

**WESTERN REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

The regular meeting of the Western Regional Water Commission (WRWC) Board of Trustees was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2013, at Sparks Council Chambers, 431 Prater Way, Sparks, Nevada.

- 1. Roll Call and Determination of presence of a Quorum** – Chairman Carrigan called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. There was a quorum present.

Commissioners Present:

Mike Carrigan, Chair
Sandra Ainsworth
Jenny Brekhus
Steve Cohen (arrived at 10:20 a.m.)
Kitty Jung
Ron Smith

Representing:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA)
Sun Valley General Improvement District (SVGID)
City of Reno
South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District (STMGID)
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
City of Sparks

Commissioners Absent:

Vaughn Hartung
Neoma Jardon
Geno Martini

Representing:

Washoe County
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF)

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Carrigan asked Commissioner Smith to lead the Western Regional Water Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment

Chairman Carrigan called for public comments and hearing none, closed the public comment period.

4. Approval of Agenda (for possible action)

Commissioner Brekhus made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Approval of the minutes of the May 16, 2013 meeting (for possible action)

Commissioner Jung made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

6. Update on the Truckee Meadows Regional Storm Water Quality Management Program, including recent community outreach activities and the recent regulatory audit – Terri Svetich, P.E., City of Reno.

Terri Svetich, City of Reno Engineering Manager and Coordinator of the Truckee Meadows Regional Storm Water Quality Management Program, provided a background of the program, including those involved, legal requirements and components of the project.

Ms. Svetich reported that the Storm Water Permit Coordinating Committee (“SWPCC”) is responsible for developing and updating the Storm Water Management Program (“SWMP”). The SWMP must be updated every five years, which last occurred in October 2011. She explained that the primary goals of

the program are to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff from entering our waterways. She added that Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (“NDEP”) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“USEPA”) conducted an audit of the Truckee Meadows in June 2013. Feedback has been favorable; however, some concerns were raised over industrial and construction inspection. The audit report has not yet been finalized.

Ms. Svetich commended Lynell Garfield-Qualls, City of Reno Hydrologist, with receiving grant funding for a storm water outreach program. The grant funding was used for a watershed map that is nearing completion and watershed crossing signs that were installed throughout the community. Another outreach tool was “Public Art Fights Pollution”, in which a local artist was hired to paint two storm drains in downtown Reno showing that the drain is the “mouth” of the river. A video (shown at the meeting and available on the Internet) was produced showing the project along with a storm water message related to the Truckee River. She added that positive feedback and compliments have been received from all over the world.

Ms. Svetich summarized that the Regional Water Management Fund has provided funding for implementation of the Truckee Meadows Regional Storm Water Quality Management Program and thanked members.

Commissioner Jardon asked if the Washoe County District Board of Health is involved in the program. Ms. Svetich stated it is not directly; however, a representative of Washoe County Community Services Department Division of Water Resources sits on the SWPCC. Ms. Jardon asked if additional staff would be needed to meet EPA’s inspection requirement. Ms. Svetich stated she did not believe it would.

Commissioner Smith thanked Ms. Svetich and commended her on the video presentation. He suggested that she share the video with high school students in the community.

Commissioner Brekhus asked if the five-year plan includes storm drain system infrastructure projects. Ms. Svetich stated it does not and added that there are ordinances in place for new development.

7. Discussion and possible reappointment of Northern Nevada Water Planning Commissioners, Mickey Hazelwood, public at large member to represent environmental, biological, conservation or public concerns and Michael DeMartini, member to represent owners of domestic wells, for a term of three years, April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2016, and possible direction to staff – Jim Smitherman, WRWC Water Resources Program Manager (For Possible Action)

Mr. Smitherman stated that this item is for possible reappointment of Northern Nevada Water Planning Commissioners, Mickey Hazelwood, public at large member to represent environmental, biological, conservation or public concerns and Michael DeMartini, member to represent owners of domestic wells, for a term of three years, April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2016. He explained that the appointments need to be made by the WRWC. He added that Mr. Hazelwood and Mr. DeMartini are active members of the NNWPC and attend and participate in the meetings. He summarized that staff’s recommendation is to reappoint the members.

