

**MINUTES**  
**NORTHERN NEVADA WATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2014, 1:30 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission ("NNWPC") was held in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada and conducted the following business:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Solaro at 1:30 p.m.

**1. Roll Call and Determination of Presence of a Quorum**

*Voting Members Present:* David Solaro, Michael Drinkwater, Mickey Hazelwood, Michael DeMartini (arrived at 1:31), John Erwin, John Flansberg, Neil Krutz, George Ball, Darrin Price, and Jerry Schumacher.

*Voting Members Absent:* Norman Harry

*Non-Voting Members Present:* Chris Anderson.

*Non-Voting Members Absent:* Harry Fahnestock, Edmund Quaglieri, and Kim Davis.

*Staff Members Present:* Jim Smitherman; Chris Wessel; June Davis; and John Rhodes, Legal Counsel.

**2. Public Comment**

None

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Jim Smitherman, WRWC Water Resources Program Manager, stated there has been a request by the presenter for Agenda Item 8 that it be continued until the April NNWPC meeting.

COMMISSIONER FLANSBERG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KRUTZ. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NINE (9) MEMBERS PRESENT.

**4. Approval of Minutes from the December 4, 2013, Meeting**

*[Commissioner DeMartini arrived at 1:31 p.m.]*

COMMISSIONER KRUTZ MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 4, 2013, MINUTES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HAZELWOOD. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH NINE (9) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION BY CHAIRMAN SOLARO.

**5. Central Truckee Meadows Remediation District ("CTMRD") Program Update – Chris Benedict, CTMRD Program Manager.**

Chris Benedict presented an update on the ongoing projects, plans, and priorities of the CTMRD Program.

Commissioner DeMartini asked how much water is lost per gallon treated in the packed tower aeration process. Mr. Benedict stated there will be nominal losses to evaporation and that it is a very small if at all measurable amount.

Commissioner Erwin asked how far away the sources of the two plumes of particular concern are from any municipal wells. Mr. Benedict stated it is about six or seven thousand feet up gradient.

Commissioner Erwin asked what the concentration is at that source. Mr. Benedict stated the highest concentration they have seen in hot spots has been in the low hundreds of micrograms per liter.

Commissioner Erwin asked about the timing for plans to put treatment at the source. Mr. Benedict stated treatment in the source areas is dependent on the progress of the potential source area investigation. Things that will trigger treatment at a source include delineation of a source that poses a threat to groundwater based on concentration and total mass and it being practical and feasible to access the center of mass for treatment.

Commissioner DeMartini asked if the water that gets treated at the treatment wells is put into the water system or back into the ground. Mr. Benedict stated it goes right into the distribution system so there is no water being lost.

Commissioner Erwin asked what the annual operating budget is for the district. Mr. Benedict stated that the revenue has been 1.25 million. In terms of expenditures, they have a fund balance right now.

Commissioner Erwin asked how many monitoring wells they have and if they are monitored monthly. Mr. Benedict stated they monitor water levels monthly and water quality as frequently as quarterly.

Commissioner Erwin asked if the monitoring wells are mainly less than two hundred feet deep. Mr. Benedict stated the shallowest are around thirty-five or forty feet and the deepest is four hundred feet.

Commissioner Erwin asked how many monitoring wells there are. Mr. Benedict stated there are two hundred and twenty.

Commissioner Erwin asked how many staff members they have. Mr. Benedict stated right now they have five and two vacancies they are trying to fill.

Commissioner DeMartini asked what the MCL might go down to. Mr. Benedict stated that talk has been either 1 or 0.5 micrograms per liter.

Commissioner DeMartini asked what the existing towers can get down to. Mr. Benedict stated it depends on the influent concentration. They have been monitoring influent and effluent and they are all below 0.5 so they would be okay.

**6. Discussion regarding a matching funds request for a Desert Terminal Lakes Restoration Fund proposal entitled “Optimizing Restoration Investments in the Truckee Watershed”; possible direction to staff, including possible direction to include \$58,075 for that project in the 2014/2015 fiscal year tentative budget – Mickey Hazelwood, The Nature Conservancy.**

Kristen Podolak, The Nature Conservancy (“TNC”), reviewed information regarding the proposal, including a project description, funding details and a project location map.

