

Republican River Water Conservation District
Special Board Meeting
Best Western Plus Overland Inn, 1410 Barlow Road., Fort Morgan, CO 80701
January 3 & 4, 2023

Welcome – Rod Lenz, President of the Board

President Lenz called the meeting to order at 1:34PM

- Pledge of Allegiance & Prayer
- Roll call of Directors/declare a quorum –Kristen Schneider, Secretary of the Board

Present were:

Rod Lenz, President
Steve Kramer, Vice President
Kristen Schneider Secretary
Aaron Sprague, Treasurer
Wil Bledsoe
Brooke Campbell via Zoom
Kevin Penny
Jim Hadachek
Josh Lechman
Robin Liming
Dennis Wieser
Tim Fetzer
Steven Meakins, excused
Tim Pautler
Don Brown
Roger Seedorf
Greg Larson, excused

Debra Daniel, RRWCD General Manager
Reon McBride, RRWCD Office & Finance Manager
Payton Liming, RRWCD Administrative Assistant
Pete Ampe, RRWCD General Counsel, Hill & Robbins, P.C.
Randy Hendrix, RRWCD Water Engineer, Hendrix WAI
Bill Hahn, Hahn Water Resources LLC (Guest)

- Daniel noted corrections to the agenda including changes to the wording for the FEC discussion and then added a presentation of the RAMP blind evaluations to the day two agenda.
- Kristen Schneider, Secretary of the Board declared a quorum with Greg Larson and Steven Meakins excused. President Lenz asked for a motion to approve agenda with the previously mentioned changes.
There was a motion and second to approve the agenda. The vote was unanimous.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT–Rod Lenz, RRWCD Board president: Lenz gave a brief summary of the things the board should expect to hear about during the meeting including FEC discussions, personnel committee housekeeping things, negotiating committee discussion, and also presentations by Bill Hahn and Randy Hendrix. Lenz highlighted that the unification of this board and those members who make this their priority help Lenz sit in his seat. Lastly, Lenz thanked the administrative staff.

Public Comment: There was no public present in the room or on Zoom for public comment at 1:37PM.

Board Discussion and Action Items

- Brooke Campbell of the Personnel Committee noted the changes to handle employee bonuses in the Handbook on page 11. **There was a motion to adopt the handbook as revised, there was a second. The vote to accept the revised version of the handbook was unanimously approved.**
- Campbell noted the changes to the updated Flex Place policy, including how long the office is open daily. There was discussion to remove the annual renewal from the resolution. **There was a motion to adopt the Flex place policy removing item 6. There was a second, and the vote was unanimous.**

Presentations

- At 1:43 PM Randy Hendrix began his presentation on the GWMD engineering reports. Hendrix discussed that all acres are included in the water balance studies, not just irrigated acres. The summary of his reports is to begin conservation by reducing pumping by 10 percent to 20 percent. The closer inflows into the Aquifer are to outflows from the Aquifer the better.
 - There was extensive discussion on how to get this information to local farmers. There was additional discussion on as long as the reductions are reasonable there should be attempts to extend the life of the aquifer.

At 2:57 PM there was a break, the meeting reconvened at 3:05 PM.

- A 3:06 PM Bill Hahn of Hahn Water Engineering began his presentation over the structural makeup of the current CCP wells and advised on maintenance and possible rehabilitation of wells to be brought online in the future.

Brooke Campbell left the meeting at 3:25 PM

- There was extensive discussion on the future steps for adding to the CCP wellfield as well as evaluating the costs for well rehabilitation and adding distance between the wells brought online to spread out the footprint of the well field.

