

**MINUTES
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
Bluemont Hotel
Manhattan, Kansas
October 8, 2015**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	3
Approval of Minutes	3
Report on Budget and Finances	3
Proposed and Sunsetting Positions	7
Executive Director’s Report	7
Future WSWC Meetings.....	8
Spring 2016 Meeting Sunsetting Positions.....	10
Other Matters	10

**MINUTES
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
Bluemont Hotel
Manhattan, Kansas
October 8, 2015**

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

ALASKA	David Schade
ARIZONA	--
CALIFORNIA	Jeanine Jones
COLORADO	--
IDAHO	Jerry Rigby
KANSAS	David Barfield
MONTANA	Millie Heffner
NEBRASKA	Jeff Fassett
NEVADA	--
NEW MEXICO	John Longworth
NORTH DAKOTA	Jen Verleger
OKLAHOMA	J.D. Strong
OREGON	Tom Byler
SOUTH DAKOTA	Kent Woodmansey
TEXAS	Robert Mace
UTAH	Walt Baker

WASHINGTON

--

WYOMING

Pat Tyrrell

STAFF

Tony Willardson
Michelle Bushman
Cheryl Redding
Sara Larsen

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

WSWC Chair Pat Tyrrell welcomed Executive Committee members and guests. Introductions were made around the room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held July 9, 2015 in Stateline, Nevada were moved for approval by J.D. Strong. Walt Baker seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

REPORT ON BUDGET AND FINANCES

A. FY2015-2016 Budget Status Report

Jeanine Jones noted that it has been some time since the WSWC has raised dues. Through good management of the budget by WSWC Staff, and funding from grants and contracts, the Council has stayed solvent.

Dave Schade reported that Alaska will be able to pay full dues again. He is working on securing funding.

Pat Tyrrell commented that Wyoming Governor Matt Mead has asked for some budget tightening.

The five states that have biennial budget cycles include: Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. We are likely looking three years out for a dues increase. If the WSWC Executive Committee does not firmly request a dues increase now, the next opportunity

will be in July 2018. It will be difficult for states to request an increase in their budget for something that “might” happen.

Pat Tyrrell said the dues request for 2018 is in his budget right now. The price of oil and gas is having a detrimental economic impact on Wyoming’s budget. J.D. said it is similar in Oklahoma. Alaska likewise has a huge shortfall due to oil and gas revenues.

A longstanding concern of the WSWC is having the budget driven by grants. Currently, financial reserves total about 90% of the WSWC’s annual operating expenses. However, if it became necessary to rely solely dues and on the funds in reserve, they would be expended pretty quickly.

Texas is now in a different situation given Carlos Rubinstein’s retirement from the Texas Water Development Board, and with a new governor. New appointments to the WSWC have yet to be made by the governor. Robert Mace is a strong advocate for the WSWC, but this may be a gray area in terms of the budget.

Jerry Rigby reiterated that the Committee has already heard from him about Idaho’s situation at previous meetings. Idaho is again in a similar situation now.

Tom Byler: I think we should seriously consider upping our ante in this organization. We will get wobbly every time, if we let that push us off. We should raise the rates.

J.D. Strong – We need to raise the dues if we have increased expenses. We should put everyone on notice that in the next year or two the dues will be increased 20%.

David Schade: We need to have a commitment on the amount of the dues. I support the raise now.

Jeanine Jones: We essentially saddled the remaining staff with all of the workload after Craig Bell’s passing in 2009. Currently, we do not have the Deputy Director position filled.

Robert Mace: Maybe the budget should look out two years, rather than annually.

Jennifer Verleger: What about setting the date at 2017, and then if we don’t need to increase dues, we simply don’t.

Pat Tyrrell: Many states have more than just the WSWC organization that is requesting an increase in dues in the coming year. Jeanine is right that we have never back-filled Tony’s previous position. We have let it go, for all practical purposes. Every organization has had a bit of pinching for the past few years. The raise in dues the committee proposed in July from \$30,000 to \$36,000 still appears necessary.

Jeff Fassett: I believe we should move forward with the increase now.

Walt Baker: I'm of the same opinion. However, I believe we need to look at the whole package and reevaluate how we are operating. What is our strategic plan? Do we need to meet three times per year, or assess how many times we should meet? Should we think of paying a registration fee for our meetings? Do we need to backfill the Deputy Director position?

J.D. Strong: A dues increase doesn't make sense to me, unless the expenses show that we need it. The WSWC is not in a financial bind right now, so we should talk about a dues increase. Maybe if necessary we take emergency action, such as skipping a meeting if we get into a dire situation. Tony and the organization do a great job of running on a lean budget. We are taking a cut in our state budget as well, and the little thousands here and there make a big difference when asked to cut back.

