

WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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February 20, 2017

Monthly Board Meeting

Chairperson Philippi called Board meeting to order on February 20, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Irrigon Fire Hall located at 705 N. Main St. in Irrigon. Those in attendance were: Board members, Dalarie Philippi, Bob Mueller Vern Frederickson Abe McNamee and Warren Kemper; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Office Manager, Lisa Baum; Field Superintendent, Richard French; Guest Boris Belchoff, Bureau of Reclamation Manager Umatilla Field Office.

AGENDA: Chairman Philippi approved the agenda with additions.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mueller moved to approve the minutes of the February 2017 Board meeting. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

BILLS PAYABLE: After review, Frederickson moved to approve the January accounts payable list in the amount of \$132,471.81. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

MANAGER'S' REPORT: A written report was distributed to the directors and is attached to and a part of the minutes.

FIELD SUPERINDENT REPORT: We are anxious to see how the snow and deep freeze have affected our canal. Basically we've had snow since early December, but significant snow and ice from December 15. Walt starts today at Division, cleaning towards Three Mile Dam. French reported that he and Bridgewater did a preliminary inspection of the canal from Three Mile to Patterson Ferry yesterday. The snow was too deep to see much once we got past 86. March 1, we will bring the excavator and crew to the Lat 86 area where we have a lot of canal work to finish up, including removing the bridge across the canal. Stahls will replace the bridge at a later date. At 86, there are ½ mile of panels buckled. While some slippage may be recent, most has been there for a long time, the result of sub-water problems. Stahls installed drainage in the area 3 years ago and that has helped. Another ½ mile worth of work in the area from Powerline to Three Mile needs attention. We haven't been able to see the rest of the canal to know that work will be needed. Discussion.

Concern about muskrats holes. Rodent control is something we have not done a good job of. We will do research in this area and likely come back to the Board for discussion.

The drainage work at Robbins is started. The crew laid 900 feet of 6-inch drain pipe. The electrical and pump work needs to be done. McNamee asked about drainage work in the Gattenbein corner area. We don't plan work there this year, but will supply drainage material if Chowning has time to do some work.

Bev reported that WRD folks will meet with her tomorrow to look at the Robbins area. They are deciding whether we need a water right permit to pump the water back into the canal. Discussion.

One prison crew has been working since Jan. 23. Though the temperature has been hovering between 19 and 30, they were able to get much needed tree & brush work done along Lateral 15, 9, 31 in Boardman. Once the snow clears, they will start cleaning the laterals. A second crew will be brought in to do the concrete work on the main canal as soon as we have sufficient thawing.

More comments from French:

- Frank's one-year review is coming up. He is working on his CDL.
- Spray truck is getting ready to go.
- Chemical is on hand
- IPS needs power to run. Pump has been returned.
- New pump for 7th Street station has been ordered
- IPS flow meter. Will leave "as is" for this year, hoping the problem was due to cavitation on the pump and not with the flow meter itself.

RECLAMATION REVIEWS: Reclamation reviews our main canal several times over a three year period. The canal is divided into four reaches that make up the "Urbanized Canal Review Program." This is part of the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009." There is a tri-annual O&M Review of the canal, plus a Facility Environmental Audit. Each one of these is helpful to the District, and work orders are developed to address the issues brought up in the inspections.

RECLAMATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT STRATEGY: Boris stated that Reclamation adopted its Infrastructure and Investment Strategy document in 2015. The action items from the document are:

- To improve data collection, analysis and reporting on its facilities
- To categorize potential investment account to importance and urgency
- To collaborate with its water and power customers

In 2015/16, they have worked collecting information on their reserved works. In 2017, they will look at the transferred works. The Reclamation Transparency Act, which requires Reclamation to report its efforts in managing its assets to Congress, was recently introduced for this Congressional session.

The Board stated its thanks to Boris and the Bureau of Reclamation for the partnership they have shared over the last 100 plus years.

OREGON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO): Bridgewater attended the Advisory Committee meeting for SHPO. They reviewed a document that would establish criteria to be used for Federal Irrigation Projects in Oregon. Reclamation submitted comments, as did WEID, about the document and encouraged the committee to delay adopting it. The committee had been working on this document over a year and was anxious to get it moving along. They passed the document, agreeing to incorporate Reclamation's comments. After reworking it, the nomination goes before the "keeper" at National Parks Service. Discussion. This process has delayed approval by SHPO for our piping project of lateral 11. The Board agreed that the District should confer with Reclamation under Section 106 so it can pipe its laterals and work its conservation plan. The sooner, the better.

IPS AIRBLAST SYSTEM/STAHL PAYMENT: The bill to Stahls for its work on renovation of the Irrigon Pump Station has been paid. The airblast system will be completed as soon as the snow melts, and before water starts. So, there will be more bills for that.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

ALTERNATE POINT OF DIVERSION/KAIZEN PROPERTY: Vern Frederickson declared a conflict of interest for the following discussion and abstained from discussion as a Board director. Kaizen Holding LLC has 131.6 acres of water rights that were developed under the District's Columbia River permit in Irrigon. Dennis Logan was the landowner at that time and shared the diversion with the District. Kaizen does not take its water from that diversion now and is pumping it from its own pump station in Boardman. The District should do an alternate point of diversion for this 131.6 acres of water rights. The Board agreed and authorized management to complete that process.

