

WHITE PINE COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

6:00 p.m.

White Pine County Library Conference Room

950 Campton Street, Ely, NV 89301

Present William Butts, Steven Carter, Kathryn Griffith, Sam Hanson, Norris Hendrix, Vice Chair Rod McKenzie, Dr. Frederick Parthey, Jill Perez.

Also Present: Nicole Bolton (USFS), Jack Cooper, Adam Henriod (NDOW), Ronald Munson, Emily Willard (Secretary).

Absent: Dave Baker, White Pine County Commission Liaison Gary Perea

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

II. Public Comment

Bill Butts inquired if Dr. Frederick Parthey and Mr. Munson had gotten together about the well running dry, stating that there had been a few changes up there. He requested that the issue be placed on next month's agenda and stated that he had been out to measure all of these things and Dr. Parthey had said the water for that well came from Gleason Creek but this cannot be because the creek is currently 16 inches higher than it was when we measured it 13 years ago. Out at the Cooper shop it is right where it was when they drilled the well, about 39 feet, and Ronnie's well, if you take the elevation where they take the water up to the Copper Flat where there's the sheep place, there's a 160-foot difference. I don't know where the water's coming from but it's going down all of the time. The situation is getting out of hand and we've taken cases to the State Engineer before and I think we are going to have to make a complaint or do something about it, because it would be very simple to solve but it doesn't look like the mine is too active on it. If we could get a meeting with your general manager, these two guys would like me to be there with them.

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie inquired if the well was registered as domestic. Bill Butts replied that it was registered in 1952 as both a domestic and industrial well, for Isabelle Construction Shops, the shower rooms, steam cleaning, and potable water.

Dr. Parthey responded that this complaint has been made before and went to the State Engineer and as a result, the State Engineer requested that research be conducted in the entire valley; this research was completed in 2017, so there is a published report that looks at the whole valley and all of the folks that have wells there, Mr. Hagblom, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Munson, so we can discuss this, I don't have a problem with that, but this has gone to the State Engineer and the work has been done and completed. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie stated, let's just wait until it's on the agenda and we can discuss it at the next meeting.

Dr. Partey stated, I am the mine representative and I am here all of the time, but Mr. Cooper has not told me anything and he has my contact info. I send him a monthly report on his well and if he wants to talk to me then he can contact me, and we can sit down and talk; this has never happened. I get a report, but I've never heard from Mr. Munson that he's got a problem. They are my neighbors and I want to take care of them, but I have never heard anything from them, I just keep hearing these things in these meetings.

Bill Butts suggested that Dr. Partey meet with Mr. Munson and Mr. Cooper and have a cup of coffee because if the mine had just punched it down another 30 feet in a plastic pipe it would have been done, but you can't make anything easy, you've got to make it all a complicated thing, that's all you have to do and you would have been out of the woods, you would have been a good citizen. Dr. Partey replied, that as he said, he has never heard from them, they have never talked to him, he sends them a letter every month. Jack Cooper inquired where the letter had been sent. Dr. Partey replied that he sends it to a P.O. Box. Jack Cooper stated that he has never received anything.

Steven Carter suggested that if Bill Butts can get them together, let them solve the issue before the next meeting, then they can just report on it at the next meeting. Steven Carter requested a copy of the report for all of the committee members so that next time, we don't have to hash it out at the meeting. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie and Bill Butts agreed that if they can solve the issue before it is brought to the attention of State Engineer that is all the better.

Dr. Partey stated that if Mr. Cooper remembers, a month or two ago, he brought this up at the City Council meeting and that there is a report from the State Engineer, and he told me that he doesn't even believe what the State Engineer had administered to be done in the valley, so if he doesn't believe what the State Engineer has administered and the report of the valley, I don't know what else he's going to believe. The report is there, he can read the report, but he's said that he doesn't even believe the report, so I don't know what he's going to believe. Dr. Partey stated that he can get everyone a copy, but Mr. Cooper needs to get a copy from the state so that it doesn't seem like Dr. Partey is sending him something, he needs to get it directly from the state.

Kathryn Griffith inquired if the report is accessible on the State Engineer's website. Dr. Partey replied that you have to request it, it is a Freedom of Information Act report, anyone can get it, but you have to request it. Kathryn Griffith inquired if Dr. Partey would send them a copy and he replied yes, I will get the team members a report but he's told me he doesn't believe in it so I don't know how I can give him something that he doesn't believe in. Bill Butts stated that he knows Dr. Partey doesn't like it, he himself doesn't like it, but that's why we are here.

