

**MINUTES
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Reservoir Center
Washington, D.C.
March 14, 2024**

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MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

ALASKA	Christina Carpenter Julie Pack
ARIZONA	
CALIFORNIA	Jeanine Jones
COLORADO	Becky Mitchell (virtual)
IDAHO	Matt Weaver
KANSAS	Earl Lewis (virtual)
MONTANA	
NEBRASKA	Jess Bradley
NEVADA	Cathy Erskine????
NEW MEXICO	
NORTH DAKOTA	Andrea Travnicek
OKLAHOMA	Julie Cunningham
OREGON	--
SOUTH DAKOTA	Nakaila Steen
TEXAS	Jon Niermann
UTAH	Candice Hazenyegar
WASHINGTON	Ria Burns
WYOMING	Chris Brown (Jeff Cowley virtually)

STAFF

Tony Willardson, Executive Director

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jon Niermann chaired the Executive Committee and called the meeting to order. He welcomed those attending in person and virtually.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska on September 14 – which were previously posted to the WSWC website – were moved for approval and the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

REPORT ON BUDGET AND FINANCES

Tony referred to Tab D comparing the FY2023 and approved FY2024 budgets noting the spreadsheet was divided between estimated income and expenses for both core WSWC functions and those related to the Water Data Exchange (WaDE). A separate spreadsheet was shared detailing income and expenditures through December 2023 (FY2024) and anticipated income and expenditures through the end of June 2024 (FY2024). Both WSWC and WaDE budgets were expected to have sufficient funds for anticipated expenses. The WaDE budget is about 45% and the WSWC budget 55% of the total of over \$1 million, including WaDE support from federal and philanthropic grants. WSWC specific income is primarily from member state dues, and all member states have paid their FY2024 assessments.

Regarding dues payments, dues notices will be mailed in May for the 2025 Fiscal Year (FY20245) which begins on July 1, 2024. Total anticipated dues from all 18 member States at \$36,000 each totaling \$648,000.

As of December 31, 2023 the WSWC's balance sheet shows over \$1 million in equity. Tony explained that WSWC funds not currently required for office operations are held in the State of Utah's Public Treasurer's Investment Fund (PTIF). These funds grow with the receipt of states' dues payments, as income, and are then drawn down throughout the year to cover expenses. Interest on those funds continue to accrue are a significant source of revenue. Also, the transition between bookkeepers has led to the need to change authority to access these PTIF funds. Tony suggested a resolution of approval allowing Melissa Fuelling, our new bookkeeper, and Michelle Bushman, WSWC Deputy Director and General Counsel, access. The resolution was moved and approved by voice vote.

Tony summarized the WaDE and WSWC portions of the budget. Philanthropic and federal support for the WaDE program has in the past supported its growth and development, including the release of the Western States Water Data Access and Analysis Tool (WestDAAT). As those resources are winding down, the future of the program needs to be evaluated. Simply maintaining existing capabilities related to access to states' water rights data would not require more than about \$12,000 for software and licensing and one quarter FTE. Without addition outside support, the current level of effort is not sustainable.

The WSWC has entered into a \$118,964 2-year agreement to assist the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy's Center for Geospatial Solutions (CGS) develop a water data hub for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. WSWC staff have also submitted a proposal to Reclamation for a \$400,000 WaterSMART grant to develop a Western States Water Conservation Application Tool (WestCAT) to integrate our WestDAAT water rights data with OpenET data as a measure of actual consumptive use. We are awaiting word on the status of the proposal. Grant announcements are expected in April. An equivalent non-federal match is required.

Further, the WSWC has entered into an agreement with the Thornburg Foundation, with additional funding from the Walton and Water Foundations, to assist the State of New Mexico with an effort to identify and prioritize water infrastructure needs and find opportunities to leverage disparate sources of funding for development. The WSWC has contracted with SWCA Environmental Consultants, in Salt Lake City, to undertake this work under the direction of Erica Gaddis, a former State of Utah employee and WSWC member.

Overall, we anticipate ending FY2024 with a small surplus.

WaDE/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION SURVEY

To date, WSWC staff time and other expenses related to WaDE and WestDAAT have been almost totally reimbursed by outside sources. However, at least one of our partners has questioned the contributions our member states are making to this work. Obviously, we rely on WSWC member state agencies' staff time and resources for the gather and dissemination of water-related accessible via WaDE and WestDAAT. Staff have designed a short survey to help with estimating the costs of developing, operating, and maintaining WSWC member state water rights, water use, and water supply data programs which generate the public information that is shared. The results will be used to demonstrate our non-federal state in-kind contributions and possibly as a future match for federal grants and philanthropic funds.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS

Jon Niermann noted the positions presently sunsetting that are being reviewed by the working committees at this meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT/WSWC ACTIVITIES and EVENTS

Tony highlighted some recent WSWC activities and events listed under Tab F, including congressional letters of support related to Good Samaritan legislation and reauthorization of the Weather Act. He also mentioned visits earlier in March with congressional staff in support of NASA's Landsat Next mission and Open ET legislative authorization.

Tony and Michelle attended the winter meeting of the Western Governors' Association in Teton Village/Jackson Hole, Wyoming, November 6-8, 2023. Staff met with Steve Emmen, WGA's water policy advisor, and had contact with various state and federal agency staff, as well as non-profit organizations. A summary of the meeting was included in the newsletter.

Referring to Tab F, Tony briefly noted coordination with WestFAST agencies and other organizations, as well as a summary of significant WaDE activities.

FUTURE WSWC MEETINGS

Jon noted the next WSWC meetings will be held in Fargo, North and the fall meetings in Kansas, with the spring meetings in Nebraska. The Summer 2025 meetings will be held in Utah and include a celebration of the WSWC's 60th anniversary. Tony also mentioned that he intends to retire thereafter having joined the WSWC staff in 1979!

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Tony referred members to Tab C, where a number of individuals are included in WSWC activities and mailings by virtual of their position, while awaiting formal appointment by their governors. Often these are people filling the positions vacated by an appointed WSWC member. We would appreciate members assistance in securing appointment letters from their governors.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS for SUMMER 2024 MEETINGS

The positions sunsetting at the next meeting were noted for future review.

OTHER MATTERS

As there were no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.