Commissioner Jung made a motion to approve staff’s recommendation. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

8. Review and discussion of recent reports and ongoing studies on climate change and its possible effects on water supply and demand in the Northern Nevada Water Planning Region, and possible direction to staff - Jim Smitherman. (For Possible Action)

Mr. Smitherman provided some background on the climate change issue. He referred to recent reports:

- TMWA's Appendix B to the current Water Resource Plan, which was developed in partnership with Desert Research Institute (DRI) and includes three reports
 - The Potential Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources, 2006, Dr. Stone, DRI and Dr. Lopez, TMWA – The report generally summarized the state of the science and focused on water resources in a high level look
 - Hydrologic Trend Analyses for the Truckee Meadows Region, 2006, Dr. Stone, DRI and Dr. Lopez, TMWA – The report presents an extensive analysis of locally-derived data sets, including temperature, precipitation, snow-water equivalent, stream flow and reservoir volume. The report also examined climate change effects that the region has experienced. The conclusions were that year-to-year variability in the data was very high, which made it difficult to identify trends and there were no consistent or prevailing changes of temperature, precipitation, volume timing or reservoir storage. The study did not identify any clear evidence of global warming at the time.
 - A third report was developed in 2009, which updated the two existing reports and expanded on the data analysis using gridded data sets to evaluate spatial patterns and provided a cursory analysis of existing climate change scenarios, which were down-scaled for the Truckee River basin to provide an overview of expected trends, uncertainty and to assess climate changes in the Truckee Meadows, as well as what the community might expect in the future. The conclusions were that annual precipitation has increased over the last hundred years; wintertime decreased; summer and fall increased and high elevation data points were most effected. Reduced snowpack resulted in reduced streamflow and inflow to water bodies. Snow water equivalent has increased in the October to December timeframe and decreased by April 1st every year. Temperature has increased across the region over the last hundred years. Climate models project decreases of annual precipitation. Local models are inconsistent with global models.
- In 2012 the Water Research Foundation published, "Groundwater Sustainability under Climate Change – A Literature Research and Review". Former NNWPC Chairman John Buzzone was on the Project Advisory Committee. This publication reviewed state of the science climate information, including climate models, assessed climate model input and downscaling methodologies, as well as model uncertainty. The review of the state of the science was very similar to that of TMWA's. The study concludes with a recommendation for a flexible planning approach and adoption of adaptation strategies that make sense regardless of whether or not climate change is an issue.

Mr. Smitherman paraphrased both reports that climate trends are definitely worth monitoring; there are some shifts taking place. Climate change model projections and forecasts come with uncertainties. He summarized that prudent planning and management measures are a good idea.

Mr. Smitherman reported the Federal Bureau of Reclamation initiated the Truckee River Basin Study, which is one of seventeen basin studies funded since 2009. The objectives are to achieve consensus to identify a set of climate change scenarios to consider for the Truckee basin within the context of addressing water supply, demand risks, reliability and identify future options. A couple of technical advisory-type webinars have been held. TMWA and the Truckee River Flood Management Authority are stakeholders in the project.

The Bureau of Reclamation's ("BOR") previous basin studies developed 50-year scenarios for water supply and water demand to "frame a range of potential future imbalances and the range of solutions that could be considered."

Mr. Smitherman stated that in 2008 the Nevada System of Higher Education received a \$15 million award from the National Science Foundation for a five-year project that includes science education and outreach

infrastructure at University of Nevada, Reno (“UNR”) and the community college system of Nevada. The goal of the program is to focus on climate change science, education and outreach.

Mr. Smitherman summarized that his intent was not to provide a detailed summary of all of the reports or projects but rather to remind the NNWPC of the extensive amount of work that has been completed, particularly by TMWA. He added that TMWA’s 20-Year Water Resource Plan contemplates climate change and the effect on water resources. TMWA’s Plan, as well as the Regional Water Management Plan includes drought response planning. The Regional Water Plan uses the nine-year drought for planning purposes. There are also groundwater modeling tools used by Washoe County, one of which includes a 10% recharge reduction scenario.

