



Monthly Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2017

5-7 p.m. – River Bank Building, Twisp, WA

Council Members Present: Dick Ewing, Andy Hover, Rick Karro, Greg Knott, Bill Tackman, and Ashley Thrasher. John Fleming and Mike Fort were unable to attend.

Others in Attendance: Natalie Kuehler, Phil Millam, George Schneider, Travis Thornton, Vanessa Brinkhuis, Curt Bovee, Rebecca McCaulay, Pat McCaulay, Jean Bodeau, Chris Riggio, Harry Grant, Boo Turner, Dick Evans, and Bob Betts

Minutes recorded by: Sali Kilmer, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Greg Knott at 5:02 p.m.

2. Introductions

3. Approval of Agenda

Andy Hover moved to adopt the Agenda of August 17, 2017. Ashley Thrasher seconded, and the motion carried.

4. Minutes – Review and Approval

Bill Tackman moved to approve the Minutes of July 20, 2017, as presented. Andy Hover seconded, and the motion carried.

5. Report from the Chair: Greg Knott

Greg deferred to the later Committee Reports, which encompass most of the activities for the month by the Chair. He officially welcomed Vanessa Brinkhuis, the new contracts and grants specialist for Ecology's Water Resources Program at the Central Regional Office. She is taking on some of Dave Holland's former job duties including watershed planning and implementation. The group warmly welcomed her to the meeting and encouraged her to return for future meetings when possible.

6. Grant Administrator Report: George Schneider

George presented a brief history of the WCRD/TLAC Project, which originated with the goal of seeking ways to reverse the decline of the Twin Lakes Aquifer. During Phase I, three sources of water were identified that could potentially add a limited amount of water. These include: 1) operational changes at Patterson Lake and the automation of water controls, 2) conveyance and infrastructure upgrades, and 3) tapping into neighboring properties with large water rights. Option Three was explored and found to be unviable.

George presented the Council with a handout which outlines the current status of the project. Aspect Consulting provided the Methow Watershed Foundation with a draft proposal for additional monitoring and analysis, but after careful examination of the proposal, the Foundation is recommending an alternative approach. The new approach would be to identify and take steps to implement a small project utilizing WCRD infrastructure to deliver water to the Twin Lakes aquifer. The source of the water would be water resulting from the automation of the screen box overflow, estimated to be about 200 AF per year. In addition, more effective operation of Paterson Lake might result in further water savings. While this approach would not achieve the goals of the original project in full, it does have several advantages, including demonstrating that the overall concept of transferring water to the Twin Lakes aquifer is valid, serving as a real example of a project that can be improved with the IFRR (high flow diversion), and recovering tangible benefits to the WCRD and TLAC from money already expended.

Andy Hover expressed appreciation to the Foundation for their realistic approach of tackling small but attainable projects that can produce tangible results. Kurt Bovee, Pat McCaulay, and Rebecca McCaulay of the WCRD provided input regarding their record keeping for the irrigation district, questioning some of the numbers used by Aspect in their reports, but expressing an overall willingness to work with MWC to make the project happen. George Schneider stated that he will begin outlining next steps with WCRD and TLAC. Vanessa Brinkhuis cautioned the Council that DOE might frown upon amending the scope of the project since it was a competitive grant. It may make more sense to cancel the original project and make a new proposal for use of the remaining funds. George will work directly with Vanessa to iron out the details of the funding. It was decided that the September MWC meeting agenda will include a decision by the Council on whether to proceed with the new approach recommended by MWF on the WCRD/TLAC project.

7. Methow Watershed Foundation Report: Greg Knott

In Mary McCrea's absence, Greg summarized the August MWF meeting. The primary focus was on the WCRD/TLAC project, as discussed in the Grant Administrator's report. In addition, the group discussed the upcoming public outreach meetings as well as the Give Methow crowd funding campaign and other grant opportunities. Dick Evans (MWF Treasurer) reported that that Foundation currently has about \$6,900 in the bank account for administrative functions and public outreach efforts. All outstanding bills have been paid to date.

8. Initiating Government Reports

Town of Twisp: No report. John Fleming absent. Greg relayed that Travis Thornton will be attending the Twisp Council meeting on Tuesday, August 22, where it is expected that the Town of Twisp will act on the recommendation to appoint him to the MWC. Greg Knott offered to attend the meeting as well.

Town of Winthrop: Rick Karro noted that the Town of Winthrop approved the recommendation of Travis Thornton to the MWC at the meeting of August 16. He will forward the approved meeting minutes as confirmation of the action.

Okanogan County: Andy Hover reported that Okanogan County will act on the approval of Travis Thornton to the MWC at its meeting of August 21.

