

EIWRC BOARD MEETING
Thursday, October 3, 2024, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.
Dean Mortimer's Barn, 6549 South 5th West, Idaho Falls
Draft Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Roger Warner, Keith Esplin, Brad Buttars, Skyler Johns, Bob Turner, Mayor Rebecca Casper, Mayor Marc Carroll, Dean Mortimer, Mayor Steve Adams, Alan Jackson, Dave Richards, Jeff Raybould & Princeton Lee.

1. Welcome – Roger Warner

2. Administrative Business

- a. Minutes of August 1 & Sept. 5 board meetings
 - i. Mayor Carroll moved to approve the minutes. Motion seconded and approved.**
- b. Bills to pay
 - i. Keith Esplin Services Invoice for \$1,903.66.
 - ii. Bob Turner moved to pay Keith Esplin's invoice; Seconded by Mayor Carroll; the motion carried.**
- c. Financial report and year-end estimate – Alan Jackson
 - i. Budget analysis
 - ii. Discussed details.
 - iii. 2025 dues rates
 - 1. Discussed raising the assessments and annual dues (e.g., 1 cent raise on city assessments and increase on business and private entity, from \$275 to \$350).
 - 2. Discussed showcasing what we do (e.g., water college tour); best way to do this is sponsor events; should hold a similar event next year, regardless of whether it's with IWUA.
 - a. Can do smaller educational events as well; could partner with other organizations (e.g., Idaho Association of Cities).
 - 3. New folks: suppliers, dealerships, finance organizations, etc. about 20 types of businesses affected by mismanagement of water resources were identified.
 - 4. Discussed new members, including businesses, set goal for \$20,000 in donations and new dues. Costs will go right back into events EIWRC hosts.
 - 5. The new amounts will keep the organization solvent and fund the larger work load.
 - iv. Motion to approve budget analysis and proposed budget as presented by Dean Mortimer; Seconded Brad Buttars; the Motion carried.**

3. Updates/Developments

- a. Current Water Situation – Keith
 - i. Hotter, dryer weather lately

- ii. Storage right now is lower than what it was this time last year, but it is still slightly above normal.
 - iii. Jackson is at 77%, which is good because it is the hardest to fill.
 - iv. Overall, we are in pretty good shape; but the weather for the next several weeks is to be hot and dry.
 - v. Twin Falls Canal is dipping into storage (65,000 ac-ft provided by IGWA).
- b. Quagga Mussel issues
 - i. Found them in a smaller area than where they were last year, indicating successes in treatment.
 - ii. Threatens to harm ecosystems all the way to the mouth of the Columbia River.
 - iii. Concern is that the mussels will plug up water infrastructure systems and destroy fish and other natural habitats.
 - iv. Concerns with boats contaminating other regions or bodies need to be addressed.
 - v. More inspection stations are being set up by the state, but some folks have concerns that they are not thorough enough to remove all potential contamination from vessels.
- c. IDWR / SWC Negotiations – Skyler, Bob, Alan
 - i. Several meetings have been held.
 - ii. Agreement covers main points most irrigators need, time, carry-over, and recharge.
 - iii. Date to finalize is extended to November 1.
 - iv. Both sides have made compromises.
 - v. Lieutenant Governor Bedke, IDWR, & IWRB met individually with parties, exchanged drafts.
 - vi. There may be some minor items left unresolved like processes, delivery of mitigation water, management of allocations, etc.
 - vii. Trying to refine the details for each side. Don't want to get in front of a judge. Want to avoid misunderstandings in the 2015 agreement.
 - viii. Buy-in from all the ground water districts is necessary. Some indicated they were unhappy, but there is optimism all districts will be in support of the new agreement.
 - ix. Options to lease the water is acceptable; only at the time of need with the leases be necessary to be in place.
- d. IWRB Projects – Jeff Raybould
 - i. Recharge well along at Egin Lakes; will expand the recharge complex out there. Wells will take around 10 CFS. Board believes this area holds a lot of promise. Need to think through the water quality issues that could arise from injection.
 - ii. Gov. wants \$10 million, from Dworshak Reservoir funds, to go to projects on ESPA.

- iii. Board is still looking at recharge sites in the upper valley. This is to increase capacity to the new goal of 350,000 ac-ft.
 - 1. Will there need to be special concessions to Idaho Power to recognize hydropower pursuant to CAMP and raise the recharge target amount? Coming up with a benefits analysis showing who gets the water and when.
 - 2. IWRB does not have as much money this year, compared to previous years, to do projects. Gov. is working with the IWRB to come up with more money.
 - 3. Still have money earmarked for recharge (25-30 million); cost share money earmarked for conversions projects; and some earmarked for canal efficiencies and enlargement of capacity to run recharge water.
 - iv. Encourage legislators to fund water infrastructure projects.
 - v. IDWR wants an increase of up to 6-7% for additional staff in IDWR, primarily to assist with adjudications and new water districts; needs personnel to manage.
- e. ESPA GWMA Plan
- i. The discussion is that hopefully the new agreement will replace need for GWMA Plan.
- f. ESPA Modeling Committee Report – Roger Warner
- i. This impacts the ESPA delivery call and management plan.
 - ii. Some recharge sites, like Mile Post 31, have counterintuitive results that bear watching. Some might say that recharging locally has a “larger effect” on the water table east and up gradient of the recharge site.
 - iii. Recharge shows up in the modelling and had a positive effect on the ESPA when it occurred.
 - iv. Take a look at the report.
- g. IWUA Legislative Committee Report – Roger Warner
- i. Domestic Well Issue
 - 1. IWUA has put this high on its priority list.
 - 2. Perhaps the biggest concern is that folks don’t want to be regulated on their land.
 - 3. Permitting this exemption in perpetuity contributes to further costs associated with developments being farther away from urban areas (e.g., bus routes; increased costs for mitigation of impacts by regulated water users).

ii. Mat Weaver and IDWR

1. No IDWR legislation this next session.
2. Gov. Little has given a 5-year review period to review regulations and reduce them. This includes the Conjunctive Management Rules; this will create opportunities for the Legislature to review the proposed changes.
3. Asking for 6-7 % IDWR budget increase. Rules continue to be reviewed, delaying conjunctive management rules.

iii. Irrigation District reporting (Transparent Idaho):

1. State Controller wants to get all the reporting consistent; Irrigation Districts are opposed because they believe only they and the County Commissioners need to see their reports.

h. Legislative Ideas with White Papers

- i. As we get further into proposals, we will need to provide white papers explaining the issues to people.

i. Coalition Annual Meeting: Dec 5?

i. Special meeting? Potential topics.

1. What will ESPA expansion look like?
2. Preparing tributary basins for ESPA and funding.
3. How will cities plan? (For GMA Plan?).
4. Proposed legislation.
5. Discussed a forum that informs the public on what happened the last two years in water wars, where we are at, where we are headed, what has the Coalition done, how folks can be involved?
 - a. Need to be objective, unbiased, and informative.
 - b. Need to make this event showcase the work of the Coalition.

j. Other business from board members:

- i. Discussion about funds being donated from businesses with the purpose of benefiting east Idaho water.
- ii. Don't want to be too friendly to one interest at the expense of the other.

4. EIWRC Directors' 2024 Schedule:

- a. IWUA Annual Meeting Jan. 13-16
- b. Next Board meeting November 7, Parsons Behle, Idaho Falls.

5. Meeting Adjourned