Mr. Smitherman reported that TMWA worked with UNR to calculate the trends for drought recurrence frequency. The frequency of occurrence for an eight-year drought was calculated at one in 230 years; a nine-year drought was one in 375 years; and a ten-year drought was one in 650 years. He welcomed questions or comments.

Commissioner Cohen asked if the cloud seeding program takes any of this information into account or alters the results. Mr. Smitherman stated he had not read anywhere where cloud seeding was incorporated into the analyses. Mr. Cohen asked if the potential for climate change might result in changing drought planning to be based on a nine-year drought. Mr. Smitherman stated that the Water Plans are re-evaluated and updated every five years so that issue will be considered.

Commissioner Brekhus thanked Mr. Smitherman for his presentation. She referred to the BOR’s Colorado Basin Study, and asked if the Truckee River Basin Study would include similar modeling. Mr. Smitherman stated that his understanding is that BOR will not be doing any new modeling; they will be analyzing the existing data sets. Ms. Brekhus stated that she is hearing concerns voiced by Southern Nevada Water Authority about the (Colorado River) Compact and other issues. Mr. Smitherman reiterated that results of the study will be used in the five-year Water Plan update. He added that he does not anticipate our local results being as severe as those seen in Southern Nevada.

Commissioner Brekhus asked if we are currently in a drought situation. Chairman Carrigan stated that according to TMWA, we are in the second year of a drought. Ms. Brekhus suggested all of our regional plans should contemplate climate change, in addition to water conservation. Mr. Smitherman stated that prior to 2008; a study of City and County codes was done by an economist from TMWA in coordination with Reno, Sparks and Washoe County planners. He explained that TMWA developed a spreadsheet comparing the irrigation standards in each entity’s codes; however, he did not believe policy changes were made. He added that recommendations were made. Ms. Brekhus requested an update of that work. Mr. Smitherman offered to provide a briefing on the work that was done.

Commissioner Brekhus mentioned that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) is requiring disaster management planning and asked if Washoe County is involved. Mr. Smitherman stated he has not been involved. Ms. Brekhus stated that for instance she was involved in a disaster planning meeting and heard that trucking water to range horses was part of emergency planning. She suggested taking a broader look at the issues. Mr. Smitherman reiterated that during the Water Plan update, water policies would be reviewed.

9. Discussion and possible approval of funding in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for the *Phase II: In-depth Analysis of Prioritized Study Areas, Creation of Baseline Data Set, and Risk Assessment*, to continue the Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study for Washoe County; and if approved, authorize the Chairman to execute an Interlocal Agreement with the County for that purpose – Chris Wessel, WRWC Water Management Planner. (For Possible Action)

Chris Wessel provided a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file) and reported that this item refers to a 2007 report, “Phase 1 Prioritization of Study Areas and Assessment of Data Needs”. He explained that the study identified sixteen areas, which have high-density septic developments, as well as data gaps related to the effects on groundwater quality. He stated that Washoe County is currently undergoing conversion of septic systems to sanitary sewer in Spanish Springs. He added that further study is needed to determine whether other areas need to undergo such a conversion.

Mr. Wessel explained that one of the recommendations from the Phase 1 report was to fill in the data gaps for areas as needed. He reported that at the last meeting, staff was directed to move forward with a proposal for the Phase 2 work, which was included in the agenda packet. An in-depth analysis of the prioritized study areas, dataset baseline creation, further groundwater monitoring and impact assessment would be performed under Phase 2.

Commissioner Smith asked for clarification that “groundwater” is referencing “well water”. Mr. Wessel stated for the most part that is correct. He added that the septic nitrate contamination predominantly occurs in the unconfined upper aquifers of the system although it can affect other layers. Mr. Smith mentioned the previous arsenic problem in Hidden Valley and asked from where it comes. Mr. Wessel explained that Hidden Valley receives water from the municipal system, which had high arsenic concentrations that required treatment. He clarified that it was unrelated to septic systems.

