

A meeting of the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) Board of Directors was held on April 7, 2022. 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
Marcus MASINI	Vice President
Richard NUTI	Treasurer
David GIORGI	Director
Dennis ACCIARI	Director
Robert BRYAN	General Manager
Gordon DePAOLI	Legal Counsel
Jessica HALTERMAN	Secretary
Sandy NEVILLE	Water Rights Specialist

Public Present:

Ed Ryan, SV/MVCD	Wyatt Fereday, NDWR	Darrell Pursel
Leo Drozdoff	Brad Crowell, NDCNR	Adam Sullivan, NDWR
Carlie Henneman, WBC	Wayne Bull, NDOW	Angela Bezzone, MBK
Ronda Eden	Donna Nelson	Carole O'Banion
Dale Borsini		

Public Present via Zoom:

Tom Renner	Tim Bardsley, NOAA	Jeff Anderson, NRCS
Shawn Stavang	Antonio Fuentes	775-220-7536

1. Public Comment

None presented.

2. Roll Call

All members were present.

3. Consideration of Minutes of the March 7, 2022 Regular Meeting

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

4. Water Master's Report

Joanne SARKISIAN reported Bridgeport was at 18,400 acre-feet (43%) and Topaz was at 34,430 acre-feet (57%). Joanne was serving 305cfs with only 13cfs being storage and the rest decree. The decree will be dropping to a 67 and 1/2 of 70 on the East and the West, Main & Tunnel will be an 80 for the weekend. There is 446 feet above Coleville.

Joanne reported that Trout Unlimited and NDOW would like to come to a meeting to do a presentation on the Upper East Project. They would like to discuss and explain their intentions with installing j-hooks and ponding structures. Vice President MASINI stated Trout Unlimited did a project at the Cottonwood prior to purchasing the ranch.

5. Staff Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer NUTI reported as of March 31, 2022:

Cash in Checking	\$ 273,729.38
Cash in Money Market	\$ 789,481.33
Cash in CDs	<u>\$ 757,568.24</u>
Total	\$1,820,778.95

B. Consideration of Bills and Payroll for payment

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 34,430 acre-feet (57%) and Bridgeport is at 18,400 acre-feet (43%). All the gage readings are available in the packet with the 4 new Bridgeport Valley gages being listed as well. With the extra gaging, the District and Water Master are getting a better view of the flows.

The shop crew replaced a failed culvert at the Frade Ranch. They are now performing repairs and maintenance at the Topaz diversion. They will be making improvements to roadways and patching other areas. After finishing at Topaz, they will be going to the Bridgeport dam to take care of recommendations per California Safety Dams and US Forest Service. They will also be doing some maintenance at the weather site there.

The District well was started on April 1st and the sleeve is holding well. It is pumping a consistent 7.5cfs which is much better than last year. The staff is currently gathering quotes for a potential well re-drill. GM BRYAN will keep the Board updated as quotes and information are gathered. Based on the quotes already received, the District will need to enter a formal bidding process and must follow NRS.

GM BRYAN will work with Joanne, Trout Unlimited and NDOW on scheduling a presentation during the May 9th meeting.

On April 4th, GM BRYAN received a response from the Navy regarding training at Topaz. An agreement was signed that indemnified the District and the training is to occur on April 8th. The Marines have cancelled their training for now.

The permanent storage water transfer from last month will be on next month's agenda. The file is available for viewing in the front office.

Dr. Styles with ITRC will be instructing a Flow Measurement Class from April 26-28th here at the District. The class is open to anyone and is \$60 per person. The class will include lecture in the morning followed by field training and practice in the afternoon. If anyone is interested, talk to the office staff.

D. Legal Counsel's Report

Counsel DePAOLI reported that the California State Board filed a report with the Court last Friday. A petition to temporarily modify the decree was filed. If there is no opposition to the petition, it will be ready for action by the Court around May 5th.

