

Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Annual Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 28, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District conducted its annual meeting on Monday, June 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the District offices, 210 West Spencer Avenue, Suite B, Gunnison, CO, 81230.

Board members present: Rosemary Carroll, Joellen Fonken, Rebie Hazard, Stacy McPhail, Julie Nania, Bill Nesbitt, Michelle Pierce, John Perusek, Don Sabrowski and Andy Spann.

Also present:

Sonja Chavez, General Manager

Raquel Flinker, Colorado River Water Conservation District

David Gochis, National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)

John McClow, General Counsel

Dominic Oldershaw (unknown)

Beverly Richards, Water Resource Specialist

Jill Steele, Accountant/Office Manager

Sue Uerling, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Michelle Pierce called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Director Rosemary Carroll arrived at 5:50 p.m.

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Director Stacy McPhail moved and Director Rebie Hazard seconded approval of the agenda as circulated. The motion carried.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

Judge Steven Patrick administered the Oath of Office for Julie Nania, renewing her term until 2024.

4. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Director Joellen Fonken moved and Director Bill Nesbitt seconded approval of the consent agenda items. The motion carried.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The current officers of the UGRWCD are: President Michelle Pierce; Vice President Stacy McPhail; Secretary John Perusek; and Treasurer Bill Nesbitt. President Pierce asked for nominations from the floor. None were offered. All current officers agreed to continue to serve in their present roles for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Director Andy Spann moved and Director Julie Nania seconded approval of the current slate of officers for 2021-2022. The motion carried.

6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION APPOINTING FINANCIAL OFFICERS

Resolution 2021-04 was included in the Board Packet. President Michelle Pierce asked if there were any questions. None were raised.

Director Bill Nesbitt moved and Director John Perusek seconded the adoption of Resolution 2021-04 appointing the financial officers for the District. The motion carried.

7. RE-AUTHORIZATION OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A copy of the current committees and members of each committee was distributed in the Board Packet. President Pierce asked if there were any changes or additions to committees and/or committee members. Director Andy Spann and President Michelle Pierce both requested that they be removed from the Watershed Management Planning Committee due to time constraints. No other changes were requested.

Director Bill Nesbitt moved and Director McPhail seconded approval of the re-authorization of Board committees and committee members for 2021-2022 with the changes noted. The motion carried.

8. PRESENTATION BY DAVID GOCHIS, NATIONAL CENTER FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH (NCAR)

David Gochis, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), gave a presentation about NCAR’s Seasonal Water Supply Prediction Model based on the research they have done since last year and trying to improve water supply forecasting and identify other hydrologic risks. He said NCAR is hoping to capture additional and more accurate data through the addition of SNOTEL/SNODAS stations and/or satellite-based products and through additional partnerships with other organizations gather similar data. David noted that overall, the models were “flatter than what we saw last year” with the exception of the East River. He said that NCAR will be generating some model corrections going forward as their models had a “slight low bias compared to the data from the SNODAS and SNOTEL sites.”

Director Joellen Fonken asked if the high winds that the District experienced in late winter and spring could affect the data from those sites. David replied that yes, some sites benefit from wind loading and some lose snow, but snow redistribution caused by the wind is not included in the final accumulation totals. However, he noted that in the corrections that they will generate going forward, this factor would be included.

General Manager Sonja Chavez asked for David’s opinion about the cost versus the value of data captured when using ASO’s. David said NCAR will be developing specific ASO models based on the two ASO flights they did this past year, and that the data would be very valuable to their models. Sonja offered that Laurna Kaatz of Denver Water might also have data that she would be willing to share with NCAR. Sonja also asked if NCAR will be able to use the radar data from the new weather radar station being installed by Western States Water Partnership at County Road 32A near Blue Mesa Reservoir. David noted that there is an 18-month station in Mt. Crested Butte that will be part of the SAIL project and another NOAA station installed near Roaring Judy that will provide data for 12 months, both of which can be very valuable providing real time data. Sonja also indicated that she coordinated with the Colorado River District to ask Congress to pay for acquisition of gap weather radar data. David indicated that the data would be very valuable if it can be provided in real time or within for example 48 hours. Sonja offered to address this in the language within the draft memorandum of understanding with Western States Water Partnership.