Tony Willardson: Our last dues increase was done in two 10% increments in 2007 and 2008. For the foreseeable future, we are in good shape. We have several month's expenses in reserve.

Pat Tyrrell: We could just leave the status quo.

Walt Baker: Would it be helpful to have a subcommittee drill down into this a little further? We did this at ACWA.

Tom Byler: I like that idea a lot. There are some big philosophical questions of what we want this organization to do. We need to determine what we are investing in. It is worth taking time to have that conversation.

Jeanine Jones: We spent a lot of time on that vision statement. We should have been doing a strategic plan for the organization.

Tony Willardson: Sometimes it is hard to anticipate the issues that may come up between meetings, which would be compounded if we were to go to two meetings per year. Roughly half of the budget goes to staff salaries.

Jerry Rigby: I think the Executive Committee is the appropriate group. Why do we need to go to a subcommittee? Couldn't we take time in this meeting?

Pat Tyrrell: Read from the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting held in Lake Tahoe. While moving forward is a good idea, those states that need that language regarding a dues increase can put it into their 2017 budget.

Jeff Fassett: Nebraska is not paying dues to WGA, but we are okay with paying dues to WSWC. We have had success in paying dues to WSWC.

Tony Willardson: Given a historic perspective on paying dues, there can be some flexibility with state budgets, if you are not able to pay in a particular fiscal year.

David Schade: In Alaska, we have such a small voice in federal government. I appreciate this organization, and we will bring in strong leaders as well.

Jerry Rigby: What do we want to do as far as a strategic plan?

Pat Tyrrell: I would like to make an assignment to do a strategic plan. It can be a few pages. Are there some volunteers? Jeanine Jones, Tom Byler, J.D. Strong, Walt Baker, Jerry Rigby, and Pat Tyrrell will be the strategic planning group.

Jennifer Verleger: Do we want to redo that survey monkey on the strategic plan?

Jeanine will chair the planning group and they will determine what we want to do, rather than how much time we are spending on things.

David Barfield affirmed that we are leaving the budget item as it was stated in the minutes from the July 2015 meeting held in Nevada, which is that the FY17 budget could increase by 20% in the member states' dues line item.

Tony said, currently, expenditures are about \$5,000 under projections, and we are in the black largely due to income courtesy of contracts. This makes a dues increase less pressing, although the concept of planning for the possibility in the future is essential, especially for those states with a two-year legislative cycle. An increase is not imminently necessary. The dues have not been increased in a long time. We should be planning, however, and maybe talk about a smaller dues increase.

B. EN Grants Status Report

Tony Willardson reported that the Council has received another grant from EPA to get some additional states to flow data through the WaDE program. This grant covers California, North Dakota, and Nevada. The funding will allow these additional states to deploy WaDE, which will then be demonstrated for the Western Governors' Association Staff Advisory Council.

C. CDWR Contracts Status Report

We have received two contract agreements with the California Department of Water Resources to continue work on improving seasonal to sub-seasonal precipitation forecasting and evaluating weather monitoring systems for irrigation management.

Of note, Susan Cottingham is currently under contract with the WSWC, and she could take on some work, including the non-tribal federal water needs workgroup, which would free some of Michelle's time to work on other projects.

PROPOSED AND SUNSETTING POSITIONS

Chairman Pat Tyrrell reviewed Position No. 382, the WSWC Vision on Water. He asked for a motion. A motion was offered and seconded. Position #382 was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee to be brought forward to the Full Council.

Relative to the sunseting positions, Pat noted that the following positions which would sunset without any action taken at this meeting, either have been, or will be discussed in the relevant committee meetings. Action will be taken during the Full Council meeting on Friday.

#345 - Federal water and climate data collection and analysis programs (Oct 12, 2012);

#346 - Supporting legislation to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Act, and accompanying letter to NOAA Administrator Lubchenco (Oct 12, 2012);

#347 - Supporting legislation to reauthorize the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act (Oct 12, 2012); and

#348 - Regarding States' water rights and natural flows (Oct 12, 2012).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. WGA/WSWC Activities and Meetings

The Council's relationship with the Western Governors' Association (WGA) is still evolving. Laura Chartrand, whom you met this morning, is the new water program manager for WGA. Recently, the WSWC wrote a joint letter to the President asking for a permanent tribal settlement fund. It was vetted with WGA staff, but they chose to "sit this one out." With respect to the issue of the tribal settlements, WGA staff noted it was not brought to them as an issue by Staff Advisory Council (SAC) members. We are welcome to raise this issue with SAC members.

