



**Wyoming Water Development Commission Workshop  
Cheyenne, Wyoming  
January 25, 2022**

1. Vice-Chairman Bill Yankee called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
- 2. Recognition of Members Present to Establish Quorum**

Commission Attendance:

Clinton W. Glick, Chairman - Excused  
Bill Yankee, Vice-Chairman  
Ron Kailey, Jr., Secretary  
Liisa Anselmi-Dalton  
Robert Choma  
Leonard A. "Lee" Craig  
Mark Kot  
John Lawson - Excused  
Sheridan Little  
Larry Suchor – Excused

Advisor Attendance:

Greg Kerr, UW Office of Water Programs

- 3. Review Public Hearings – Proposed Level III Projects**

WWDO Interim Director Jason Mead asked for Director Brandon Gebhart to run the meeting since he was limited to remote attendance. Director Gebhart reviewed the Level III public hearings conducted during the week of December 6-10, 2021 and noted that all projects received favorable support with many positive comments having been received. There was no further discussion.

- 4. UW Water Research Program Proposals 2022**

Greg Kerr, Director of the UW Office of Water Programs discussed each of the six research proposals received from UW faculty in response to the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that were approved by the Commission and the Legislative Select Water Committee. Director Kerr then went through the proposal review process to

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include external peer reviews and a technical review committee made up of federal and Wyoming state agency representatives. The outcome of those efforts yielded three projects in Tier 1 (of high priority) to be considered for funding by the Commission at tomorrow's meeting. Considerable discussion ensued to include project budgets, UW funding match, student training potential, past funding levels, etc. Director Gebhart explained to the Commission their responsibility and instructed them to take the evening to review the slate of Water Research Program proposals in order to recommend which projects should move forward to the Select Water Committee (SWC) for their consideration on January 27th.

## **5. Project Recommendation Updates**

### *Deaver ID Rehabilitation 2022*

A simple rounding issue was discussed between the project recommendation and the amount found for the project in the Omnibus Water Bill – Construction.

### *Dry Creek ID Pipeline Replacement 2022*

A simple rounding issue was discussed between the project recommendation and the amount found for the project in the Omnibus Water Bill – Construction. This project is also dependent on a funds transfer from account I to account II.

### *Fontenelle Reservoir Storage*

This recommendation is new and was not presented to the Commission prior to this workshop. Meetings with the Water Development Office, the State Engineers Office, and the Attorney General's Office have been taking place to investigate the possibility of the State of Wyoming purchasing additional storage water in Fontenelle Reservoir. Such would require negotiations with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and would include permitting activities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A contributing funds agreement with the USBR to complete research, conduct technical meetings, carry out the NEPA analyses, and to modify existing and/or create new contracts will be required. The requested appropriation for this effort is \$1.7 million. It was noted that the NEPA budget is a significant portion of the overall request and as discussions continue and further information is gathered, NEPA requirements could require additional budget.

### *Goshen ID Tunnel Rehabilitation 2022*

The GID recommendation was changed with respect to loan percentages and is contingent on a \$7 million transfer of funds from account I to account II. It was noted that at this point the amount needed for construction and where the funding will come from is unknown. There was also a discussion of interest accrual at the end of design vs. when the benefits accrue. The goal of the project is to complete the design within the next year to year and a half.

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Little Wind River Storage Study, Phase II

The project recommendation change reflects extending the reversion date from July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2027.

Northwest Rural Water System Improvements 2022

A simple rounding issue was discussed between the project recommendation and the amount found for the project in the Omnibus Water Bill – Construction.

Small Water Project Program - Rehabilitation

A change to the project recommendation was made such that the project funding will no longer be contingent on a transfer from WDA I to WDA II.

Account Balance Summaries

Director Brandon Gebhart provided an overview summary of updated project appropriation requests and resulting account balances. Discussion ensued.

**6. Legislative Update**

Joint Appropriations Committee

The Water Development Office testified before the Joint Appropriations Committee on December 8, 2021 with regards to the agency's budget. There were no exception requests.

Joint Revenue Interim Committee

The draft Severance Tax Distribution Revision Bill was discussed. The Joint Revenue Interim Committee wishes to provide funding for the school foundation program, and proposes raising the mineral severance tax cap to cover this. Proposed distribution percentages would change, as would the cap. Although there would be no net change to Water Development Accounts, the WWDO is closely watching this draft legislation.

Select Water Committee

The Select Water Committee previously discussed House Bill 6 - ARPA Funds for Water and Wastewater Projects which could provide a \$95 million appropriation for new water and wastewater projects using ARPA funds. Yet to be determined is how the money is to be split up and what roles the Office of State Lands and Investments, Water Development Office and the Department of Environmental Quality each will play.

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*Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (PL117-58)*

It was noted that the Wyoming Water Development Office is closely watching this bill at the federal level as it may provide significant opportunities for the funding of water projects across the State of Wyoming.

*Supplemental Water Development Funding*

The Legislative Select Water Committee is working on a draft bill to provide supplemental funding from the General Fund for select water development projects, accounts, contingency funds and programs. The draft bill will be discussed at the upcoming SWC meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Legislative Process Discussion**

Director Gebhart walked through the roles and responsibilities of the Commission and individual Commissioners during the legislative session to include the Executive Branch policy regarding lobbying.

**8. Sponsor's Contingency Fund Requests**

Bill Brewer, WWDO Construction Deputy Director went through contingency fund requests to include the Big Horn Regional Transmission project and the Leavitt Reservoir project, among others. Also discussed was a request to increase the Account III Contingency Fund through an appropriation in the Omnibus Water Bill - Construction.

**9. Discussion**

There were no additional items for discussion.

**10. Adjournment**

Vice-Chairman Bill Yankee made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded; motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Kailey, Jr., Secretary