

**NORTHERN NEVADA WATER PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 4, 2013

The regular meeting of the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (“NNWPC”) was held on Wednesday, September 4, 2013 in the Washoe County Commissioner Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

- 1. Roll Call and determination of presence of a quorum** – Chairman Solaro called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. There was a quorum present.

Voting Members Present:

David Solaro, Chairman
Michael Drinkwater, Vice Chairman
George W. Ball, Jr.
Michael DeMartini
John Erwin
Norman Harry
Mickey Hazelwood
Neil Krutz (arrived at 1:35 p.m.)
Darrin Price

Voting Members Absent:

John Flansberg
Jerry Schumacher

Non-Voting Members Present:

David Boland

Non-Voting Members Absent:

John Bird
Harry Fahnestock
Kelvin Hickenbottom
My-Linh Nguyen
Edmund Quaglieri

Staff Members Present:

Jim Smitherman
Chris Wessel
June Davis
John Rhodes, Legal Counsel

2. Public Comments.

Chairman Solaro called for public comments and hearing none, closed the public comment period.

3. Approval of the agenda.

Jim Smitherman reported that the minutes of the August 7 NNWPC meeting were not available, so item 4 would be continued to the next meeting. Commissioner Erwin made a motion to approve the September 4, 2013 meeting agenda as amended. Commissioner DeMartini seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Approval of minutes from the August 7, 2013 meeting.

The minutes were not available for approval at this meeting; this item was continued to the next meeting.

5. Review and possible approval of an amendment to the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (“NNWPC”) Administrative Policies and Procedures, to provide for selection of a new Chairman following a resignation; and if approved, election of a new Chairman, and Vice-Chairman if necessary, and possible direction to staff – John Rhodes, NNWPC Legal Counsel. (For Possible Action)

John Rhodes, Legal Counsel, reported that this item was continued from the August meeting. He referred to the revised proposed amendments to the NNWPC Administrative Policies and Procedures to provide a process for selection of a new Chairman following a resignation or inability to act of the sitting Chairman. He reiterated that the previous Chairman, John Buzzone, resigned. He stated that Mr. Buzzone represented Washoe County so his replacement, David Solaro, would automatically move into that role. Mr. Solaro has agreed to act as Chairman for the remainder of the County’s term.

Mr. Rhodes stated that two options were developed to cover a situation where a replacement member declines to act as Chairman:

- 1) Upon resignation of the Chairman, a new Chairman and Vice Chairman would be elected from among the rotation – this option would change the elections from April to whatever time it would be needed.
- 2) Hold a new election to appoint an interim Chairman and Vice Chairman to serve the remainder of the term – the elected interim chairman would not be eligible to serve a full term for a period of one year following the end of the interim term – this option would retain the policy of holding annual elections in April of each year..

Mr. Rhodes invited questions or comments. Commissioner Price stated he prefers Option 2 so that the process is similar to that of other governing bodies and would remain consistent. He asked about eligibility for appointment, which does not include Sun Valley General Improvement District (SVGID). Mr. Rhodes stated that is correct and explained that those entities that have already served in the Chairman’s role are not listed as eligible.

Mr. Smitherman referred to Option 2 and asked if there is any restriction on who could serve in the interim. Mr. Rhodes stated that the eligible list would still be applicable. He added that the interim person elected would only serve the remaining balance of the current term, with an annual election to be held the following April.

Commissioner Price made a motion to select Option 2 to be included in Section 5 of the Administrative Policies and Procedures. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Rhodes offered to finalize the amendment and link it to the website.

6. Report on groundwater monitoring efforts in Washoe County; discussion and possible direction to staff – Christian Kropf, Senior Hydrogeologist, Washoe County. (For Possible Action)

Christian Kropf, Senior Hydrogeologist for the Washoe County Community Services Department, Division of Water Resources, provided a presentation on groundwater monitoring and data in Washoe County (copy on file). He showed samples of monitoring wells and explained what they are and how they work. Domestic wells provide the best data on aquifer levels and other monitoring activities.