Tony mentioned that Secretary Jewell made a request last year for the Indian water rights settlement fund in the FY2016 budget. The WSWC is working with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which coordinates Federal environmental efforts (and coordinates with agencies and other White House offices in the development of environmental policies and initiatives), to put more pressure on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We believe

this may be the last chance to secure a permanent funding mechanism for Indian water rights settlements from this Administration.

Our relationship with WGA is strong enough, but we will need to work through their SAC members in order to get water-related issues on their agenda.

Since the WSWC's last meeting, Sara has been working with the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) on a survey regarding the USGS' Water Use Data and Research (WUDR) Financial Assistance Program. More information will be forthcoming.

B. 2015 Summary of WSWC Activities and Events

Tony went through the Summary of WSWC Activities and Events and pointed out some of the recent meetings and events since the July 2015 WSWC meeting. See Tab K for details of the activities and events.

FUTURE WSWC MEETINGS

A. WSWC Spring Meetings and Washington Roundtable – Washington, DC

Tony Willardson reviewed a tentative schedule for the WSWC Spring Meetings and Washington Roundtable, which will be held March 21-25, 2016 in Washington, D.C. He noted there will be a change to the usual format of meetings, which includes abbreviated committee meetings in order to accommodate a workshop at NOAA headquarters, the WSWC/ICWP roundtable, and a meeting with WestFAST Principals.

B. CDWR Workshop Series on Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting

Jeanine Jones remarked that the WSWC, the California Department of Water Resources, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration held a workshop on May 15, to develop a Western vision for improving monthly and seasonal precipitation forecasting. She noted the time is ripe for efforts to improve monthly and seasonal forecasting, particularly as drought in the West has called attention to the need for better information to support preparedness and response.

The WSWC has organized a workshop to be held at the National Weather Service headquarters in Salt Lake City, on October 21-22, 2015. They will identify specific research needs and operational strategies for advancing sub-seasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting. It is expected that these needs and strategies will form the basis for initiatives by NOAA and/or

by the WSWC to advance the state of science and practice for seasonal prediction for water resources.

Another workshop on this subject is scheduled to be held in the spring of 2016 with NOAA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

C. CDWR Workshop Series on Expanding CIMIS into Interstate Watersheds

Jeanine Jones mentioned work that the California Department of Water Resources has contracted for with the WSWC relative to the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) project. This is a network of almost 100 computerized weather stations, located at key agricultural and urban sites throughout California that provide information on a one kilometer grid. Farmers can get actual evapotranspiration (ET) estimates. It is designed to help growers and landscape managers develop efficient water budgets and irrigation strategies.

There is a hope to combine the CIMIS project with the Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) agricultural weather information system called "AgriMet," as well as the Arizona Meteorological Network (AZMET), which provides meteorological data and weather-based information to agricultural and horticultural interests operating in southern and central Arizona. There are other networks that don't have the horsepower that the CIMIS network has. California is willing to talk to these smaller networks to see if they can provide the satellite telemetry needed. The BOR WaterSMART grants could be used towards such projects. Jeanine suggested that maybe something will come of it or maybe not. Such an effort would be appropriate for the Colorado River Basin.

The first CIMIS workshop is tentatively planned for the November/December time frame in Palm Springs. A visit to CIMIS stations will be part of the field trip.

D. WSWC Summer Meetings

The summer meetings are scheduled to be held July 13-15, 2016 in Bismarck, North Dakota at the Radisson Hotel. At this point, no pre-meeting workshops have been planned in connection with this meeting.

E. WSWC Fall Meetings

The WSWC fall meetings in 2016 will be held September 28-30, 2016 in St. George, Utah.

SPRING 2016 MEETING SUNSETTING POSITIONS

The positions indicated on the agenda are listed for the purpose of making you aware they will sunset at the Spring 2016 meetings, unless there is a motion to continue the positions or absent any actions to revise and readopt them. Those scheduled to sunset are included in Tab XYZ for your reference.

Tony reviewed briefly the upcoming positions for the Spring 2016 meetings. He gave an explanation relative to Position #350, supporting implementation of the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006 (April 5, 2013). Costs for the program continue to increase. A bill is currently before the Congress. Pat Tyrrell commented that the Wind River Tribe was in litigation with the State of Wyoming for many years before their rights were finally decreed. Some tribal lands are being irrigated, but only 30% of their water has been developed. There is a bit of political sensitivity to the bill. Non-tribal irrigators don't want the Act funded, because they would have to scale back their diversions to their legally adjudicated amount. Barasso's bill will deal with efficiencies off-reservation and others. The sentiment is: "Why am I paying taxes to the federal government so they can take away my water rights?"

OTHER MATTERS

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.