Commissioner Erwin asked how far they are from having results on the study at Sage Hen. Ms. Podolak stated the Sage Hen Project has yet to begin the thinning, but there is a study in the Kings River Experimental Watershed that the US Forest Service is doing that is post-thinning and it is showing a water yield increase.

Commissioner Erwin asked if TNC is doing some thinning in the Independence Lake Watershed area. Ms. Podolak stated they are and Truckee Meadows Water Authority (“TMWA”) helped fund that forest thinning.

Commissioner Erwin asked if there is a study going on as a result of that thinning. Ms. Podolak stated there is not.

Commissioner Erwin asked if they made any money on the sale of the wood after thinning. Ms. Podolak stated that it was expensive because there was no bio mass facility to take the material to. In the future this type of work should cost less if there is a bio mass facility nearby. Chris Fichtel, TNC, stated they could probably cut the per acre cost in half if they had a place to take the bio mass.

Commissioner Price asked about the total project cost. Ms. Podolak stated it is about four hundred thousand dollars for the study.

Commissioner Price asked how they arrived at \$58,075 for the proposed investment from NNWPC. Ms. Podolak stated the numbers are estimates from the pre-proposal stage and that they will sort the numbers out more clearly now that they are preparing the full proposal.

Commissioner Price asked for more information on the budget and contribution numbers. Mr. Fichtel stated some of the contribution from NNWPC would be helping to get more information from the Natural Capital Project as well as helping to pay the person coming in to staff the project. TNC's funding would go toward some of the work that would be put into play by a project manager here in Reno, a hydrologist, and a forest ecologist.

Commissioner Price asked about other agencies that could potentially be involved with the project. Ms. Podolak stated they are reaching out to the Bureau of Reclamation, TMWA, and other groups.

Commissioner Price asked how many of the target area counties have pledged money to the project. Ms. Podolak stated none have at this point.

Commissioner Price asked about the deadlines associated with the grant. Ms. Podolak stated the full proposal is due March 28 and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ("NFWF") will respond by May 1.

Commissioner Price asked if anyone has started working on developing the model. Ms. Podolak stated it has been in use for over ten years and it has been in use in the US for climate change planning related to the rise in sea level. It has not been used for a water conservation type of project.

Commissioner Price asked if they will have time before the proposal deadline to approach the other agencies. Ms. Podolak stated yes, and that she would like more input regarding who they should be targeting in order to include the headwater entities as well as the downstream users.

Commissioner Erwin asked if NFWF is contingent on getting the other sources lined up before they make a decision on the grant. Mr. Fichtel stated he does not think so. NFWF has not said that other funding must be in place at the time that they make their decision.

Commissioner DeMartini suggested that some of the input needed for this model could be gathered from data in the Watershed Analysis Risk Management Framework ("WARMF") model that is administered by the City of Reno. Ms. Podolak stated they would get in touch with the person in charge of that model.

Chairman Solaro asked Mr. Smitherman if there is room in the budget for funding something like this. Mr. Smitherman stated the draft budget as this time will end up with some cash reserve and there would be enough cash reserve to cover this.

Commissioner Drinkwater asked if this model can do all three different resource management strategies of snow storage, sediment yield, and nutrient reduction. Ms. Podolak stated it can do all three.

Commissioner Drinkwater asked if there is any data on how accurate it has been. Ms. Podolak stated there are some research studies in Latin America where this model was used that show the efforts being made are having the benefit they were modeled to have.

Commissioner Drinkwater stated that qualitatively there was a prediction of reduction in sediment which manifested and asked if quantitatively there was a number put on it. Ms. Podolak stated there have only been two quantitative studies on how well the model works and they are showing that it is working.

John Rhodes, Legal Counsel, stated for clarification that if the Commission directs staff to include the requested amount in the tentative budget, it does not constitute an approval of the project. The applicant would still need to come back to the NNWPC with a more specific project to seek a recommendation to the WRWC to fund the project. This action would just set the money aside if in the future a decision is made to approve the project and make a recommendation to the WRWC.

*[There was no public comment on this item.]*

COMMISSIONER DeMARTINI MADE A MOTION TO RESERVE THE \$48,075 IN THE BUDGET FOR A FUTURE APPLICATION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KRUTZ.

Commissioner Price expressed concern that they are the only agency that has been approached.