Mr. Kropf explained that the data is used to determine the need for wellhead protection, as well as providing information on which to base land use. The most heavily monitored areas include:

- South Truckee Meadows
- Lemmon Valley
- Golden Valley
- Central Truckee Meadows Remediation District
- Fish Springs Ranch

Mr. Kropf reported that approximately two decades of information is available for Spanish Springs, particularly studying the impact of high-density septic. A decade of information is available for the Verdi basin for development of a flow model. The Cold Springs area is also monitored in relation to the wastewater treatment plant.

Mr. Kropf stated that based on lack of funding and resources, the monitoring program has been greatly reduced.

Mr. Kropf showed some of the monitoring results from different areas. He explained that based on the results of one monitoring well, water levels were decreasing one to two feet per year. Based on the rapid decrease in the water levels, a program was developed, "in lieu groundwater recharge". The program focused on converting domestic wells to the municipal system where possible. He explained the main reason for the decline is believed to be that 475 domestic wells were built in a very low-yield aquifer.

Mr. Kropf reviewed some of the past and ongoing recharge programs, such as Golden Valley. It began as a pilot project in the early 1990s. Based on the outcome, the community decided to continue the program with their own funding, which has been successful in increasing water levels.

Nitrate levels in Spanish Springs have been monitored, which are almost at the maximum contaminant levels allowed. Mr. Kropf stated that based on the levels, the septic to sewer conversion program was initiated.

Mr. Kropf stated that the desired next steps are:

- Hopefully the monitoring program can continue – assistance has been received in the form of interns being hired by the County
- Refresh and optimize all of the networks where groundwater is pumped
- Semi-annual monitoring
- Water quality needs to be monitored, particularly nitrates
- Monitor water levels
- Continue utility of the model – climate change could create a huge impact – modeling is needed
- Contamination and remediation rely on monitoring

Mr. Kropf invited questions or comments. Commissioner DeMartini asked about the possibility of a regional repository for monitoring information. Mr. Kropf stated that the monitoring data is not regionalized; each entity maintains its own data. He added that the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) convened a committee called the Groundwater Task Force, which includes agency representatives and groundwater professionals. He stated this is one of the committee's big topics of discussion. He reported that the County has a large dataset and is in the process of converting it to an actual access database. He stated that NDEP also has a large dataset throughout the state and are approximately 70% complete on converting it to a database, which would provide a good example to follow into the future.

Commissioner Price asked if domestic well monitoring is voluntary. Mr. Kropf stated it is and added that some owners allow Washoe County to monitor their water levels. He added that in some cases, monitoring is done for water quality on a voluntary basis. Mr. Price asked what is being done about the levels that exceed the safe water drinking act. Mr. Kropf stated that for instance in Golden Valley sampling occurred where a large volume of nitrate was found; participants volunteered to have their wells monitored. Based on the results, a fact sheet was prepared that included what is occurring, what could be done and any potential effects that could be experienced. Mr. Price asked if it was a one-time notification and added that ownership has probably changed over the years. Mr. Kropf agreed that is a good point.

Commissioner Price asked if all of the entities are using the same model. Mr. Kropf stated that consultants are hired and could use a different model, as could different agencies. Mr. Kropf explained that the groundwater flow model relies on a fairly large dataset. He added that having water level data does not necessarily mean that a flow model would be developed. He stated that the same situation occurred on the Truckee River; many agencies had information that is not always consistent.

Mr. Kropf stated that users should verify any information being entered into a model.

Chris Wessel reported that the NNWPC recommended a second phase to the Septic Analysis Plan and added that it would include some nitrate monitoring of domestic wells. He stated that the information gained from that project would be used; however, would not serve as a mechanism of funding to continue this program.

Commissioner Drinkwater stated that in reviewing Mr. Kropf's information, it appears that the only monitoring being done is related to independent funding sources. Mr. Kropf stated that is correct currently. Mr. Drinkwater added that the necessity and the utility cannot be overstated and asked what we should be doing that we are not doing. Mr. Kropf stated that missing data can result in unknown impacts. Mr. Drinkwater asked if an action was implemented based on the findings. Mr. Kropf stated that there have not been any recent actions to address the events noted. He added that converting desert areas into developments with irrigated turf has been shown to impact water quality although the extent is unknown. He reiterated that based on resource and funding constraints, further studies and mitigation have not been possible.

