

A meeting of the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) Board of Directors was held on July 7, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM at the District Board Room, 410 N. Main St, Yerington, Nevada by President SNYDER.

Present:

Jim SNYDER	President
Richard NUTI	Treasurer
David GIORGI	Director
Dennis ACCIARI	Director, via phone
Robert BRYAN	General Manager
Gordon DePAOLI	Legal Counsel
Dale FERGUSON	Legal Counsel
Jessica HALTERMAN	Secretary

Public Present:

Joanne Sarkisian, USBWC	Taylor Thomas, USBWC	Sara Tiscareno
Ed Ryan, MV/SVCD	Wyatt Fereday, NDWR	Adam Sullivan, NDWR
Carole O'Banion		

Public Present via phone:

Silas Adams, WBC	Wes Walker, MBK	Angela Bezzone, MBK
Mike Mantelli		

1. Public Comment

None presented.

2. Roll Call

4 members were present with Director Acciari on the phone.

3. Consideration of Minutes of the June 7, 2021 Regular Meeting

Director GIORGI made a motion to approve the minutes; Treasurer NUTI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

4. Water Master's Report

Joanne SARKISIAN reported Bridgeport is at 11,100 acre-feet (26%) and Topaz is at 13,990 acre-feet (23%). The trans-evaporation rate on the West is 30% and there are problems on the East so there is not an accurate evaporation rate available. Joanne is continuing to deliver storage on the West and Main; nothing is being delivered on the East until the problems are fixed. Since March 1st, 55,423 acre-feet of decree has been delivered and since April 1st, 4,927 acre-feet of storage has been delivered.

5. Staff Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer NUTI reported as of June 30, 2021:

Cash in Checking	\$ 110,402.84
Cash in Money Market	\$ 589,095.48
Cash in CDs	\$ 749,661.39
Total	\$1,449,159.71

B. Consideration of Bills and Payroll for payment

June 2021 Bills & Payroll

<u>Check Number</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Check Amount</u>
122039	6/7/2021	Ameritas Life Insurance	\$2,470.20
122040	6/7/2021	ABILA Dept 3303	\$195.98
122041	6/7/2021	Sticks and Stones	\$527.30
122042	6/7/2021	MBK Engineers	\$415.00
122043	6/7/2021	True Value	\$39.46
122044	6/7/2021	Power Plan	\$186.51
122045	6/7/2021	Public Employees' Benefits	\$870.23
122046	6/7/2021	Purchase Power / Pitney	\$150.00
122047	6/7/2021	Wells Fargo Card Services	\$2,344.50
122048	6/7/2021	Gesselman Garage	\$945.00
122049	6/8/2021	AFLAC	\$35.70
122050	6/8/2021	Giomi, Inc.	\$160.48
122051	6/8/2021	AT&T	\$156.51
122052	6/8/2021	NAPA AUTO & TRUCK PARTS	\$109.19
122053	6/8/2021	Lyon County Recorder	\$36.00
122054	6/8/2021	MF Barcellos	\$2,408.93
122055	6/8/2021	O'Reilly Automotive, Inc.	\$553.78
122056	6/8/2021	Jim Menesini Petroleum	\$208.09
122057	6/8/2021	NV Energy	\$233.43
122058	6/8/2021	Southwest Gas Corporation	\$42.88
122059	6/8/2021	Xerox Financial Services	\$238.80
122060	6/8/2021	City of Yerington	\$133.31
122061	6/8/2021	Mason Valley Guide Service	\$975.00
122062	6/8/2021	Smith Valley Conservation	\$840.18

122063	6/14/2021	PERS Administrative Fund	\$7,960.87
122064	6/14/2021	Charter Communications	\$197.92
122065	6/14/2021	Gesselman Garage	\$375.00
122066	6/21/2021	Nevada Division of Water	\$180.00
122067	6/21/2021	Nevada Division of Water	\$180.00
122068	6/29/2021	Farm-Assist, Inc.	\$6,930.00
122069	6/29/2021	MBK Engineers	\$5,583.25
122070	6/29/2021	Nevada Energy Systems,	\$521.33
122071	6/29/2021	Pitney Bowes Global	\$213.42
122072	6/29/2021	Quill	\$168.99
122073	6/29/2021	NV Energy	\$2,584.43
122074	6/29/2021	Alhambra	\$26.94
122075	6/29/2021	Verizon Wireless	\$801.34
122076	6/29/2021	Woodburn & Wedge	\$42,480.00
122077	6/29/2021	Desert Research Institute	\$17,939.66
122078	6/29/2021	Mason Valley Tire	\$269.62
PAYROLL	6/30/2021	JUNE PAYROLL	\$39,836.89