9. BREAK

10. GENERAL MANAGER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bill Nesbitt reported that the market is still flat and indecision is driving the market, but that he thinks the Federal Reserve will have a hard time raising interest rates in the near future. Bill predicts that the District will be close to making one percent on our investments this year.

B. Watershed Management Planning Committee Update

General Manager Sonja Chavez referenced the work session that was held with City of Gunnison personnel on June 14th. She felt it was a good meeting to discuss possible opportunities for partnering with them on future projects, particularly augmentation water sources. The City will publish their Master Plan soon, so this will provide more information about possible opportunities to cooperate. Questions and discussion followed about how the District views municipal projects as efficiency projects versus normal operations/maintenance or deferred maintenance with respect to granting funds. Director Nania noted that the Grant Committee has wrestled with this issue before. Director Stacy McPhail pointed out that during the work Session, City of Gunnison representatives were talking about planning for population growth by researching options for a source for water storage and that this is different than standard operations and maintenance. Questions were raised about whether the District is bound by statute on what funding it can provide for municipal projects. Sonja said that at this point she sees the District's role as one more of administrative or political support (e.g. helping write grants, funding studies on water and growth, or managing grant funding). Director Rosemary Carroll offered that she felt each grant applicant would need to be addressed on an individual basis and that it was her position that we should not make a blanket statement about what we might support. Sonja noted that one observation coming out of this year's grant cycle was that it would be beneficial for the District to require that applicants considering submittal of a grant funding request should meet with District staff in the fall. This would ensure that there is time to discuss all of the implication of the project and be able to make determinations in advance about whether a project is an efficiency project versus deferred maintenance. Sonja offered to check with other grantors to see how they handle such issues and will report back to the Grant Committee and Board.

Sonja referenced the memo in the packet regarding the three contracts, each under \$100,000, that she is considering. Sonja said she plans to move forward with the \$38,000 contract with JW Associates for their expertise in compiling all of the different research and data that is available, specifically as it relates to forest fire zones of concern. Sonja will have General Counsel John McClow review the contract. Sonja noted that JW Associates will present their findings at a minimum of three stakeholder meetings one of which would include our Board. Sonja said that there will be other entities in the District who will benefit from the study and that Scott Morrill of Gunnison Emergency Management has already expressed his interest in this data and work effort. Sonja noted that she continue moving forward with her development of two additional sole source contracts for other watershed planning activities as noted in the memorandum in the Board Packet.

Sonja reported that drafting of the contracting with KR Welding & Fabrication for the Outcalt No. 2 & GTVA Shared Ditch Diversion are underway. Staff plans to complete grant contracting with the Colorado River District for Community Partnership Funds by the end of July so that construction can commence on or around August 15th.

C. Education & Outreach Update

General Manager Sonja Chavez referred to the memo in the packet provided by intern Alex Baca. She said the yard sign distribution is still ongoing and that we will need to hit the Crested Butte area harder later in July. Alex has developed a District Instagram account geared toward youth and will provide a demonstration for the Board in July.

E. Taylor Local User's Group (TLUG) Update

TLUG Chair Don Sabrowski noted how grateful he was to have Director Andy Spann back in person. Don asked Andy if he had received any negative comments from irrigators about TLUG's decision to reduce releases from 300 down to 275 at the end of June. Andy replied that there had been a few comments from a small number of users at the far end of the valley but that overall, everyone understands that this is an effort to save some water for late summer/early fall. Don reported that the draw-down of Spring Creek reservoir and the recent rains have definitely helped the situation.

Chair Sabrowski also asked General Counsel John McClow if next year when Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) attempts to refill Spring Creek Reservoir, what will happen to the

streamflow below the reservoir if the district has below normal snowpack again next winter. John said that if CPW is in priority with their water right, then they have the right to take all inflow in Spring Creek upstream of the reservoir. John said he will research the decree to determine CPW's priority rights and report back.

Don noted that the next TLUG meeting will be Wednesday, July 7th at 9 a.m. in person in the District Board room.

F. Basin Water Supply Update

Water Resource Specialist Beverly Richards provided a Power Point presentation of the most recent drought and precipitation forecasts available. Bev said that over the weekend, the District rain gauge collected nearly .8 inches of rain and that the forecast calls for more rain this week. While this is good news in the short-term, the long-term forecasts are still predicting drought conditions to increase across the west and in the basin over the next few months with lower-than-average precipitation.