There was discussion regarding revising the motion to be contingent on other sources of funding being approved. There was also discussion clarifying the process for this funding and making a recommendation to the WRWC in the future.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the funding cannot be made contingent because it has not been approved. This action is just making a placeholder in a tentative budget. Mr. Rhodes also stated there seems to be a confused record that needs to be clarified.

CHAIRMAN SOLARO MADE A MOTION TO DIRECT STAFF TO RESERVE THE \$58,075 FOR A POSSIBLE FUTURE PROJECT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KRUTZ.

Commissioner Drinkwater asked that the applicant provide the requested studies to Mr. Smitherman before coming back to secure funding.

Commissioner Erwin asked if the original motion had been withdrawn. Commissioner DeMartini withdrew his motion.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH NINE (9) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION BY COMMISSIONER HAZELWOOD.

- 7. Discussion regarding proposed Washoe Evapotranspiration Project improvements, including equipment upgrades for up to six additional weather stations and deployment of the weather stations at locations not presently monitored; possible recommendation to the Western Regional Water Commission (“WRWC”), and possible direction to staff, including possible direction to include \$40,000 for that project in the 2014/2015 fiscal year tentative budget – Chris Wessel, WRWC Water Management Planner.**

Chris Wessel presented information included in the staff report regarding the proposed Washoe Evapotranspiration Project improvements.

*[There was no public comment on this item.]*

COMMISSIONER ERWIN MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PRICE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH TEN (10) MEMBERS PRESENT.

- 8. Discussion regarding a proposal and scope of work for supplementary precipitation gauges to validate cloud seeding in the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River basins; possible recommendation to the WRWC, and possible direction to staff, including possible direction to include \$25,000 for that project in the 2014/2015 fiscal year tentative budget – Jeff Tilley, Desert Research Institute.**

This item has been continued to the April NNWPC meeting.

- 9. Discussion regarding a request for partial funding of a watershed improvement project to reduce storm water flows to the Highland Canal and improve the quality of such flows to the Truckee River, and possible direction to staff, including possible direction to include \$250,000 for that project in the 2014/2015 fiscal year tentative budget – Glen Daily, P.E., City of Reno.**

Glen Daily presented an overview of the Drainage Improvement Project to improve storm water quality and reduce quantity from entering the Highland Canal.

Commissioner Erwin asked if the two detention basins prior to the outfall to the Truckee River are up in Mason Park and on the other side of the railroad. Mr. Daily stated yes.

Commissioner Krutz asked who would maintain those basins. Mr. Daily stated the facilities within Washoe County jurisdiction will be maintained by Washoe County and the facilities within the City of Reno jurisdiction will be maintained by the City of Reno.

Commissioner Krutz asked if Nevada Department of Transportation (“NDOT”) would maintain their own facility. Mr. Daily stated yes and that right now they are not looking at actual physical improvements within the Interstate 80 right-of-way but anything they have implemented and will implement will be maintained by NDOT.

Commissioner Price asked if the City of Reno currently does storm water quality monitoring. Mr. Daily stated yes they do.

Commissioner Price asked if these are existing sites or sites that will be added. Commissioner Flansberg stated they are existing sites.

Commissioner Price stated that this sounds like a construction project and asked Legal Counsel if they are able to use Regional Water Management Funds to fund construction projects. Mr. Rhodes stated that he believes the broad language in the statute allows the funding of this type of infrastructure which relates directly to municipal water supply and surface water quality. It is a policy question and it is up to the Commission if this is the type of activity they want to fund.

Commissioner Price stated that if they are going to start funding construction projects that they could specifically say benefit the Truckee River, that would include most of the projects they see. Commissioner Price stated that his reason for asking for an interpretation of the law is that this would set a precedent.

Commissioner Price asked how the \$250,000 request from the Water Management Fund was calculated. Ron Penrose, TMWA, stated that dollar figure comes from TMWA and represents the remainder of their consultant fees to get the project design. It also represents their best estimate of securing permits from NDOT, the Army Corps of Engineers and the railroad.

Chairman Solaro asked if there is room in the budget available for this request. Mr. Smitherman stated there would be enough cash reserve in the budget to cover this request.

Commissioner Flansberg stated that Washoe County, the City of Reno and TMWA are all working together on this project.