Total Bills & Payroll \$140,526.12

Director GIORGI questioned if the District had sprayed in Smith Valley; GM BRYAN stated the bill was for the High Ditch in Yerington. Ed RYAN advised that Smith Valley Conservation District has the spraying permits, so the service is billed through them.

Vice President MASINI made a motion to approve the bills; Director GIORGI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

C. Manager's Report

GM BRYAN reported Topaz is at 13,990 acre-feet (23%) and Bridgeport is at 11,100 acre-feet (26%). There is still 4,803 acre-feet to serve on the East and 3,796 acre-feet to serve on the West.

The shop crew has been spread out. They have performed repairs and maintenance on the drains up to mid-last week. Since last week, the crew has been monitoring the problem on the East Walker and taking current meter readings. The District is trying to pinpoint obstructed areas and performing bank re-stabilization. As mentioned by Joanne, the East has been experiencing between 75-80% losses from the release at Bridgeport to the USGS Strosnider gage. The decree is at an 1859 and

no storage water is being ordered or delivered. The high loss is a significant issue that is out of the norm. The District and MBK Engineers compared data from previous drought years and data showed there is no significant climate difference between droughts. The frequency data is showing the continuing pattern is close to the 2013 drought year. In terms of water supply and carry over, there is no reason for the losses to be this high. For about a week and a half, 25cfs was released from Bridgeport in attempt to isolate any issues. Meter readings were taken at the lower level and on Saturday afternoon, Joanne increased the release to 42-45cfs. It took three days to get the water to the problem area. The area of concern is from above the Flying M to the confluence, but more emphasis is on trying to find out why the losses are happening at Strosnider. There have been staff at key locations doing readings every day. GM BRYAN requested USGS to rate the gage and piggyback on measurements. The whole idea is to pinpoint and isolate the problematic spots to address them either mechanically or evaluate the need to bring in other resources. The District contacted Greg Chico to fly his drone from above Flying M to the confluence to get good indication of the condition of the channel and to identify potential problem areas. A few spots were flagged, but there was no clear reason for the high losses. With 4,803 acre-feet to deliver still, several farmers and ranchers are wanting to know when they can call for their water. GM BRYAN is unsure of when the water can be called for and will continue to talk and work with users and agencies. In about a month, the second year of the Stored Water Leasing Program is set to release just over 400 acre-feet. GM BRYAN will keep the Board and users informed of progress.

On June 29th, the District and NRCS had a meeting. The State office informed the District that they and the Federal level felt it best to end the current contract due to several factors regarding PL 566. The size of the watershed and the cost benefit ratio is too large for the program we are currently trying to pursue and that caused some flags in qualifying for funding opportunities. NRCS and the District are working to end the current contract and are discussing the need to perform a Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Report. The biggest issue with the current contract is the size of the watershed; the program caps funding at 250,000 acres and the District takes up 235,000 acres with the entire watershed being over 4 million acres. The intent of the current program was to identify sediment sources and to come up with mitigation options. GM BRYAN will keep the Board informed on the progress of the project.

Over the last several weeks, Lahontan Water Quality Control Board reached out the District to assist in collecting samples to test for the harmful algae bloom. The staff worked with the Reservoir Tender to pull samples then sent them in for testing. The samples did not reveal any major concern and LWQCB requested the District post signs warning people to not swim in or touch the algae blooms. The LWQCB is requesting the District pull samples approximately 2 weeks before holidays. They are paying all costs associated with the sampling and testing.

Dr. Styles will be at the District on July 22nd and 23rd. If there are any questions for him, let GM BRYAN know.