E. Review and Approval of Monthly Storage Transfers

GM BRYAN stated the regular transfers as well as the reservoir to reservoir transfers were available in the packet. The total West to East reservoir transfers was 337.4621 acre-feet and the total East to West reservoir transfers was 98.4172 acre-feet. GM BRYAN stated the Water Master is comfortable with those numbers and the exchange was made on April 1st. Vice President MASINI asked if the the regular year to year transfers can still be made; GM BRYAN confirmed. Vice President MASINI made a motion to approve the month to month storage transfers and the reservoir to reservoir transfers; Treasurer NUTI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

F. Storage Water Leasing Program Update

Angela BEZZONE reported the documents have been submitted to the Court. The deadline for the program application is May 13th and the deadline for the program agreement is May 31st. A proposed release plan will be filed with the California State Board. Releases could start as early as July but they will be coordinated with other demands on the system to ensure as much water as possible makes it to the lake. Last year the releases were made in August. Once the applications and agreements are in, they will be submitted to the Nevada State Engineer. That will be done concurrently while the California State Board is reviewing the release plan. Currently, there is a little over 100 acre-feet enrolled in the program; Walker Basin Conservancy has not submitted their portion yet.

6. Preview by Nevada State Engineer of upcoming public meetings on current groundwater conditions and water rights.

Adam SULLIVAN reported the Nevada State Engineer's Office will be holding two public meetings to discuss drought conditions, address concerns, and be available for questions. Adam stated no curtailment is being considered. Adam gave an overview of the proposed PowerPoint presentation. Highlights include:

- Overview of NDWR Staff
- Explanation of surface & groundwater relationships
 - o What decree is and how it is managed

- What surface water is and how it is accumulated, stored, and managed
- Different types of groundwater rights (primary, supplemental, etc.) and the duty
- Current drought and groundwater conditions in both valleys
 - What drought is and how the severity is determined
 - Discuss areas of loss
 - Discuss charts showing trends in decline
- Well drilling & pumping
 - Who to hire for drilling; when a licensed driller is required and when it is not required
- Future outlook
- Online resources

Adam reiterated that the State is not considering curtailment this year, there are other ways to work around curtailment. NDWR would like to work with the users on developing a pumping plan rather than implementing an order. President SNYDER stated a few years ago, a group of farmers started working on a voluntary plan among irrigation users to manage the aquifer. The concept was if they were successful in implementing the plan, the State Engineer would be hands off. If the group were to renew the effort, would NDWR be willing to consider that as a good idea; Adam stated it is a good idea to work on a plan and have NDWR as a partner. Even with a plan, NDWR will still measure water levels and monitor the pumping but would be willing to work in partnership with user groups. Adam stated that the Pahrump community came up with a groundwater management plan in effort to avoid being a critical management area. They took steps to reduce commitments and found ways to work with decreased pumping. Treasurer NUTI stated Artesia was considered a separate basin in 1976 and requested to know if that was true; Wyatt advised that Smith Valley is administratively one basin but hydrologically it has two separate basins. Treasurer NUTI asked if NDWR allows a permit to move from the Smith Valley side to the Artesia side; Wyatt advised permits have been allowed to go back and forth. Treasurer NUTI asked how that can happen when the two separate basins are both over allocated; Wyatt stated the main thing that NDWR looks at when an application comes in is injury to existing rights. They analyze the impact of the permit as well as the drawdown effect and decide based on that and that some requests have been denied. Adam clarified that no change applications have been made for the proposed Highbay project.

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

Wyatt FEREDAY stated that feedback on the presentation is appreciated and changes or additions can be made to the presentation. Vice President MASINI stated it has been mentioned to him several times that NDWR wants users to save water, but then sends letters threatening to take the rights away if no water is pumped. Vice President MASINI recommended addressing that with the public as it is contradictory. Adam agreed and stated the water laws are not set up to incentivize water conservation. If an active water user reduces water use during drought periods it is recognized and appreciated and the user will not be penalized for saving water. Water rights that are subject to forfeiture are

ones that have not been used for decades and there is no show of intention or good faith in using the water, and that is where the office acts. It is hard to distinguish where the line is drawn but NDWR is not looking to penalize anyone for saving water during a drought. Wyatt stated NDWR is not coming after supplemental groundwater rights as they are to be used after exhausting surface rights. For the standalone primary groundwater rights that have been speculated on and are not being used to any beneficial use is hoarding a state resource at the expense of economic development. NDWR has a statutory duty to notify the owner after 20 years of no pumping. Wyatt stated they do not want more pumping, but that is how the laws are written.

