
**Wyoming Water Development Commission
Workshop
December 9, 2020**

* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Workshop was conducted remotely via Zoom.

1. Chairman Kellen Lancaster called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** – Secretary Ron Kailey led roll call of the Commission.

Commission Attendance:

Kellen Lancaster, Chairman
Clinton Glick, Vice-Chairman
Ron Kailey, Jr., Secretary
Gerald Geis – excused
Mark Kot
Sheridan Little
Mike Purcell
Larry Suchor
Rodney K. Wagner
Bill Yankee

Advisor Attendance:

Darren Cook, Attorney General's Office

3. **Financial Status Report**

Director Gebhart provided the Commission with current and projected account balances. He also reminded Commissioners to file their Financial Disclosure forms with the Secretary of State prior to the January 1st filing deadline.

4. **Review of Public Hearings – Proposed Level III Projects**

Six public hearings were conducted December 1-3, 2020. No comments were received during most of the hearings. The few comments that were received were in favor of the proposed projects.

5. **Lance Creek Well Purchase**

Three studies have been completed on behalf of the Lance Creek Water and Sewer District [District] since 1995. The final Level II study resulted in a production-sized well that met EPA drinking water standards. The District applied for Level III funding to connect to the well in 2012. \$170,000 was appropriated for the project in 2013, but the District objected to terms of the agreement related to water sales. The contract was never executed and funds were reverted back into Water Development Account I in 2018.

In November of 2020, the District expressed a renewed interest in connecting to the well. The Water Development Office [Office] presented them with two options: apply for Level III funding to connect the well to their existing system under the same terms of agreement as previously offered, or purchase the well outright at its production cost of \$33,000. The Office informed the District of additional steps they will need to take if they choose to purchase the well and proceed with permitting and construction without the assistance of the Office.

A proposed amendment to the 2021 omnibus construction bill has been drafted that would grant the Commission the authority to sell the well. This amendment is nonbinding.

A separate amendment in the bill changes sponsorship for the Sheridan Area Water Supply 2020 Project from the Sheridan Area Water Supply Joint Powers Board to the City of Sheridan, per the request of both entities.

6. Project Recommendation Updates

- *Lake Hattie Full Utilization Study, Level I*

Director Gebhart informed the Commission of the current state of the project. There has been no formal ruling by the court. He recommended that the Commission proceed with their request for \$250,000 to serve as a placeholder until a full scope of work can be developed.

- *LaPrele Irrigation District Dam Rehabilitation, Level II, Phase II*

Director Gebhart recommended an appropriation of \$500,000 to explore and secure funding sources for construction. Funding sources could impact final design criteria, environmental analyses, etc. This funding would be used on a by-task basis until additional funding is secured and the scope becomes more defined. Director Gebhart then explained the risk analysis task in further detail.

Commissioner Mike Purcell questioned this recommendation for he believes that the hazardous condition of LaPrele Dam qualifies as an emergency situation under the Emergency Water Program. As such, he proposed that the project receive enough funding to progress with the final design.

To initiate 30% design, Director Gebhart informed the Commission that the Consultant would need \$1.6 million. More than 50 percent of this funding would be spent on geotechnical analysis. The Commission agreed to consider this request.

7. Small Water Program Guidance Document Discussion

The Commission was provided with a guidance document pertaining to project eligibility within the Small Water Program. The document is designed to describe the program, eligibility, criteria, and how projects are vetted and prioritized.

8. Demo of Practical Applications of a GIS Tool Developed for Watershed Studies

Mike Henn, Manager of the Sublette County Conservation District, demonstrated how data collected during the New Fork River and Big Sandy River Watershed Studies was used to develop a tool for constituents that mapped points of diversion, means of conveyance, and associated water right certificates and original applications.

9. Legislative Process and Meeting Requests Discussion

Director Gebhart stated that during the legislative session, information flow to and from the Commission should go through his office.

10. Legislative Updates

- Survey and Aging Infrastructure Draft Bill Update

Director Gebhart announced that an Aging Infrastructure Survey Draft Bill was presented to the Joint Agriculture Committee and failed on a tie roll call vote.

- Level I and II Application Fees

Director Gebhart revised his previous recommendation to maintain the original \$1,000 application fee, but amend the Water Development Program's Operating Criteria to require applicants to reimburse the Office in tiered amounts based on the number of taps served or irrigated acreage by their entity.

Questions were raised about whether the original application fee should be increased instead and if that alternative would require legislation. The Director explained how his recommendation would eliminate the need for legislation but would require an amendment to Operating Criteria. Such an amendment may not go into effect until the 2022 application cycle.

The Commission approved of the Director's recommendation and agreed consider the revised application fees and operating criteria changes at the August Commission meeting.

- Gillette Madison Pipeline Project

Director Gebhart provided an update on the Gillette Madison Pipeline Project. He informed the Commission that the City of Gillette had repaid \$40 million of their \$44,328,358 outstanding loan. Repayment of the remaining balance, plus interest, will begin upon project completion.

- Agency Budget Reductions

To address agency budget reductions, the Wyoming Water Development Office has maintained two vacant staff positions and plans to renegotiate the lease to discontinue use of the lower level of their office building.

- Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities

Director Gebhart proposed dissolving the Commission's agreement with the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities to store emergency water in Seminoe Reservoir at a cost savings of \$25,000 per year.

With no additional items to discuss, the Commission adjourned for the evening.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Kailey, Jr., Secretary