

# EIWRC BOARD MEETING

Thursday, February 6, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Parsons, Behle & Latimer, 350 Memorial Drive, Suite 300, Idaho Falls

## Meeting Minutes

**PRESENT:** Keith Esplin, Roger Warner, Dave Richards. \_\_\_\_ Idaho Falls, Dean Mortimer, Mayor Steve Adams, Mayor Marc Carroll, Mayor August Christensen, Payton Hampton, Skyler Johns, Mayor Rebecca Casper, Mayor Jerry Merrill, Keith Davidson, Mayor Adams Bob Turner Cooper Fritz, \_\_\_\_, & \_\_ Zoom: Dennis Leikam, Courtnie Dawson, Leisa Moulton, Aaron Dalling.

### 1. Welcome – Roger Warner

### 2. Administrative Business

- a. Minutes of Nov 6 board meeting, December 10 Annual meeting
  - i. Mayor Carroll moved to accept December and January Meeting Minutes and Mayor Adams seconded, and the motion carried.
- b. Board officer election
  - i. Dean Mortimer moved to reelect same officers as 2024, Mayor Adams seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- c. Bills to pay
  - i. Rocky Mountain Environmental bill
  - ii. Keith Esplin bill
  - iii. Mayor Merrill moved to pay all the bills, Mayor Carroll seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- d. 2024 Year End Financial Report – 2025 Budget – Amy and Alan
  - i. Not available
  - ii. Still need to determine what the Ground Water District rates will be.

### 3. Updates/Developments

- a. Current Water Situation – Keith
  - i. Water outlook is on par with normal, but reservoir storage is about 200,000 ac-ft below where it was last year.
  - ii. Runoff will likely not be as much because the soils are dryer than in previous years.
  - iii. Snowpack is not terrible, but we have had some dry spots this year.
  - iv. Prediction is AF Reservoir will fill, and there may be some spill over Milner. But will need a much wetter winter to have significant recharge opportunities.
- b. IWUA Convention Report - Roger
- c. Recharge well controversy – Cooper Fritz
  - i. The best way to impact spring flows from Blackfoot to Neely is to recharge north of Blackfoot. Has the effect of recharging American Falls Reservoir.
    1. Three ways to do recharge
      - a. In canal recharge – seepage into the ground, usually outside the times the canals usually operate
        - i. March, April, and May is usually when recharge is available; once April 15 comes the canals carry

irrigation water and recharge can only be done in basins.

b. Use recharge basins

- i. Can construct basins on private land
- ii. However south of the Menan Buttes, the basins do not take water as well, so there are fewer opportunities; unfortunately, the model show this area impacts the Near Blackfoot to Neely reach the most.
- iii. Basins in Ririe and Iona only impact river in limited way. Have about a two-year carry-over.

c. Recharge Wells

- i. Help overcome challenges with reaching south of Menan Buttes.

2. Need a diverse portfolio of recharge sites to spread out returns to the Snake River.

ii. Discussion of recharge wells

1. E. coli is in the canal water
2. But coliform dies off at a rate of 95% in the course of 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile over three days and E. coli dies at a rate of 98%; This is due to lack of sunlight.
3. MCLs are not exceeded in Magic Valley for the over 200 different items tested.
4. Nitrates in the surface water are lower in the surface water than the ground water.
5. IWRB wells will case through the shallow aquifers where domestic wells are drawing from and test the water.
6. Need to communicate results of bacteria attenuation with folks.
7. Test wells should take 10-12 CFS; if they do not work, or if the bacteria do not attenuate, they won't use them. Goal is to drill wells until the capacity of the delivery system or the local aquifer is reached.
8. Cooper did a master's thesis looking at recharge contamination, and there were no contamination results recharging 1,200 CFS, which is enough water to irrigate over 1,000 acres. Sampling was monthly for a season.
9. Recharge has improved water quality issues in the Southwest Irrigation District and at Egin.
10. City of Idaho Falls does 70 samples for coliform each week. It is a big concern for them. If the City gets flagged, then they have to change the entire system. Some cities, like Rexburg, are not chlorinating their water, so this is a big concern. City of Idaho Falls is also worried about organic matter that mixes with Chlorine and may create cancer causing materials.
  - a. There is some public concern with the announcements of the large volume of wells and sites being announced.
  - b. Discussion about standards to measure what will happen to the water supply if mass recharge is conducted.

- c. Issue: What needs to be done to make the public comfortable with recharge.
    - d. Cooper discussed changes at the department for injection well permits: it has changed; new team all out of Boise with the task to make sure the recharge is safe
  - iii. Discussion about limited recharge in certain areas and how these areas can receive benefits of recharge for mitigation purposes.
  - iv. Cooper: proposed path forward, next step, 9 miles upgrade of Osgood, meet back here and test before they do anything else.
- d. IDWRB / Idaho Power, Winter flow past Milner
  - i. Idaho Power wants 200 cfs for the winter months for additional generation of power; IWRB has been allowing it; justification is their participation in cloud seeding (they create the additional water, so they are entitled to the benefits of the additional water in the winter)
  - ii. IGWA requested a study to show the actual benefits of cloud seeding; study is done; study is to be presented to IWRB soon.
  - iii. IGWA has taken issue with sending water past Milner instead of recharging it; this may put the trust water rights into jeopardy in the future.
  - iv. There is talk that IWRB will be giving IP a long-term agreement granting them bypass flows.
- e. Legislative Report
  - i. Keith and Roger retained legislative committee positions with IWUA.
  - ii. Domestic Well Legislation
    - 1. Legislation is moving forward
  - iii. IDWR Administrative Procedures
    - 1. Revised to create limited carve out where OAH can appoint independent hearing officer and requires a hearing before methodology changes and order need to be issued before January 1 each year.
  - iv. Water Funding
    - 1. Bill is moving forward to fund IWIRRI
      - a. This would give independent eyes on the measurements of the aquifer. This can be a positive for East Idaho.
  - v. Resolution from Sen. Cook
    - 1. To support increased storage: maybe Teton, raising Minidoka, Jackson Lake Dam may need rebuilt in the next 20 to 30 years.
      - a. Raising could be done because BOR owns land around lake.
      - b. One foot raising this will increase storage by 35,000 ac-ft.
  - vi. Resolution
    - 1. Parties have come to an agreement to support the joint resolution implementing the new Settlement Agreement and supporting increased recharge by the state. There was some hold-up because of opposition to cloud seeding, but the parties have resolved that issue and a joint resolution will likely move forward soon.
- f. 2025 Legislative Water College

- i. Discussion about what we could show in East Idaho if we host.
  - 1. Bingham may have some new infrastructure to show
    - a. May want to look at the spring flows
    - b. Could host at the Casino in Fort Hall.

g. Other business from board members

**4. EIWRC Directors' 2024 Schedule:**

- a. Next board meeting March 6
  - i. Blackfoot City Council Chambers
- b. IWUA Water Law Seminar – June 1-3, Sun Valley

**5. Meeting Adjourned**