

HUERFANO COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Minutes of Board Meeting January 22, 2024

The monthly meeting of the Huerfano County Water Conservancy District, which had been properly noticed and was available for public participation, was called to order by President Scott King in person at Walsenburg Housing Authority, 220 Russell St, Walsenburg on January 22, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Directors: Scott King, Kent Mace, Sandy White, Beaver Edmundson, Lonnie Brown.

Secretary: Carol Dunn

By Zoom: Engineer: Steve Smith and Attorney Steve Monson

Guests: Doug Brgoch, Amos Mace, Pauline Adams, Gary Vezzani, Fred Eccher, Ed Diemer; **by Zoom:** Doug Winter, Dale Lyons, Lenna Rauber.

Agenda: Accepted on a White/Brown **motion**.

Minutes: The minutes for the December 11, 2023 and January 8, 2024 board meetings were approved on a White/Brown **motion**.

Financial Reports: There was a White/Brown **motion** to accept the financial reports as presented. Board approved.

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS: There were no new water cases.

2024 Meeting Schedule was approved and open to amending later on a White/Mace **motion**.

DWR river reports: Ed Diemer thinks ice might be causing false readings on the Cucharas River sensors; the current call is for Maria-Stevens. By Zoom, Lenna Rauber reported the Huerfano River call is #12 and #16. There is less than one foot at I-25. Rauber continues to honor the futile call in the upper Huerfano basin, but things are frozen up right now. Diemer and Rauber are working on setting up a meeting for ditch users on the Cucharas River with Rachel Zancanella, DWR District Engineer.

Spring Creek Fire Mitigation Project – David Steffan reported he has talked to Larry Morgan about working on projects, but the estimate for the work was beyond budget at about \$200,000. Instead, he will focus tasks on channel maintenance around the Middle Creek stream gage, to either rechannel or fill in with rocky deposits. Sheet piling and riprap are already in place. Steffan estimated the cost would be \$46,000 because of the large rocky debris. Work will also be done in the deep cut created by flooding next to the county road – slope moderation, grade control and semi-circular cross vanes. The goal would be to use boulders to reduce undercutting of the roadbed and capture fine sediment. Even during winter some native grass seeding could be done as proposed by NRCS, with a formulation created for the burn scar and altitude. Steffan will have firmer cost estimates and maps by the February meeting. Brgoch offered advice about possibly planting willows on the south side of the gage location.

Huerfano Regional Augmentation Plan

Steve Smith reported HCWCD has 47 af committed for 2024 augmentation demands of 52 available. Most is Tier 1 and some Tier 2. He doesn't see any issues with operations this year.

Siete, Inc – Siete has not been taking all the water they expected/leased. Compared to the expected 7 af by the end of January, Siete has used 1.5 so far. They have used Twin Lakes water from La Veta Lakes and will be directed to continue pulling from that source until the Twin Lakes water is exhausted.

SMAF – Kent Mace reported we need to address replacing the shut off valve since the reservoir has been lowered by releases. There was also discussion about the siphon valve. Smith will check the as-built drawings to determine how deep it should be (possibly 4.5 feet).

When temperatures were below zero, there was a freeze up issue on the overland pipe for return of water to the river.

Amos Mace reported needs for 2024 at SMAF include: grounding system, baffles in stilling well, bird strips, planting so we can release the reclamation permit, spray for willows, wall scutcheon, Siemens meter fix. He estimated the cost at less than \$10,000.

Recharge pond – We are getting the recharge we need (at 0.6 cfs) at the recharge pond, but could possibly use the reserve capacity. Steve will watch the demand rate and advise whether we should expand the infiltration.

Flood Emergency Warning Gages – An RFP has been developed by Applegate Group to monitor and operate the five remaining gages. Brgoch recommended a May 1 startup date. The chosen company will need to remove the Pass Creek gage and put it into storage. On a White/Mace **motion** the board agreed to accept the RFP for publishing in consultation with Doug Brgoch.

PL-566 update – The draft letter of recommendation has been submitted to NRCS by Jones & DeMille. The company is awaiting Colorado NRCS comments so the final letter can be submitted to the national office of NRCS.

Arkansas Basin Roundtable report – King reported on two meetings. A presentation was made about self-running diversion structures/flumes that can be remote-controlled. The City of Aurora’s pending Wild Horse Reservoir, near Buena Vista, is 83,000 af in size and estimated \$1-billion cost. The Shoshone Power Plant on the Colorado River is being decommissioned. Xcel will sell the related water right for \$98.7-million, and Colorado River Water District is applying for a CWCB loan to purchase it.

Break – King called a break at 7:32; meeting reconvened at 7:50 pm.

Bills – On a White/Brown **motion**, the board authorized the transfer of up to \$19,500 from ColoTrust savings, transfer the CWCB loan payment directly from ColoTrust, and approved paying the following bills, which total \$147,105.61:

Mountain States Financial group: monthly bookkeeping	\$200.00
Monson, Cummins, Shohet, Farr: mtg, aug plan, reservoir funding, Great Plains	\$3,790.75
Dunn Write: contract, mileage, internet, phone, dinner exp, coffee, computer cable	\$2,206.01
Admin SCF Flood Mitigation grant	\$697.50
La Veta Carpentry: monthly website admin and monthly water analyst	\$400.00
Doug Brgoch: monthly water consultant contract	\$500.00
Applegate Group: mtg; aug acctg; Wm Craig ops; PL-566, Siete Inc.	\$7,427.50
David Steffan: remediation coordinator contract for November and December 2023	\$285.36
American Express: 3 Colorado Water Congress conference registrations	\$2,325.00
Ark River Watershed Collaborative: SCF Flood Mitigation mapping & photo monitor	\$3,054.59
Glatfelter Insurance/GPE: Liability and property insurance	\$2,674.00
Colorado Water Conservation Board annual loan payment	\$123,185.93
Postmaster: Post office box 442 annual rental	\$82.00
San Isabel Electric: monthly usage at SMAF	\$211.97
Spanish Peaks Library: monthly rent	\$65.00

At 7:54, there was a **motion** by Mace/Edmundson and approved by the board to go into executive session, joined by the District’s consultant Brgoch, engineer Smith, and guests Fred Eccher and Mayor Gary Vezzani to discuss: water rights acquisition; negotiations on a monitoring well easement; legal advice on a water rights case statement of opposition; storage water releases for repairs to SMAF.

Discussion in the executive session included purchase, acquisition, lease or sale of real, personal or other property interest as in CRS 24-6-402(4)(a); conference with an attorney representing the District for the purposes of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(b); and determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and instructing negotiators pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(e).

On a White/Mace **motion**, the executive session was closed at 9:54 pm, and the regular session was reconvened.

There was a White/Brown **motion** to oppose the Pryor Ditch case when it is filed. Approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Scott King, President

Carol Dunn, Secretary