Brooke Campbell rejoined the meeting at 4:15PM

Board Discussion and Action Items continued

- Seedorf discussed the recommendation from the Negotiating committee to the full board for the FPI property leases. The suggestions are as follows: There will be two leases. The leases will be for three years. The bid packet will be published through the entire basin and will run for three weeks. *The board suggested changing the lease end date to January 31, 2027.*
 - There was extensive discussion on the fiduciary responsibilities of the District to earn money back on the purchase until the wells are utilized for the well field. There was also extensive discussion on limiting the appropriation allowed to the leasee for conservation purposes.
 - **Roger Seedorf tabled FPI lease decisions until tomorrow.**
- Schneider discussed the Executive Committee addressed an issue brought up at the November board meeting. There had been a request to hold public comment after the Board Discussion and Action Items. The Executive committee decided to only hold Public comment before the Board Discussion and Action Items (as it has been historically) because the board needs to hear the concerns of the public before the vote is cast, not after.
- McBride discussed the changes to the Records Retention Policy.
 - Brown requested the following changes to be made: Under Administrative, Boards and Committees, G. I., there should be a permanent list of those who served on the committees and a permanent list of those who served on the board.
 - **There was a motion to keep an annual list of each board member and the committees the board member served on. There was a second and the vote was unanimous.**
 - **There was a motion to adopt the policy, there was a second and the vote was unanimous.**

At 4:44PM there was a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to § 24-6-402(4)(f), there was a second and the vote was unanimous.

- Campbell gave a summary of the meetings the Personnel committee held with staff in December of 2023.

At 4:54 there was a motion to exit Executive Session. There was a second, and the vote was unanimous to exit executive session.

- **There was a motion to recommend increasing the General Manager's salary to \$123,000 or whatever is divisible by 12, the administrative assistant's salary to \$51,500 or whatever is divisible by 12, and the Office and Finance Manager's salary to \$62,000 or whatever is divisible by 12.**
 - **There was an amendment to the numbers \$51,600, and \$62,004 (to make them divisible by 12). There was a second and the vote was 14 Yays, 0 Nays and Robin Liming recused himself from the salary vote.**

Presentations (continued)

- At 4:58 PM McBride started her presentation about utilizing Google. McBride suggested downloading Google Email, Drive, and Sheets. McBride showed an example of email, and how to reply to an email if it is needed. She showed how to organize emails with labels. McBride emphasized the information shared on the Google drive is only for board member use.
- At 5:23 PM Tim Pautler began his presentation showing the rain events on the South Fork during the 2023 year.

At 6:07 PM, President Lenz paused the meeting, to be reconvened January 4, 2024 at 8:00AM.

The meeting resumed January 4, 2024 at 7:57 AM.

- Kristen Schneider conducted roll call, a quorum was declared with Brooke Campbell attending by Zoom and Steven Meakins and Greg Larson excused. President Lenz stated the previously tabled negotiating committee discussion will be moved to the negotiating committee concerns portion of the agenda.

At 8:00 AM Public comment was requested. There was no public comment.

- General Manager Daniel thanked the board for the opportunity to recently trade pickups. She thanked everyone who helped through the process.

Public comment closed at 8:05 AM.

Board Discussion & Action Items Continued

- At 8:08 AM Kevin Penny began his presentation for the Fee Evaluation Committee. Penny discussed the history of the fee, and then discussed the earliest concepts of proposal which was presented to local GWMD and county commissioners. Penny then showed additional concepts and showed the latest iteration, a portion of the fee comes from irrigated acres and the other portion of the fee comes from the percent of appropriation used. Penny ended his presentation stating that data compiled by the staff will be the most important part of the proposal, whatever it ends up being. There was extensive discussion on how this structure of fee sends signals but also allows everyone in the Basin to still manage their pumping. Sprague discussed how the Budget committee is comfortable with some flex in the budget and he suggested over collecting in the beginning while the initial investigation is conducted.

Brooke Campbell left the meeting at 9:02AM.