Commissioner Smith asked if Spanish Springs septic system owners would be required to hook up to the municipal sewer system. Mr. Wessel reported that the first phase of that project is almost complete and a second phase is planned; however, lack of funding stalled the project. Commissioner Brekhus mentioned that since federal funds dried up, we need to look for local solutions.

Commissioner Brekhus referred to Island 18 in Reno, which is an old development, and suggested that Washoe County consider this annexed area. Mr. Wessel agreed and stated that the focus of this study was municipal wells and did not include domestic wells. He explained that even if the density of septic systems does not present a local impact, they still add nitrogen loading to the system.

Mr. Wessel stated that to address the community wide problem would most likely require some sort of fee collection. He clarified that federal funding is not a possibility currently and other areas have had to impose a fee.

Commissioner Brekhus referred to land use planning and a recent request she heard for a commercial development to go on septic. She asked if NDEP sets the standard for lot size upon which a septic system could be installed. Mr. Wessel stated that the Health Department sets that standard, which is currently a five-acre minimum for residential.

Commissioner Brekhus made a motion to approve funding in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for the *Phase II: In-depth Analysis of Prioritized Study Areas, Creation of Baseline Data Set, and Risk Assessment*, to continue the Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study for Washoe County; and authorize the Chairman to execute an Interlocal Agreement with the County for that purpose. Commissioner Jung seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

10. Discussion and possible ratification of staff's approval of an invoice for reimbursement of certain expenses incurred in evaluating and implementing recommendations regarding integration/consolidation of public water purveyors in accordance with the existing Interlocal Agreement.

Mr. Smitherman stated that the Interlocal Agreement prohibits him from approving an invoice over \$25,000. It either needs to be approved by the WRWC or staff's approval ratified by the WRWC. He explained that in the interest of time, he approved the invoice so is asking for ratification.

Mr. Smitherman reported that TMWA's expenses were approximately \$57,500 in consulting fees and Washoe County's fees were \$31,900 for legal fees and \$38,000 for consulting fees. He explained that funding in the amount of \$300,000 was approved by the WRWC.

Chairman Carrigan requested a brief update from Mark Foree, TMWA General Manager. Mr. Foree reported that work is continuing toward the merger. He added that TMWA is close to finalizing an agreement with South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District ("STMGID") to merge directly into TMWA, which was one of the last tasks that had to be completed prior to moving forward to implementation. He stated that the estimated timeline to complete the merger is the end of December 2014.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to ratify staff's approval of an invoice for reimbursement of certain expenses incurred in evaluating and implementing recommendations regarding integration/consolidation of public water purveyors in accordance with the existing Interlocal Agreement. Commissioner Cohen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

11. Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding agenda items for the November 20, 2013 meeting and other future meetings (for possible action)

Mr. Smitherman reported that the next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2013. He stated that the agenda items would include:

- Update on Cloud Seeding program – Commissioner Smith stated he would like to hear a report based on the fact that they were previously State funded and the WRWC and TMWA has funded the program for the past four years. Mr. Smith asked that DRI include an update on additional funding sources.
- Review financial statements of the annual audit – will be reported by Ben Hutchins
- Results of the Storm Water Audit if written report is available
- Update on Facility Plan Conformance Review Procedures along with proposed revised procedures
- Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency report on entire parcel-based population and employment modeling project with the focus on industrial land use analysis
- Review agreement with City of Reno for treatment options at the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF)

Commissioner Brekhus referred to the five-year update of the Regional Water Plan and asked when information would begin to be presented to the WRWC related to the process. Mr. Smitherman reported that the update would begin in 2015. He offered to provide an overview of the process at an upcoming meeting.

12. Commission Comments

None

13. Staff Comments

None

14. Public Comment

Chairman Carrigan called for public comments and hearing none, closed the public comment period.

15. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Niki Linn, Recording Secretary

Approved by Commission in session on _____ 2013.

Mike Carrigan, Chairman

Note: DRAFT Minutes not approved by Board.