III. New Business

A. *Discussion/Action/Possible Approval – Selection of Chairman

Brief discussion ensued on the committee being short two members and the decision in the January meeting to postpone elections until the new committee members had been sworn in. Kathryn Griffith stated that she has not yet been sworn in. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie opened the floor to nominations. Sam Hanson nominated Kathryn Griffith for Chair, Bill Butts seconded, Sam Hanson closed the floor to nominations, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. *Discussion/Action/Possible Approval – Selection of Vice Chairman

Chairwoman Kathryn Griffith opened the floor to nominations Kathryn Griffith nominated Rod McKenzie as Vice Chair, Sam Hanson seconded, Steven Carter closed the floor to nominations, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. *Discussion/Action – Approval of the January 30, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie made a motion to approve the January 30, 2018 minutes with revisions; Bill Butts seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

D. *Discussion/Action/Possible Recommendation – Letter of Interest Received for Text Revision of and Data Incorporation into the 2006 White Pine County Water Resources Plan.

Discussion ensued on the method by which this item should be brought to the attention of the Commission. Emily Willard stated that she had been through the same process for incorporating the PLUAC edits into the White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan and Commissioner Gary Perea had informed the PLUAC that the Commission would not address any budgetary item unless a proposal with a funding estimate had been submitted for their review. Kathryn Griffith inquired if the letter in hand is basically Emily Willard's proposal to the County Commission. Emily Willard replied, correct, they want some kind of dollar amount before they will even consider it.

Sam Hanson made a motion to accept the letter of interest that has been proposed for text revision and data incorporation into the 2006 White Pine County Water Resources Plan. Discussion ensued on amending the letter to include Kathryn Griffith. Bill Butts stated that there is certainly a lot of work, they used to have two girls working steadily on this thing and there's a lot of things that have not been gather yet, like the mines and the water. Emily Willard stated that this phase of the daunting project, to incorporate the new data, to update the text to reflect what is in the new tables and charts, and then update the table of contents, those little details, and then bring it back to you guys and take the next step, which would be more data collection, deleting portions that you think aren't necessary, so I didn't include those things in this proposal.

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie inquired what Emily Willard makes as the Water Advisory Committee secretary now. Emily Willard replied that it is a set amount that averages about \$15.00 per hour, but it depends on the month. Kathryn Griffith inquired, considering all of the revisions and all of this, how many hours per week do you think that you would be able to contribute to the updates of this plan, with my assistance? Would you prefer to work 100 hours, and I work 100 hours, or you 150 hours and I 50 hours, because I don't want to bite into anything that you are doing.

Emily Willard replied, whatever you guys want to do, whether splitting it into 100 hours each that would be fine with me. So this 200 hours, I based this on how much time Kathryn Griffith had said that she had spent already, and it was about 10 hours per week, and honestly I don't

want to spend much more than that per week because I am doing both the PLUAC and the Water Advisory minutes and everything so I don't want to bite off more than I can chew. Those 200 hours worked out to about 5 months at 10 hours per week. If we could finish earlier with the both of us working on it that would be a plus too, with the State Engineer's ruling or decision.

Bill Butts stated that if the Commission doesn't like it they can go home and type it up themselves. Norris Hendrix agreed. Bill Butts stated that he is not going to do that. Norris Hendrix stated that we need to start somewhere, and this is as good a place as any, he doesn't think this will ever finish the job. Emily Willard stated that she didn't include everything because she didn't want it to be too complex right now. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie inquired if both Kathryn Griffith and Emily Willard work on this together, would you be like a team, you're both there, or nobody's there. Kathryn Griffith replied that this was what they were discussing, that they would basically look at it, which chapter, when Emily Willard would like to start and when she would like to end, and then Kathryn Griffith would continue with that, kind of a tag team effort. Emily Willard stated, yes, like every other chapter.

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie stated, so \$50.00 per hour because you were both working on the same thing; I was going to suggest \$20.00 per hour rather than \$25.00 per hour. Bill Butts inquired, well, what does the girl from the County get? Vice Chair Rod McKenzie inquired if they would not come down to \$20.00 per hour, he is wondering what the Commission is going to look at. Bill Butts inquired, what do they pay a grader operator? Sam Hanson stated, it's got to be greater than \$20.00 per hour. Bill Butts stated, yes it does, and their talent is just as good as that guy running a grader. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie stated, well they start at one figure and work up. Bill Butts stated, well, they're already experienced. Bill Butts stated that if it was him, we should start at \$25.00, we can always back up. Norris Hendrix stated that if we start at \$25.00 and the Commission cuts us back to \$20.00 we're still in good shape but if we start at \$20.00 and they cut us back to \$15.00 well then it starts to hurt. Sam Hanson stated that he thinks \$25.00 is a good figure.

