sonja said that the notices for the 2020 Grant program applications went out. Grant applications are due February 28, 2020. She suggested that, for future grant cycles, it might could be beneficial to the District to do feasibility type funding for projects, such as pre-engineering funding. This discussion will be had by the committee along with evaluating grants applications received in this cycle.

The Watershed Management Planning Committee met on December 16, 2019. The group formed an action plan, categorizing projects as ready to build or needing additional feasibility study from the phase 1 streams Ohio Creek, the East River, and the Slate River, as well as a brief action plan for the three sub-basins. There is \$10,000 remaining in the budget for this work. The watershed coordinators met on January 13, 2020 and discussed the remaining work, contracts, and phase 2 work.

The Education Committee met on January 6, 2020 and worked on developing a draft mission statement to guide the District's education program. Sonja created a spreadsheet of current and proposed, future activities.

The Gunnison River Festival will be divided into two parts, one in June and one in August.

Lake San Cristobal Outlet Works Update: A meeting of the Lake San Cristobal Water Activity Enterprise will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

Robert Hurd cleared the snow and ice from the top of the vault yesterday. He also cleared some ice and some rocks that were in the back of one of the gates. He levelled off the gates and matched them. The combined releases through the two gates is currently 19 cfs. The lake level is 8,995.5. Robert also reset the electrical system. Sonja said it would be advisable to see if the Lake San Cristobal Water Activity Enterprise can hire Robert to do that work and to also educate someone from the Road and Bridge department on how to operate and troubleshoot the gates.

Sonja said that the District will be installing a VPN and Sonic Wall so that our network can be securely accessed by staff when travelling.

6. DINNER BREAK

7. UPDATE ON COAL CREEK WATERSHED COALITION ACTIVITIES AND GRANT – ASHLEY BEMBENEK AND ZACH VAUGHTER

Ashley Bembenek gave a presentation updating the board on the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition's activities which include the Slate River Integrated Monitoring Project 2019 Study. The objectives of the study were to confirm that freezing conditions during the winter of 2018-19 decreased E. coli concentrations from peak concentrations measured in the late summer of 2018, and to evaluate attainment of the E. coli standard for primary contact recreational use on stream segments in the study area.

Ashley thanked the board for its continued support of Coal Creek Watershed Coalition. She added that Zach Vaughter has announced he will resign as executive director in March.

Ashely said that CCWC is seeking a letter of support for upcoming, non-point source

application. She apologized for the late request, which she said fell through the cracks of the internal transition.

The consensus of the board was to submit a letter of support. Sonja will draft the letter on District letterhead and will sign it.

8. BOARD/STAFF/COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS

Paul Jones gave a brief update on the Wet Meadows Program. He said that he is still compiling the 2019 report. Tom Grant secured a new grant from NFWF in the amount of \$139,000. Paul Jones is applying for a Restore Colorado grant. He is looking at long term goals and how to meet goals and objectives through long-term funding.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Nesbitt said that the District exceeded its interest on investments line item in 2019. He expects the 2019 final figure to be in the neighborhood of \$75,000.

Bill said that he continues to look into bank rates for certificates of deposit. The District has a few certificates that will renew in February.

Drought Contingency Planning – Status of Economic Impact Studies – UGRWCD and Colorado River District: John McClow said that Ed Harvey sent a letter letting the board know what progress has been made in the economic impact study.

Sonja Chavez said that the ag crop budget is being redone for each basin. The final report is expected in April.

Taylor Park Reservoir: Julie Vlier said letters expressing interest in participating in the TLUG process have been received from incumbents Mark Schumacher, representing whitewater recreation, and from Ryan Birdsey, representing flat water recreation as the new owner of the Taylor Marina.

Julie Vlier moved and George seconded to appoint Mark Schumacher and Ryan Birdsey to the Taylor Local Users Group. The motion carried.

Education Committee: Bill Nesbitt said that the committee had a very good meeting. Sonja produced the spreadsheet the board received this evening, which includes ongoing, annual tasks, and proposed, new tasks. The committee will likely request increased funding for this line item in the 2021 budget. Stacy McPhail said it may not even be necessary to increase our budget if we can leverage more funds from potential partners, as represented by a new column in the spreadsheet.