On August 28 at 1:30 p.m. there will be an open public meeting between the Okanogan County Commissioners and Department of Ecology. The purpose of the meeting is to define agency interaction between DOE and the County in light of the Hirst decision in matters involving permits, well drilling, etc.

Andy also reported on two different studies that the County is undertaking. The first is a “buildable lands” study by sub-basin. The purpose of the study is to determine how many buildable lots are left in the county under current zoning. This will provide hard numbers to put against the 2 cfs or perhaps initiate possible re-zoning efforts. The second study is an in-depth well log study. The County is seeking additional grant funding for both of these projects. Greg recommended that the MWC Technical Committee be kept abreast of the County’s progress on these two studies to ensure that work is not repeated that has already been done by Aspect Consulting. He also mentioned that MWC would be willing to explore grant opportunities to support a volunteer well monitoring program.

9. Sub-Committee Reports

Instream Flow Rule Revision Committee: No report. Mike Fort absent.

Political Action Committee: Bill Tackman reported that there is not much of anything going on in Olympia with regard to the Hirst decision. The legislators are in recess and there is still no capital budget.

Technical Review Committee: See the Grant Administrator’s report regarding the WCRD/TLAC Project.

Outreach and Education Committee: Bill Tackman reported that he met with Greg Knott and Sali Kilmer to strategize for the fall public outreach meetings. The meetings are tentatively scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 10 at the Methow Community Center, Wednesday, Sept. 13 at the Twisp Grange, and Thursday, Sept. 14 at the Mazama Community Center. The focus of the meetings will be on Ordinance 20, the Hirst decision, and closed basins. In addition, four presentations by subject matter experts are being arranged for the fall and winter. Topics will include groundwater/surface water interactions, the effects of climate change on the hydrograph, the Trust Water Rights program, and water banking. Dates for these presentations are yet to be determined.

Bylaws Amendment Committee: Ashley Thrasher stated she is working with Greg Knott, Mike Fort, and Mary McCrea to amend the MWC bylaws. Changes to the bylaws will be presented to the MWC for action.

10. Agenda Items

Presentation: Preview of New MWC Website: Sali Kilmer presented a preview of the updated MWC website. Curtis Edwards did the initial work to get the website imported to the new host. Since then, Sali has been working to link documents and update information on the site. She will send a link to Council members before the site goes live so they have a chance to provide feedback.

Report: Water 2066 Work Group: Ashley Thrasher reported that she met with Greg Knott, George Schneider, and Dick Ewing regarding the direction of the Water 2066 project. It was decided that a starting point should be soliciting input from various stakeholder groups for “lay of the land” concerns regarding water use now in order to pave the way for a more effective plan for future water use and conservation. Therefore meetings are being arranged with groups and agencies including the Yakima Nation, MVCC, Colville Nation, WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, and others.

Discussion: Closed Basins: Andy Hover began the discussion with a brief overview of closed basins. WAC 173-548-050 specifically defines the closed basins in the Methow River Basin, WRIA 48. In June, Okanogan County obtained a DOE .shp file defining what DOE views as closed basins. According to the DOE file, in many cases as tributaries get close to the mainstem, they are viewed as having hydraulic continuity with the mainstem.

The Yakima Nation has recently appealed the approval by the County on two separate parcels. One parcel was in the mapped closed basin area. However, the land owner had a new well which had not been in use, but for which they had documentation from DOE that showed they were not in hydraulic continuity. The Yakima nation withdrew their appeal on this approval. The other parcel was outside of the mapped closed basin area on the DOE .shp file. The County’s position is that DOE, when they had drawn the closed basin map had already done the science and research to establish that a well constructed on this parcel is out of direct hydraulic continuity with the stream. The hearings examiner upheld the County’s decision. The County is awaiting word whether the Yakima Nation will appeal further.

The bottom line is that the County is relying on the science and research done by DOE and USGS which established the mapped areas for the closed basins on the .shp file. For parcels within the mapped closed basins, DOE guidelines on well construction and proof that it is not in hydraulic continuity with the stream is required for construction of all new wells.

Public Comments: Phil Millam thanked Andy Hover for his concise presentation on closed basins and the information on the two studies being pursued by the County.

Discussion: Agenda Items – Next Meeting: The next meeting agenda will include a decision on how to proceed with the WCRD/TLAC project and the adoption of the amended MWC Bylaws. The Water 2066 discussion item will be moved from an Agenda Item to a Committee Report. Greg will arrange for a presentation at the October MWC meeting regarding Board insurance.

11. Meeting Adjournment

At 6:57 p.m. Andy Hover moved to adjourn the meeting. Ashley Thrasher seconded, and the motion carried.

Greg Knott, Council Chairman

Approved at the September 21, 2017 Council Meeting.