Emily Willard inquired if we want to amend the letter to include Kathryn Griffith and 100 hours each. Bill Butts stated that the letter should just include Kathryn Griffith and Emily Willard as a team and let it go at that. Sam Hanson stated, collaboration. Bill Butts seconded Sam Hanson's motion to accept the letter of interest, and the motion passed unanimously. Brief discussion ensued on who should sign the letter and submit it for inclusion on the next Commission meeting agenda.

IV. Unfinished Business

Vice Chair Rod McKenzie spoke about the annual evaluation, stating that he had sent a copy to Sam Hanson. Sam Hanson stated that he made those corrections and submitted the evaluation to Nichole Baldwin. Vice Chair Rod McKenzie stated that he didn't know where things stood since it had not made it onto the Commission's February 14th agenda. Kathryn Griffith stated that she believes the reason for this was that the Commission meeting was on the 14th and the evaluations would be in on the 15th so they postponed it until the next Commission meeting. Brief discussion ensued, and the committee requested that Emily Willard email everyone a copy of the evaluation.

V. On-Going Business

A. Referral of Items from County Commission

County Commission liaison was not in attendance.

B. Review, Recommendations – Division of Water Resources, Monthly Report

Discussion ensued on White Pine County's unused water rights that have been transferred to Robinson Mine for three years. The NEPA process for water storage above McGill is in process. Bill Butts stated that Jose Noriega from the USFS is fine with having holes bored through the top of the mountain, it is not going to hurt the plants or animals or anything. Sam Hanson and Vice Chair Rod McKenzie stated that they believe that the reservoir will be above ground because there had been a discussion on evaporation rates. Bill Butts stated that when the guy out of Twin Falls, Idaho had talked to them about it, it was all underground.

C. Reports – USGS, BLM, US Forest Service, National Park Service, NDOW, Division of Water Resources, SNWA, State Land Use Planning Advisory Council, Robinson Nevada Mining Company, Ely Shoshone Tribe, and The City of Ely

U.S. Geological Survey: Representative from the U.S. Geological Service was not in attendance.

Bureau of Land Management: Representative from the Bureau of Land Management was not in attendance.

U.S. Forest Service: Nichole Bolton stated that she had nothing to report.

National Park Service: Representative from the National Park Service was not in attendance.

Nevada Department of Wildlife: Adam Henriod reported that flows in Steptoe Creek are 5-8 cfs, we're seeing quite a bit of fluctuation because temperatures are fluctuating, Willow Creek 3.4 and 3.2 cfs. The boat launch for Comins Lake is still in the funding process. The White Pine County Wildlife Advisory Board is writing a report for additional funding using Heritage and we are seeking local contributions. All of those contributions will be matched three to one through voting contributions; it's going to happen, it's just going to take awhile.

Bill Butts inquired if there had been any more shocking. Adam Henriod replied that there had not been any shocking, probably when the ice melts.

Nevada Division of Water Resources: Representative from the Nevada Division of Water Resources was not in attendance.

Nevada State Parks: Representative from the Nevada State Parks was not in attendance.

Southern Nevada Water Authority: Representative from the Southern Nevada Water Authority was not in attendance.

State Land Use Planning Advisory Council: Representative from the State Use Planning Advisory Council was not in attendance.

Robinson Nevada Mining Company: Dr. Parthey stated that dewatering is continuing in the Ruth pit, and they are currently pumping 5,000 gpm into Gleason Creek, the rest goes to the mill for our processors. This will continue for the rest of the year. The mine tour and presentation for the Ely City Council, the White Pine County Commission, and the Water Advisory Committee will take place on March 13th and 15th. Kathryn Griffith requested that Dr. Parthey send an invitation to Jill Perez so that she can speak to the Ely Shoshone Tribe council about it. Brief discussion ensued on RSVP requirements.

Ely Shoshone Tribe: Nothing to report.

City of Ely: Sam Hanson stated that, contrary to reports, the City is not going bankrupt.

VI. Reports – Comments from Committee Members, Reports, Water Committee Members, and Meetings Attended

Brief discussion ensued on the two vacancies and Elaine Blackham's resignation. Emily Willard stated that she would remind Nichole Baldwin to send the McGill-Ruth GID a letter advertising the vacancy if she had not done so already. Norris Hendrix inquired about Don Phillips. Emily Willard replied that he had allowed his membership to lapse because he is in ill health and she had inquired if his son would be interested in filling the vacancy, but she had not heard anything.

VII. Public Comment

None were made.

VIII. Next Meeting Date and Time Announcement

The next meeting is scheduled for March 20th, 2018.

IX. *Adjournment

As there were no further discussion items for the Committee, Chairwoman Kathryn Griffith adjourned the meeting at 6:46pm.