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

Carlie HENNEMAN reported that the Conservancy does have water administered in stream. They currently have approximately 220 acre-feet at Wabuska and are allowing the Tribe to store the water in Weber as it is the lowest it has ever been at this time of year. The Conservancy does have an application in the decree court that will hopefully be approved this week. There is a new AmeriCorps group that is working ½ time with the Conservancy and ½ time with the Boys & Girls Club. On the land side, it is going to the big year as they are trying to complete all the work at the State parks. It will be tricky in terms of how much water can be put into the Stored Water Leasing Program.

9. Presentation by Tim Bardsley with NOAA regarding the current year weather and water outlook for 2022 irrigation season.

Tim BARDSLEY's presentation included the following highlights:

- High soil moisture relative to past drought years
- Good observed flows to date
- Early start to snowmelt will likely decrease runoff efficiency
- Water supply forecasts continue to drop
- The atmospheric outlook is not great
- Lot of winds and lower temperatures are expected
- Next two weeks are drier than normal
- There will be a mini heatwave late this week with cooler temperatures next week
- Low chance for precipitation over the next 3-4 weeks
- SNOTEL Peak SWE is around March 12th which is approximately 2 weeks earlier than the median peak
- Currently about 1 week ahead of last year's snowmelt
- Water supply forecast is comparable to 2013 & 2020

Jeff ANDERSON wanted to point out how unique the record low was as it set a record at every single site. Leavitt Meadow melted 11 days earlier than normal. There was a lot more snow at lower elevations last year- 2" this year compared to 9" last year at Leavitt Meadows.

10. Review and Consideration of adoption of policies and procedures for the processing and payment of accounts payable to ensure that payment is the correct amount, to

the correct supplier, for the correct services, which policies and procedures include, but are not limited to, invoice review, matching with purchase orders where applicable, segregation of invoice review, payment approval and payment, monitoring accounts payable, filing account payable documentation and the payment process.

Secretary HALTERMAN stated there is currently no policy or procedure in place for the District. This policy would satisfy audit recommendations in establishing more financial internal controls as well as strengthening segregation of duties. The policy covers the payable processing of paper checks as well as electronic payments. Several vendors are charging for paper invoices and paper checks and prefer online payments. Rather than having a physical check to sign, there will be a Payment Control Form attached to the invoice and will have two signatures. Once the payment is made, the Receptionist will sign off on correct vendor, correct amount, and correct services. To safeguard the bank account, the payment will be scheduled and the money will be transferred from the bank account to a bill pay account so no vendor will have direct access to the account. Secretary HALTERMAN will schedule all payments as no payments will be made automatically.

Treasurer NUTI made a motion to approve the policies and procedures for the processing and payment of accounts payable to ensure that payment is the correct amount, to the correct supplier, for the correct services, which policies and procedures include, but are not limited to, invoice review, matching with purchase orders where applicable, segregation of invoice review, payment approval and payment, monitoring accounts payable, filing account payable documentation and the payment process; Vice President MASINI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

11. Consideration and action on proposed District Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, including fixing of the charges and levying assessments for that fiscal year on the water right lands within the District, on lands with appurtenant stored water rights within the District, on water right lands within the Local Improvement Districts within the District, on water right lands served by the High Ditch within the District, on reserved water rights, presently or formerly appurtenant to water right lands within the District, and Equipment Rental and Interfund Rental rates.

GM BRYAN stated the figures in the draft budget are the same figures as presented last month.