D. Legal Counsel's Report

Counsel DePAOLI reported that Mineral County filed an amended complaint by the June 30th deadline, and it included a long list that the Court and State are obligated to do. In the procedural aspect, Mineral County was required to serve potential riparian water right holders in California, and they did not do that before Judge Jones dismissed the case. They are required to complete that task by December 31st. The defendants already participating in the case must submit a response to the amended complaint by September 29th so legal counsel will be working with them on an appropriate response.

E. Review and approval of monthly storage transfers.

Director GIORGI questioned if transfers from the East to the Main affected the reservoirs; GM BRYAN stated only the East or West portion of the water right can be transferred so there is no effect on either reservoir.

Treasurer NUTI made a motion to approve the transfers; Director GIORGI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

F. Storage Water Leasing Program Update

Angela BEZZONE stated there is currently 703 acre-feet in the Leasing Program- 427 acre-feet from Bridgeport and 276 acre-feet from Topaz. A release plan has been developed per the requirement from the State of California. The release plan proposes the water be released starting in August and continuing through September, which aligns with the Tribe's shut off date. The intention is to minimize losses within the river. The temporary change applications were submitted to the Nevada State Engineer and are awaiting approval and signature at the appropriate time. Everything is moving along as it should with all approvals obtained. Treasurer NUTI asked if the program would happen if the problem on the East is not resolved; Angela stated there will be more discussion about moving forward when the time comes. There is a possibility that the Topaz releases could be made, and either hold the East water or release it and let the losses be what they will be. Either way, the 1-year clock does not start until the Nevada State Engineer approves the temporary changes.

G. FY2020-2021 Audit Update

Secretary HALTERMAN advised the auditors with Sciarani and Company have completed the pre end-of-year testing. They tested accounts payable and receivable, payroll, and cash balances. Everything seems to be on track so far and the post year-end testing will continue soon.

H. Current Drought Conditions for WY 2021 Presented by MBK Engineers

Wes WALKER presented a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The flows on the West are currently the 6th driest year on record
- The flows on the East are currently the 4th driest year on record
- Forecasted flows follow along with being the 6th (West) and 4th (East) driest years on record
- The snowpack was gone in early June and the flows are very low
- Temperatures for the rest of the summer/fall are forecasted to be above normal; comparable to 2014/15
- There were a few thunderstorms last week that boosted the precipitation numbers, but nothing significant
- It is forecasted to be a slightly above to normal monsoonal season
- The rivers are seeing losses comparable to other drought years; the East was looking comparable to dry years until late May when significant, unexplained losses were seen
- The unexplained losses were up to 85% between the reservoir and the Strosnider gage. 25cfs was being released and 5 cfs was making it to Strosnider
- East Walker River flow and soil moisture data was analyzed and compared to previous drought conditions. All data was comparable and there is no clear evidence of why the losses were occurring. The closest high loss data was in 2015 when the river was dry
- Drone flights, field visits and topographic/elevation data was all reviewed and, unfortunately, there was still no explanation why the losses were high
- Currently doing a flow test on the East, releases were increased to 42-45cfs with still no deliveries and only 10cfs made it to Strosnider as of this morning
- Most losses are occurring between East Walker Bridge and the Strosnider gage
- The tentative plan is to hold deliveries until the end of the week and re-evaluate
- Options on the East include:
 - o To run the river as it is and make everyone aware of the high losses
 - o To have users donate water to perform more testing
 - o To perform channel maintenance and repair, but the outcome is unknown
 - o To ask the Nevada State Engineer to allow users to pump their wells to accommodate for the amount of storage being held in the reservoir
 - o To reduce the East allocations, but that is not a preferred option

6. Update from the Division of Water Resources regarding groundwater pumping and upcoming fieldwork schedules.

Wyatt FEREDAY stated the temporary transfers have been submitted, paid for, and are awaiting the State Engineer's signature when the time is right.

Wyatt reminded everyone that the pumpage numbers are reliant on users reporting their usage each month. He thanked all users who have been reporting. They currently have approximately ¾ of the users complying. Wyatt will do a physical inspection on all meters at the end of the year. NDWR has a new staff member to fill Kerry's spot. Mike Scott will be starting in his role next week. He has been with NDWR for two years so has a bit of experience. Mike will be helping Wyatt and filling some of Kerry's roles. Kerry was

dedicated to Smith and Mason Valley; Mike is geared toward the Western Nevada Basin as a whole. Wyatt acknowledged that conditions are tough, but keep in mind the permit limits.