The next question to consider is how Kaizen will be billed in the future for these water rights? There is a cost inherent to each water right for being part of the District (administrative) and a cost that is part of the operations and service provided. In the case of Kaizen and these water rights, they are paying their own pumping, system maintenance and operational costs. Discussion. The Board directed Bridgewater to come back with a recommendation.

INTENT TO TRANSFER NOTICES FOR NON-USE: The District is starting its project to notice folks in Irrigon who have not used water on all or a portion of their property for the past four years. This is timely as the Columbia River water right certificate in Irrigon was final in 2012. This makes 2017 the 5th year of non-use. The WEID meets the state's criteria to remove water that has not been used if proper notice is provided to the landowner and affected parties (lienholders). The criteria is having a full-time manager and an active Water Management and Conservation

Plan. The District sent 60 letters last August to folks about this issue, and many of them responded that they would irrigate. Now, the notification process will start in earnest. We are required to notify landowners 30 days prior to the start of the irrigation season if we intend to move the water rights due to non-use. There are several instances:

- 1) Non-use due to buildings and driveways. We will ask these folks to sign a permanent transfer form that will move the water right off their property since it can no longer be put to beneficial use. Their 2017 bill will be adjusted accordingly.
- 2) Portions of the property not irrigated. Landowners will be notified. We expect most to irrigate these areas in 2017 to protect their water right.
- 3) Landowners who have not irrigated and/or have not installed an irrigation system. Some of these are absentee landowners. They will be given options to save their water right, including temporary transfer, instream transfer and using the water.

We estimate 100 acres of water rights are not being used and over 100 patrons to be contacted. Lienholders also need to be contacted. The Board asked that Lisa does the lienholder research with the County. If there are some holdings where interest is complicated, we can pay the \$200 to the title company for that research.

We expect 20 acres to become available for permanent transfer and have a waiting list for those rights. Discussion. The current newsletter that will go out with the annual bill has two pages dedicated to Oregon Water Law and five year non-use.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-006 - INSTREAM LEASE: With instream lease being a viable option for folks on the Irrigon system to protect their water right, the Board reviewed its instream lease policy. The costs of the instream lease were discussed. Mueller moved to adopt Resolution No. 17-006 INSTREAM LEASE POLICY and set the fee for instream lease as \$350 per landowner plus the State's cost of the transfer which would be prorated among the properties involved. Frederickson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

TEMPORARY TRANSFERS: The District has been doing temporary transfers annually. The releasing landowner pays the cost of whatever water right remains and the receiving landowner pays the transfer cost and the annual water right fees. About \$7000 annually is lost to the District in the customer fees. For instance, it takes 6 – 10 small customers to make up what a larger irrigator would take in transfer. Discussion. The Board directed that all customers will pay the \$350 annual customer fee since they remain customers and retain voting rights. If they transfer off their water rights temporarily, the customer fee will remain and the rest of the fees for that water right will be paid by the receiving landowner.

This year, we expect more folks, especially in Irrigon, requesting to temporarily transfer OFF their water right than we have land to place the water. Discussion. We will use a “rolling system.” For all requests received by a published deadline, priority will be given to someone needing to transfer OFF to prevent a five-year non-

use situation. Then to the ones whose last transfer or use date is furthest from the current year. At some point, seniority of request may be used, with all other things equal. In other words, a “rolling system”. Once the transfer occurs, that property goes to the bottom of the list and works it way back up.

BOARDMAN MASTER PLAN: The Board reviewed the summary pages for the Boardman Master Plan. Discussion. All designs will be to 8.5 gallons per minute per acre. Ponds were discussed. The Board provided direction to Bridgewater.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-004 – RESTORING RECREATIONAL IMMUNITY: Mueller moved to adopt Resolution No. 17-004 and send to Special Districts of Oregon in support of their legislation action. The Chairman is authorized to sign on behalf of the Board. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-005 – WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY: Mueller moved to adopt Resolution No. 17-005. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

COMMENTS ON INSTEAM LEASE: Kemper wondered if we are following state and federal law regarding instream lease and what we can charge people. Why does it cost more to leave the water instream and not use it? Others explained there are costs to prepare the maps, the documents for instream lease, monitor the instream lease and the state’s fees (\$450).

GROUNDWATER PROBLEMS – UMATILLA AREA: Bridgewater mentioned the groundwater issues around Three Mile Dam, which the Board has been aware of. Directors Mueller and McNamee will go with French to the site for consideration of how we can do work there next fall or winter. Groundwater has increased inside the Umatilla Pump Station compound where the ground is quite spongy and some washing has occurred. We will need to keep an eye here and may do some drainage work.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Signed:

Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

Dalarie Philippi, Board Chairperson