In the General Fund, the proposed assessment was \$10.00 per acre and the major change from last year was increasing the Legal Expense to \$500,000. To address the cost of rehabbing and potentially redrilling the well, the cost of well water was increased to \$20.00 per acre-foot. Treasurer NUTI inquired if the District makes any profit off the well lottery; GM BRYAN stated no profit is made, the amount is simply to cover the regular maintenance and the cost of electricity. Treasurer NUTI suggested to increase the cost of the well water and allocate a certain dollar amount or percentage to be kept in a separate fund for future well expenses. Treasurer NUTI clarified that the increase in well water will be in effect next spring; GM BRYAN confirmed.

In the Reservoir Fund, the proposed assessment was \$4.35 per acre. There were no significant changes to the revenue or expenses. Secretary HALTERMAN is pursuing grant funding for the projects at Bridgeport Reservoir. GM BRYAN would like to address all problems at the dam and put power in the gatehouse. The cloud seeding expense was kept at \$31,000 and, historically, that has been allocated for the DRI cloud seeding program. There was discussion on budgeting for aerial cloud seeding, but funding for that has not been decided. Treasurer NUTI asked Adam SULLIVAN if the State Engineer has any pull in working with legislators to fund an aerial seeding program; Adam stated they have access to a lot of networking and could potentially assist with the pathways to identify funding sources. Brad CROWELL suggested the Board look at the cost vs efficacy of the aerial seeding program. There is a lot of federal money available and if the District can find state or federal money to underwrite the program, it may work. Brad has pressed DRI to show better data on what get in terms of increased precipitation and that data is tenuous at best. Brad suggests finding as much outside money as possible. GM BRYAN will be in contact with Brad on the funding opportunities. Vice President MASINI reiterated that the US Board has a larger assessment base than the District and they should be involved in the program. Treasurer NUTI asked if Carson & Truckee does cloud seeding; GM BRYAN stated he is not certain in Carson, but Truckee has a ground generator. President SNYDER asked what the data shows between aerial seeding vs ground seeding; GM BRYAN stated the ground generators produce 100s of acre-feet where aerial seeding produces thousands of acre-feet. GM BRYAN stated the District could talk with other agencies to investigate funding sources. Discussion was held and it recommended to increase the overall cloud seeding budget to \$100,000 of which \$31,000 was for the DRI cloud seeding program and the rest was for future projects.

The Equipment fund is proposed at \$2.75 per acre; Local #1 is proposed at \$1.00 per acre; Local #2 is proposed at \$1.00 per acre; Local #3 is proposed at \$1.30 per acre; Local #4 is proposed at \$11.00 per acre for regular assessment and \$8.00 per acre for special assessment; and the High Ditch is proposed at \$10.00 per acre. No significant changes were made to any of the expenses or revenues. Treasurer NUTI suggested a fuel surcharge due to the increased fuel costs. Discussion was held on equipment rental and labor prices and it was recommended to increase all prices by 15%.

President SNYDER asked if action had to be taken on the budget today; GM BRYAN stated it would be best to act today as the later the approval, it makes it tougher to meet deadlines with assessments, etc.

Director GIORGI asked if any large receivable amounts were still outstanding; GM BRYAN stated the Plymouth still owes \$37,000 but an agreement was signed by all their board members and they will be paying the full amount over the next 3 years. Director GIORGI asked if Nevada Copper was still leasing the Wabuska property; GM BRYAN advised they are still leasing the property and have made all payments on time.

Vice President MASINI made a motion to set the per acre assessments at \$10 for General Fund, \$4.70 for Reservoir Fund, \$2.75 for the Equipment Fund plus 15% increase on all labor and equipment charges, \$1 for Local #1 and Local #2, \$1.30 for Local #3, \$11 regular and \$8 special for Local #4, and \$10 for High Ditch; Director GIORGI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

12. Director Comments

None presented.

13. Public Comment

None presented.

14. Adjournment

Director ACCIARI made a motion to adjourn; Treasurer NUTI offered a second. The vote was called for and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:12pm.

Jim Snyder, President

Marcus Masini, Vice President

Richard Nuti, Treasurer

Dennis Acciari, Director

David Giorgi, Director