7. Update by Nevada State Engineer Adam Sullivan.

Adam SULLIVAN reported that NDWR is trying to keep costs down in order to keep assessments low. The data reporting order is helping to keep some of the costs down. The level of data and precision of the data from the last drought is slightly different in that this drought has more detailed information from the District. Adam is looking forward to working with users to get ahead of problems. He appreciated hearing the decision about the East Walker losses and stated losses are occurring all over the state. The District is doing the right thing by doing multiple flow measurements and meter readings.

With the low water year, there is a huge reliance on supplemental groundwater pumping. Adam does not want to be in a situation similar to 2015-16 regarding curtailment. He asks that all users be diligent in using storage water when possible and to closely monitor their pumping amounts.

Ed RYAN asked if there was money left in the clearing and snagging fund; Adam advised he just expended that fund recently.

Treasurer NUTI asked for reassurance that the State Engineer will not take away pumping rights if fields are set aside to save water; Adam stated he and his office will work with users regarding that situation, but he does not want to take any rights away.

GM BRYAN stated users have historically been given a generic 30% loss allowance, but the current losses are significantly greater than that. GM BRYAN asked if the State Engineer is willing to give users higher loss allowances based on the actual losses; Adam stated the reports from the District are extremely helpful in showing the losses and the NSE office will work with users. Wyatt stated tracking the farm to farm ordered and delivered amounts are extremely hard to track, but with the data from the District, it has been easier to verify a user's duty when questions arise.

Director GIORGI asked if a user has 100 acre-feet left in Bridgeport and cannot use it, if the NSE would allow him to pump that amount from the well to make up the difference; Adam advised the user would have to use their supplemental rights within the limits of the permit. GM BRYAN asked, based on the current situation on the East, is it better to leave the allocated amount in the reservoir and use the supplemental wells or call for the storage water and get what they can; Adam stated he does not have an answer readily available, but it is a balancing game at what works best between surface and ground water. Director GIORGI asked if there would be a fine for over pumping since the water cannot be delivered from Bridgeport; Adam stated his office is not out to fine anyone, but it is a very limited water system. Wyatt reminded everyone that there are temporary transfers available.

8. Update by the Walker River Conservancy on activities related to the Walker Basin Restoration Program, including Acquisitions and Conservation and Stewardship Activities.

Silas ADAMS stated the Conservancy is still going through interviews for the Executive Director position. A couple candidates will be in Reno next week and hopefully next month there will be someone hired and at the meeting.

9. Update from Manager, staff and legal counsel on drafts, for future Board consideration, of policies, enforceable by regulation or otherwise, concerning fees for services provided to ditch companies, such as payroll services, moderating and taking minutes of meetings, for water card revisions, late fees and/or interest charges for past due invoices, and delinquent reserved water rights assessments, prepayment requirements for projects and material purchases and other revenue sources, such as copy charges.

GM BRYAN stated there are drafts of proposed policies in the Board packet. Since it is new information, GM BRYAN stated any action may need to be tabled until a future meeting. Secretary HALTERMAN stated that based on last month's meeting, the Board wanted to see more information and policy drafts on some of the potential revenue sources and fees. Information on late fees, interest charges, overdue payments, and payroll charges is available for review and comment and have been posted on the website.

Treasurer NUTI made a motion to table the item until a future meeting; Vice President MASINI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

10. Director Comments

None presented.

11. Public Comment

Carole O'BANION asked how long the District had been keeping records on drought conditions; GM BRYAN stated the District has many years of drought records, but the most recent is from the 2012-2015 drought. Due to changing conditions, it bodes better to compare and contrast data from the most recent events. Data shows that the models from 20-30 years ago have shifted from 2000 to current. Carole questioned when the last drought began; GM BRYAN stated the last drought was from 2012-2015 but 2020-2021 is considered drought as well. Carole asked if another drought year is anticipated; GM BRYAN stated it is unknown.

12. Adjournment

Treasurer NUTI made a motion to adjourn; Vice President MASINI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

Jim Snyder, President

Marcus Masini, Vice President

Richard Nuti, Treasurer

Dennis Acciari, Director

David Giorgi, Director

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