

**Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Lake City Fire Station
Tuesday May 24, 2022**

The Board of Directors of the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the Lake City Fire Station, 131 North Henson Street, Lake City, CO, 81235 and via Zoom video/teleconferencing.

Board members present: Sara Bergstrom (via Zoom), Joellen Fonken (via Zoom), Stacy McPhail, Julie Nania (via Zoom), Bill Nesbitt, John Perusek, Michelle Pierce, and Andy Spann (via Zoom).

Board members not present: Rosemary Carroll, Rebie Hazard and Don Sabrowski.

Others Present:

Cindy Dozier

Robert Hurd, Lake San Cristobal Water Activity Enterprise

Sonja Chavez, UGRWCD General Manager

John McCloy, UGRWCD General Counsel (via Zoom)

Beverly Richards, UGRWCD Water Resource Specialist

Jill Steele, UGRWCD Accountant

Sue Uerling, UGRWCD Administrative Assistant/Communications Specialist (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order

Board President Michelle Pierce called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Agenda Approval

Bill Nesbitt moved and Stacy McPhail seconded approval of the agenda as circulated. The motion carried.

3. Consent Agenda Items

Stacy McPhail moved and Bill Nesbitt seconded approval of the consent agenda items. The motion carried.

4. Legal and Legislative Matters

John McCLOW asked if there were questions on the final, legislative report he provided to the board. There were no questions.

Before the board for consideration and adoption is a proposed policy regarding endorsements by directors. It reads: “Unless a director has been appointed by the Board of Directors to represent the District in another organization, a Director may not identify in any way as a representative of the District without prior approval from the Board.

Bill Nesbitt moved and John Perusek seconded adoption of the Policy Regarding Endorsements by Directors. The motion carried.

Bill Nesbitt said sometimes things move fast, and it would be good if a director has something come up it is good to have the advance time to give the board, or at least staff, a heads-up.

5. Colorado Dust on Snow Program (San Juan Basin), Jeff Derry

Jeff Derry, of the Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies, gave a presentation on dust on snow.

Jeff said that from 2006 to 2022, the daily average melt has gotten 20 days earlier. 2009 was a record dust on snow year. Northern Colorado is currently a lot wetter than the southern part of the state.

When he went out to do sampling this month, Mr. Derry reported that there was no snow to be found in many places that usually have snow in May.

The Rio Grande basin has much more severe dust, going back to early April.

Jeff encouraged the board and public to check out the spreadsheet they have on their website that gives snow and dust information. Also, drought.gov has images and information.

The Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies is about 15 miles from Hinsdale County, as the crow flies, so some of their data could be useful for Hinsdale County.

Joellen Fonken asked if atmospheric thirst describes only air, or soils as well. Mr. Derry said that the evaporative demand in the atmosphere can steal water from plant and soils, especially those exposed to the atmosphere, as opposed to covered by snow.

6. Basin Water Supply Update

Bev Richards gave a brief update to her May 13, 2022 Basin Water Supply Information report.

Hinsdale County, Ouray County, and Mineral County are all now in severe drought. Saguache County is half in severe drought and half in extreme drought.

Sixty-four percent of the state is in severe to exceptional drought, up from 48%.

All streamflow gage sites show they have peaked and are all below the historical average. The exception is the Gunnison River at Whitewater Park gage, which does not have a long period of record.

Taylor Park Reservoir inflows are now projected to be 87,000 acre-feet, down 3,000 acre-feet from the May 4, 2022 projection.

7. General Manager, Staff and Committee Updates

Treasurer's Report: Bill Nesbitt said there is not much to report on. The District is in good shape. The stock market is not good, but it was up this afternoon. He went to Community First Bank in Lake City to look into interest rates, which were at about .5%. A certificate of deposit at the Bank of the West will mature at the end of the year.

Jim Lebenthal with Cerity Partners and Jamie Dimon with JP Morgan Chase are saying that the numbers indicate a correction, not a recession. Most larger cities are at full employment.

The 10-year bond is at 2.724%. The 2-year bond is at 2.464%, which is odd because it is only 30 basis points lower.

General Manager's Update: Prehearing Conference Regulation #35: Sonja Chavez said she recused herself from the recent meeting because she was new and the District had already submitted a prehearing statement with her name on it. The Homestake Mine has agreed to a new, temporary modification. The EPA is not supportive and wants a plan of what they will do to address mine remediation.

Mt. Emmons Mining Company: Coal Creek is attaining the acute aquatic life standard. Although the Keystone Mine has completed improvements and fulfilled some of its required reclamation work, they still retain an issue with cadmium at the site.

Grant Applications Pending & Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Requests: Sonja reported that the U.S. FWS Sagebrush Ecosystem Grant has been awarded at \$273,350.

Board action was sought on a bid for roof repair at 210 West Spencer Avenue. John McClow advised that it is not necessary to go out for a public bid. The bid can be sent directly to roofers, preferably three of them.

Stacy McPhail authorized the General Manager to contract with the most qualified, reliable, and financially feasible company. Bill Nesbitt seconded. The motion carried.

