

A special meeting of the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) Board of Directors was held on January 3, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 1:34 PM at the District Board Room, 410 N. Main St, Yerington, Nevada by President Jim SNYDER.

**Present:**

Jim SNYDER	President
Marcus MASINI	Vice President
David GIORGI	Director
Robert BRYAN	General Manager
Jessica HALTERMAN	Secretary
Gordon DePAOLI	Legal Counsel via phone

**Public Present:**

Silas Adams	Joanne Sarkisian	Isaac Metcalf	Kerry Stevens
John Bakos	Dale Borsini	John Snyder	Taylor Thomas
David Peri	Paul Sciarani		

**1. Public Comment:**

None presented.

**2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum:**

Treasurer Nuti and Director Acciari were absent.

**3. Presentation from Walker River Irrigation District staff and District legal counsel regarding the requirements under N.R.S. Chapter 539 for the formation of local improvement districts to acquire existing multi-user irrigation ditches diverting from the River from existing owners (ditch companies and/or tenants in common) for purposes of their continued operation and maintenance by a newly formed improvement district and issues related thereto:**

GM BRYAN gave an overview of what the District can/will provide and how it would operate the Local Improvement District(s). Discussion included:

- A list of 7 steps is available in the office as well as on the District's website. Each step would need to be completed before submitting documentation to the District. GM BRYAN stated the office staff is willing to assist in any of the steps/information gathering if requested. Also, Counsel DePaoli will be creating a resolution for the ditch companies to sign that will include signatures of those who are in agreeance of becoming a Local Improvement District (LID).
- A handout was provided that listed all the services being done for individual ditch companies. WRID does not currently charge for the services, but it was mentioned during the recent financial audit that the services could be charged for as private accounting firms charge for the same services.
- GM BRYAN stated a template for how a LID operates is WRID Local 4 (Saroni Canal). The LID would each have an Advisory Board that meets at least once per year and more if topics arise. The Advisory Board would be the deciding factor in setting assessment prices, requesting repairs & maintenance and making large decisions. The

recommendations from the Advisory Board are then taken to the WRID Board for final acceptance/approval.

- The assessments would be billed and collected through the Lyon County Tax Roll. Kerry Stevens asked if WRID would attempt to collect outstanding assessments; Secretary HALTERMAN stated the District could only collect amounts outstanding after the LID is formed; previous outstanding balances would need to be collected by the ditch company, but WRID could assist.
- John Bakos asked how many ditch companies the District owns; GM BRYAN stated the District owns 2 out of 40+ ditch companies. The District has 5 employees and is responsible for over 80,000 water righted acres; TCID has 60,000 acres and 44 employees plus the manager. TCID also assesses every land owner in Fernley and Fallon whether they are a water right holder or not.
- GM BRYAN advised a 'one shoe fits all' type of bylaws is desired for all LIDs. President SNYDER inquired how the bylaws for the ditch companies who allow the transfer of water outside of the ditch would differ from the ones that don't; Counsel DePAOLI advised there will be a difference between ditch companies who are recognized as owning the water rights under the decree and individuals own their rights through the ditch company compared to ditch companies which simply transport water and the individuals own the water rights separately. Whatever the law is with respect to ditch companies that own the water rights and the shareholders take the water rights according to articles and bylaws. If it is a ditch company that simply transports the water, the LID would not necessarily be able to enforce the old bylaws. On the other hand, one thing being done with the acquisitions is requiring NFWF to continue paying all assessments as if the water is still used for irrigation at its original place of use. Also, having a ditch improvement assessment would help in continuing to pay what is necessary to operate the ditch.
- GM BRYAN stated there have been previous concerns about a ditch company being able to dissolve the LID if they do not agree with how the District is operating the canal. If a ditch company wants to dissolve the LID, it would need to follow statute.
- John Bakos asked what the procedure for ordering water entailed; GM BRYAN stated a water user calls the ditch rider with an order; the ditch rider informs the river rider who informs the Water Master. WRID is the record keeper for the orders and submits the records to the State.
- GM BRYAN stated, currently, some ditches need major repairs and are not eligible for federal grants; if the ditch company becomes a LID, they are more apt to receive grant funding.
- President SNYDER inquired whether the regulating reservoirs would be impacted with ditch companies becoming LIDs; GM BRYAN stated the project would not be impacted as most of the sites are on NFWF properties. GM BRYAN also stated ditches where there are already sand traps will be utilized.
- Dale Borsini advised he is concerned that as the District creates LIDs, the WRID assessments will increase; Vice President MASINI shared the concern and inquired how the WRID assessments would be kept low. GM BRYAN stated the overhead will increase as he would like 2 or 3 more employees, but those employees could also serve as ditch riders and the cost would be shared depending on what they job they are doing. GM BRYAN also stated the work being done on outside ditches is costing the District

and many of the recent increases are because the District is losing money on private projects. It was a recommendation on the financial audit that a 50% payment be made on all projects outside of the District owned canals.

- Isaac Metcalf questioned how projects would be prioritized if two district owned ditches needed repairs; GM BRYAN stated it would depend on the severity of what is needed, and ditches get what they pay. GM BRYAN assured that no emergency repair would be put on the back burner because the ditch has a lower assessment. Isaac stated he does not want to wait two weeks to get assistance when he is paying the District.
- Isaac Metcalf questioned if repairs and maintenance can still be done by his agency; GM BRYAN stated they can continue doing what they are doing and can even send a bill to the District.
- Isaac Metcalf questioned if the District would take ownership of the weir if all three ditches (Joggles, SAB and West Hyland) signed up to become a LID; GM BRYAN stated if the State is okay with it, the District would take ownership.
- Joanne Sarkisian questioned what is meant by consolidating ditch riders; GM BRYAN stated if the Advisory Boards approve, a ditch rider could be assigned to ditches in a certain area.
- Dale Borsini questioned if his ditch would be put on the back burner if he needs WRID to do a project and the District does not own the ditch; GM BRYAN stated it would not be any different than it is right now- the project would be prioritized and, when the crews are available, the project could be done. GM BRYAN also stated emergency repairs are the exception- they will be dealt with as they are right since the District is the first call that is made when help is needed.
- Dale Borsini asked if the NFWF acquisitions were decreasing the workload on the crew; GM BRYAN stated the workload has not decreased and, in some cases, it has actually increased because there is no longer anyone up stream catching debris.
- Kerry Stevens asked if all of the ditch companies have to agree to become LIDs; GM BRYAN stated it is completely voluntary to sign over. The District does not anticipate all the ditch companies to sign over, but there are a handful that have expressed interest so far.
- Isaac Metcalf questioned what happens after the 7 steps are completed and the information is given to the District; GM BRYAN stated, per NRS, the District would need to file the paperwork with the local District Court and follow the steps in creating a Local Improvement District.

**4. Public Comment:**

None presented.

**5. Adjournment:**

Director GIORGI made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Vice President MASINI offered a second. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