- There was extensive discussion on the facets of compact compliance, including conservation, budgeting, funding, and personal perspectives.
- **There was a motion to authorize the administrative staff to contract with outside vendors to assist in the development of a tool in the valuation of the split fee concepts. There was a second. The vote was unanimous.**

The group took a break at approximately 10:05 AM. The board reconvened at 10:17 AM and *Brooke Campbell rejoined the meeting.*

- Hendrix's priority list was displayed for the board members to see. There was discussion on each item and where they fall on the priority list. There was also discussion on developing protocol for wellfield maintenance and meeting with Garney Construction for cost estimates to bring on additional wells.
- SFFZ Report: 11,684 acres retired in SFFZ

- o Pending contracts: 56 acres in SFFZ, 343 acres outside the SFFZ
- o Approximately 2,400 acres awaiting contracts at the agencies
- o 600 acres to be voted on for the RAMP blind evaluation
- o There was extensive discussion on the payment rates for the SFFZ and working with the local agencies: FSA and NRCS.
- There was discussion about the priority list being important to the Negotiating committee to make sure the money is spent in the correct area in the Basin.

At 11:04 AM there was a motion to go into Executive Session. There was a second and the vote was unanimous. Rod Lenz and Aaron Sprague left the executive session because of conflicts of interest.

- The board discussed property leases during Executive Session.

At 11:28 AM Lenz and Sprague came back into the Executive Session.

- The board discussed property acquisitions in the SFFZ and pipeline acquisitions.

At 11:47 AM Brooke Campbell left the meeting.

At 12:08 there was a motion to leave Executive Session. There was a second and the vote was unanimous. No decisions or votes occurred during executive session.

- **There was a motion to lease the FPI properties in two leases (by location), for three years, beginning March 1, 2024 and ending January 31, 2027. There was a second. Wieser asked to amend the motion by limiting the irrigation to 600 acre-feet for the three year period of the lease. There was a second to the amendment.**
 - o **The vote for the amendment went as follows:**
 - **Yays: Hadachek, Penny, Lechman, Pautler and Wieser.**
 - **Nays: Seedorf, Schneider, Liming, Brown, Kramer and Fetzer**
 - **Bledsoe abstained**
 - **Sprague and Lenz recused themselves from voting**
 - **The amendment vote failed.**
 - o There was additional discussion on the original motion, the first half of the payment will be made on March 1, and the second half of the payment will be made on November 1. Parts will be paid for by the District and labor will be paid for by the lease.
 - o **After additional discussion, there was a vote on the original motion. The vote was unanimous.**
 - **Lenz and Sprague recused themselves from voting**

Steve Kramer left the meeting at 12:19PM. The Board took a break for lunch at 12:20PM. Lenz asked the board members to use this time to reach out to those who may be interested in attending the upcoming Colorado Master Irrigator class in Yuma. The board reconvened at 12:48PM.

- **The group discussed the RAMP blind evaluation. There was a motion to approve all the contracts under the blind evaluation. There was a second. Robin Liming recused himself from the vote. The vote was 13 yays.**
- There was discussion on the prices remaining the same in the SFFZ after the ARPA funds are exhausted. The board suggested contacting the landowners in the SFFZ to tell them the rates may change as the ARPA funds are exhausted.

Old Business

- There was discussion on the CSU professors for the Basin impact study to attend the meeting in February.
- Daniel discussed meeting with Ivy Reynolds to create more workable parameters for the Dryland Farmable CREP program.

New Business

- Lenz suggested attending the Ogallala Aquifer Symposium March 18 and 19 in Liberal, KS. He said it's a great symposium and there are many contacts to be made there.

At 1:33 PM the recording stopped because the batteries died.

- Seedorf discussed possible land acquisitions in the SFFZ owned by the Colorado State Land Board.

The recording began at 1:39 PM.

- o "We are interested, without full board approval, we are going to take the time and look at the appraised values compared to our program cost."
- Discussion was held on the PTAC Third Agreement and where it is in process.

At 1:57 there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. There was a second and the vote was unanimous.

Kristina M. Schneider
Secretary

2/23/24
Date