Water Roundup 2022 Conference Planning Update: Sonja Chavez said that the conference will take place on Thursday, June 9 from noon – 9:00 p.m. at the IBar Ranch. She asked Michelle Pierce if she would open the conference, speak about the UGRWCD, and introduce George Sibley. Michelle agreed.

Watershed Management Planning: Sonja said that a complication with the wetlands assessment is that the State is doing a wetlands mapping update. We are going back and forth on whether we can do something in advance of the wetlands assessment or perhaps at a higher level to complement the process. Or do we just put it on a lists of action items in the basin. We have lost 52% of wetlands.

Bill Nesbitt asked if there is data available that takes that 52% and calculate the effect on water availability. Sonja said that there are people doing work on that.

Wet Meadows: Bill Nesbitt asked if Cheryl Cwelich can give an approximation of acreage that has been affected. Sonja said she will be able to very soon.

“Water Roundup” 2022 Conference: The first annual Water Roundup will take place Thursday, June 9, from 12:00 – 9:00 p.m. Michelle Pierce will open the conference, make some brief remarks, and introduce George Sibley. Stacy McPhail will discuss the role of conservation easements in the preservation of agriculture and protection of water resources. Becky Mitchell, CWCB Executive Director, will be in attendance, possibly presenting over the noon hour. There will be a bonfire and fireside chat. The CRWCD is a conference sponsor and they will give a “state of the river” update as part of it. Newspaper ads are running this week. Conference registration is \$50 per person including all meals. Just the evening barbecue can be purchased for \$10 for each additional guest.

Taylor Local User’s Group Update - May 5, 2022 meeting summary: Sonja said that the Four Parties meeting took place in May. The recommended schedule of releases by the Taylor Local Users Group was approved at the meeting. Conversations have been getting tougher as we get into drought years. Ernie Cockrell and the UGRWCD do not agree on interpretation of the stipulation. Taylor is not going to be used as a storage vessel in dry years. We were hoping to have some extra water in September, but that most likely will not happen.

Education & Outreach Committee - May 6, 2022 meeting summary: Bill Nesbitt said he had nothing to add to the report in the packets. Approximately half the education and outreach budget has been spent so far this year.

Stacy McPhail said that the Gunnison Cattlewomen put on Ag Venture Day for Gunnison and Crested Butte students from grades K through 5. Bev Richards and Sue Uerling kindly volunteered to come to assist, using the Conservation District's water trailer as a teaching tool 16 times in 1 day. The UGRWCD paid for new tires, tarp, chock blocks, and cover for the tires. The Education Committee decided to put money into Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory's science education day for grades 3-5 grades. The cost is \$1250 for the event and \$750 to the school to transport the children.

Stacy said the Cattlewomen have been trying to figure out how to best reach out to Lake City children. She said she could bring the water trailer to Lake City to do a demonstration for the school children. Michelle will give Stacy a contact number to call.

Scientific Endeavors: Rosemary Carroll was not in attendance. Bev Richards said that ASO flights were scheduled for May 18 and 19 in the East and Taylor Rivers. They may have been grounded on the 19th, due to weather.

Sonja Chavez said that \$200,000 in funding to study harmful algal blooms was obtained from Gunnison County. Additional funding is being sought, including from the CRWCD's grant program.

Gunnison Basin Roundtable Update:

Bill Nesbitt moved and Stacy McPhail seconded to appoint General Manager Sonja Chavez as the Upper Gunnison representative to the Gunnison Basin Roundtable. The motion carried.

Gunnison River Festival Update: Joellen Fonken said that this year, there will be 4 hours of Gunnison River Festival activities at Lake San Cristobal on Sunday, June 12, in conjunction with the Lake Fork Valley Conservancy.

8. Miscellaneous Matters

Sonja Chavez said that the Executive Committee was not able to meet in April. Due to the Water Roundup, the Gunnison River Festival, and vacations, it would make sense to push that out until July. The board agreed.

Board members with expiring terms need to submit letters of interest to the judge by this Friday, May 27, 2022.

9. Citizens Comments

Grant Houston, of Silver World Newspaper, said he is glad to attend the meeting and to see the board here in Lake City.

10. Future Meetings

The Colorado Water Congress conference will take place in Steamboat Springs later this year.

The District's annual audit site visit will take place May 31 – June 3, 2022.

TLUG meeting: June 7 at 9:30 a.m.

UGRWCD Water Roundup at IBar Ranch: June 9 – 10, 2022.

20th Anniversary of the Gunnison River Festival: June 10 - 12, 2022.

Watershed Management Planning Committee: July 12 at 1:30 p.m.

11. Summary of Meeting Action Items

Follow up with Rebecca Hall at the school.

Schedule Executive Committee meeting in July.

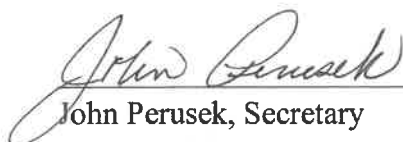
Add policy regarding endorsements by directors board policies.

Michelle and Sonja: Letter regarding Sonja's appointment to the GBRT.


12. Adjournment

Board president Michelle Pierce adjourned the May 24, 2022 meeting at 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


John Perusek, Secretary

APPROVED:


Michelle Pierce, President