G. Scientific Endeavors

Director Rosemary Carroll reported that she was in the field all day with US Forest Service staff and Western University professors. Rosemary said she has been thinking how the variety of scientific studies and projects going on in the basin might overlap to provide important hydrologic information and outcomes for the watershed. She noted that the Forest Service is very interested in having a 100-foot fire break. Director Bill Nesbitt offered that there may be some historical data from Jerry Chonka that might be of interest.

H. Gunnison River Festival (GRF)

Director Joellen Fonken and GRF Chair thanked the UGRWCD staff for their "amazing support" during the GRF. Joellen said this year's GRF had the biggest field ever on Taylor Down River race and that pre-registration really helped. She said that there may have been a little overkill in offering a few too many educational components and that some folks did say they missed the Whitewater Park component, as there is a different group of boaters who take part in the Taylor River races versus the White Water Park activities. Overall, Joellen felt the event was successful considering the constraints and late timing due to Covid-19.

11. UPPER GUNNISON DISTRICT DEMAND MANGEMENT STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING UPDATE

General Counsel John McClow referenced the draft document in the packet and went over the redlined portion with the changes requested at the previous meeting. Director Bill Nesbitt questioned the Equity section and why we should have to share proportionally in demand management. John indicated that the “the whole plan is designed to be proportional so that no one is disadvantaged. The question is how can you accomplish that in an entirely voluntary program. The CWCB has not ever resolved the inconsistency.”

President Michelle Pierce asked where we go from here with this statement. John noted that it will be presented to Kathleen Curry at the Gunnison Basin Roundtable meeting, we can send it to the CWCB and that we can share it on our website and social media outlets. General Manager Sonja Chavez noted that there has been some confusion on the effort as stakeholders are being approached by both the State and Colorado River District about the concept. President Pierce asked if the Board was comfortable with broad distribution of this updated statement and the consensus was YES.

12. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

General Counsel John McClow reported that he had a conversation with Steve Anderson from Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (UVWUA) and that after several meetings with the state Attorney General and the Division of Water Resources, UVWUA is not going to take any further action to protect water going over dam and they are going to let it be for the time being. He wasn't willing to predict too far into the future but everything was going to be fine with the way things are. They are going to manipulate their storage a little, but that can't hurt us and can help us with regard to the storage at Taylor Park.

John also reported that the Colorado Water Congress will hold their Summer Conference August 24-26 in Steamboat. He noted that it will be held both virtually and in person with some of the technical webinars being presented in advance. John offered that staff would email the link for the conference to all Board members and they should reply with their interest in attending as soon as possible.

General Manager reported that she is considering starting the July monthly Board meeting at 4 p.m. with a short meeting following by a tour of three of the water projects the District is

currently involved in. She asked Board members to please email her with their thoughts, wishes, concerns.

Sonja also noted that on June 24th, stage one fire restrictions went into effect in Gunnison County. She wasn't sure about Saguache County.

Sonja said the foundation repair work on the Spencer condo building would begin July 2. She also noted that the condo association received a quote on repairing the roof of the building at upwards of \$40,000 because of all of the issues that were discovered. She said a presentation will be made to the Board and/or the condo association at a later date.

Sonja reported that the District is helping sponsor the 4-H Junior Livestock barbecue prior to the livestock auction at the fairgrounds. The District will have a table where water bottles, stickers, reusable bags and other education materials will be displayed and available for attendees.

13. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No comments were brought forth.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS

Please see the schedule in Board Packet.

15. SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

General Manager Sonja Chavez will coordinate getting the data from the new radar station at Blue Mesa to NCAR.

Sonja will also contact Steve Anders from the USGS on the anomalies occurring with the Willow Creek gauge.

Sonja will also reach out to other granting entities about how they determine/handle water efficiency projects versus maintenance/operations projects.

Sonja will coordinate with JW Associates to schedule a time when they can present results to the Board.

Administrative Assistant Sue Uerling will send an email with the link about the Colorado Water Congress Summer Convention in Steamboat to submit registrations for any interested Board members and staff.

The District will start sharing the updated Demand Management Statement of Understanding with the public and on media outlets.

General Counsel John McClow will research the decree for water rights for Spring Creek Reservoir.

16. ADJOURNMENT

President Michelle Pierce adjourned the June 28th, 2021 meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



John Perusek, Secretary

APPROVED:



Michelle Pierce, President