Chairman Solaro asked how this project became a storm water quality project versus a water quality project. Mr. Penrose stated they are talking about drainage that was storm water drainage that was dumping into the canal system which is used for water treatment and that it is source water pollution from a municipal water perspective.

Commissioner Erwin stated the canal was built sometime around 1878 and was not designed as a storm water transport system. Communities were built around it and events have taken place that may impair the ability for TMWA to protect the Highland Canal as it makes its way to Chalk Bluff. The Joint Powers Authority agreement that created TMWA limits TMWA to a water supplier. When activities get to the point where they step into storm water and effluent treatment projects, TMWA is limited on its participation and that's when the partnerships are required with the other entities to solve these types of issues.

Commissioner Krutz asked why the City of Reno and Washoe County are not picking up the rest of the tab. Mr. Daily stated that the City of Reno does not currently have the funding available to apply towards the project.

Commissioner Price stated that he is behind the project and protecting the Highland Canal but he does not think this is the appropriate place to fund the construction of the project.

Commissioner Erwin talked about the interconnectivity of the work this Commission has done in the past and who this project will benefit. Commissioner Erwin stated that ninety-five percent of the funding of the Regional Water Management Fund and the Truckee River Fund comes from the customers of TMWA. Commissioner Erwin also stated that it is the position of this Commission to see that the watershed is managed properly and protected and where they can cooperate and use those dollars appropriately to yield a maximum benefit to multiple players, it makes sense to see this project go forward.

**COMMISSIONER ERWIN MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DeMARTINI.**

Commissioner DeMartini requested that the motion include that a benefit cost ratio be provided before final funding is approved. Mr. Penrose stated that there has not been a benefit cost analysis done on this project. Mr. Penrose spoke about what would be involved in preparing a benefit cost ratio and that they have not taken it to that level of detail. Commissioner DeMartini stated that he understood that it would be too extensive and that the costs are mostly intangibles and withdrew his request for a benefit cost ratio.

Commissioner Price stated this project should be funded by the municipalities and not this Commission.

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR AND TWO (2) OPPOSITIONS BY COMMISSIONERS KRUTZ AND PRICE.**

Commissioner Price asked for confirmation that the Commission just voted to include this project in the budget and that they did not vote to recommend approval of the funds for the project. Mr. Smitherman stated that is correct.

**10. Program Manager's Report – Jim Smitherman, WRWC Water Resources Program Manager.**

- A. Status report of projects and work plan supported by the Regional Water Management Fund
- B. Financial report on the Regional Water Management Fund
- C. Request from the Truckee River Flood Management Authority (“TRFMA”) to the Western Regional Water Commission for the creation of a voting position on the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission to represent TRFMA

Mr. Smitherman stated that at the last meeting of the TRFMA, the Board included an item on their agenda to ask the WRWC to create a voting seat on the NNWPC for a TRFMA representative.

- D. Status report on the pending consolidation of the South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District, Truckee Meadows Water Authority and Washoe County water utility

Mr. Smitherman stated that there will be a joint board meeting to discuss this issue on March 19. The WRWC meeting scheduled on March 19 has been cancelled.

- E. Informational report from the NNWPC representative on the TMWA Standing Advisory Committee (“TMWA SAC”)

Commissioner Ball reported that the TMWA SAC is functioning well. The meetings are well attended and well managed. The discussions are very informative and productive. Commissioner Ball stated that he will continue to attend the meetings.

**11. Discussion regarding possible agenda items for the April 2, 2014, NNWPC meeting, and other future meetings, and possible direction to staff – Jim Smitherman.**

Commissioner Price asked when they would see the budget. Mr. Smitherman stated they would see the budget on April 2.

Mr. Smitherman reviewed possible agenda items for the April 2 NNWPC meeting.

Commissioner Price asked about the Legislative Oversight Committee. Mr. Smitherman stated the statute ended last July and that there is no longer an Oversight Committee.

Commissioner Price requested an update on the water rights purchase project. Mr. Rhodes stated that update will be included on a future agenda.

**12. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

None

**13. STAFF COMMENTS**

None

**14. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

COMMISSIONER FLANSBERG MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:00 PM, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PRICE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH TEN (10) MEMBERS PRESENT.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Birmingham.

Approved by:

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David Solaro, Chairman

**APPROVED BY COMMISSION IN SESSION ON \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.**