Watershed Management Planning Committee: George Sibley said that this item was basically covered earlier in the meeting. Currently, the sub-basin coordinators are working on their scopes of work.

Sonja said that a somewhat different approach is being taken in phase 2; for example, this time Jesse Kruthaupt will do all the work relating to agriculture, someone else will undertake angling and recreation. She said there was discussion about adding another potential Western intern to help out, most likely with the recreational portion. Sonja will take on the water quality work and the agency work, coordinating with the various agencies to see what data is out there. Basin outreach probably will not take place until later this summer. The budget will be restructured and run by Chris Sturm for his approval.

Julie Nania asked if the board would have a chance to weigh in on the scopes of work and deliverables before they are approved. Sonja said yes, if that is the board's desire.

2020 Grant Program: This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Update on Scientific Endeavors Within the District: Rosemary Carroll said there is not that much going on because it is winter. She is doing some grant writing. NASA Snow-X is a program linking snow observations with the goal of getting scales in snow characterizations understood and be able to utilize the satellite data.

Penn State has received funding to look at the canopy interactions with water and soil on Coal Creek and will begin sampling in June. Stanford is setting up its next round of proposals in the Slate River to measure heavy metals transport. It is very technical work and a challenge she would like help with is trying to figure out how to take that technical information and make it useful to the District.

Rosemary is building a hydrological model from Almont downstream and will be incorporating the helicopter data in the hydro modeling in the East River.

George Sibley said he would like a presentation to the board by Rosemary. She said that she is speaking in Carbondale and Aspen March 4 and 5, and she could give that presentation to this board.

9. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizens requested to speak.

10. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Julie Nania said that the Forest Service and HCCA have partnered with Wet Meadows. This year, funding is short for materials for one of the projects, and a funding request has been submitted to the CWCB for the shortfall. She said that a letter of support from the District would be much appreciated. She offered to draft the letter. The consensus of the board was to sign a letter of support.

11. FUTURE MEETINGS

Sonja Chavez said that in March, GCEA will come to present on the MOU they are going to sign with UVWUA for the hydro plant at Taylor Reservoir. There will also be a presentation on dust on snow in March.

In April, Andy Mueller has been invited to present. Sonja will ask for board input on what they would like to hear from him.

The Watershed Management Planning Committee will meet on February 10, 2020.

12. SUMMARY OF MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action items include a letter of support for Coal Creek Watershed Coalition and a letter of support for HCCA.

Bill Nesbitt asked about the Water Workshop. Sonja said that the format has changed, and it is now called Western Water Games. George Sibley said that there are now nine regular water conferences going on around the state, and so it was decided that WCU should focus on getting people actively engaged in discussing water issues. They held the games last May, and he thought it was successful.

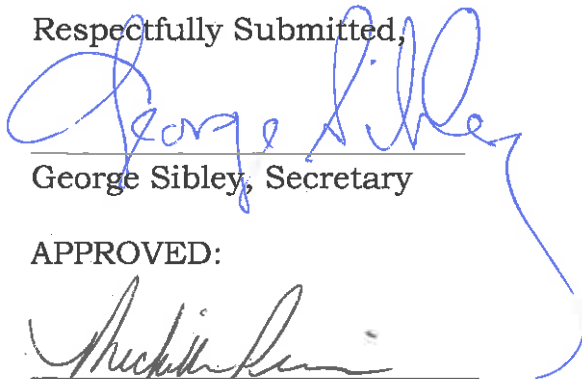
Cheryl Cwelich said she just came from a meeting on that tonight. She suggested that the students reach out to the District's Education Committee.

Sonja said that during the Education Committee meeting, there was discussion of having a workshop the day before the Gunnison River Festival, separate from Western's water games. Next month she will bring an agenda or topic for discussion.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Michelle Pierce adjourned the January 27, 2020 meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



George Sibley, Secretary

APPROVED:



Michelle Pierce, President