Commissioner DeMartini stated that it seems that there is agreement that duplicate efforts are occurring, which could be good in relation to "checks and balances". He added that given the economic situation, perhaps there would be an economic method to create a regional repository in order to better utilize resources. Mr. Kropf stated that the goal would be to monitor more areas more frequently, which is getting better based on the utilization of interns.

Commissioner Price made a motion to accept the report. Commissioner Hazelwood seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

7. Report on the South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District ("STMGID"), issues arising from the pending consolidation of Washoe County's water utility with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority ("TMWA"), and possible consolidation of STMGID with TMWA - Jerry Schumacher, STMGID

Commissioner Schumacher was not present. Commissioner Erwin provided an update from TMWA's perspective. He stated that a meeting was held with the STMGID Board in a public workshop setting. He reported that STMGID previously presented a "position paper" regarding any further discussion related to merging with the County or directly with TMWA. He stated that STMGID refined their points and presented them in December, at which time the Board directed staff to perform due diligence. He stated that due diligence was performed by TMWA to determine whether the merger would be revenue/cost neutral to all customers involved, which was finalized in June 2013 and presented to the STMGID Board in mid-July.

Commissioner Erwin reported that last week's meeting, which was attended by approximately 50 people, included discussion of the outcome. He reported that approximately ten attendees asked questions about the results. He stated that TMWA staff left the meeting when the next agenda item was opened, which was related to assembling a team to assist with further negotiations as they relate to the offer sheet provided by STMGID. He stated that further steps are anticipated by STMGID representatives prior to TMWA proceeding.

8. Report on the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (“TMRPA”) parcel-based population and employment modeling project; and possible direction to staff – Jim Smitherman. (For Possible Action)

Mr. Smitherman reported that TMRPA’s staff is putting the final touches on the draft final report on the industrial land needs analysis. The report will be presented to the RPGB on September 5 at 2:00 p.m. in the Washoe County Commission Chambers. He invited members of the NNWPC to attend the meeting, which will be followed by a question and answer session.

Mr. Smitherman stated that his involvement in the project has been minimal over the past month because TMRPA staff is working to finalize the report. He added that fire flow data has been received for industrial zoned lands from TMWA and Washoe County.

Following presentation of the final report, the final phase of the project will be launched, which will be scenario planning, including water and sewer services.

9. Program Manager’s Report, Jim Smitherman.

a. Status Report of Projects and Work Plan Supported by the Regional Water Management Fund

b. Financial Report on the Regional Water Management Fund

Mr. Smitherman reported that the documents included in the packet are provided as informational items. He invited any questions or comments.

Commissioner Price referred to the Regional Data and Analytical Program and asked if that is the item that was discussed under agenda item 8. Mr. Smitherman stated it is and explained that reference to the project is multi-phased and the title was provided during approval of the interlocal agreement a couple of years ago. Mr. Price asked if the amount listed includes Mr. Smitherman’s time, which he stated does not; however, it is tracked.

Commissioner Price referred to the amounts listed that were carried over from last fiscal year and asked if large bills are anticipated. Mr. Smitherman stated that he does not anticipate large bills and added that some of the projects are slated for completion in 2014. He explained that some amounts are the same every year, such as the Storm Water program, which shows a zero percent completion at the beginning of the fiscal year.

10. Discussion regarding possible agenda items for the October 2, 2013 NNWPC meeting, and other future meetings, and possible direction to staff, Jim Smitherman.

Mr. Smitherman reported that upcoming agenda items include:

- TMRPA’s status report on the parcel-based population and employment modeling project with the focus on industrial land use analysis – TMRPA Staff
- Review and possible recommendation to the WRWC regarding facility conformance review policies, in the form of a Resolution – Mr. Rhodes stated that the statute provides a means for conformance review for facilities that may effect the workings of the Regional Water Plan; however, it also stated that the WRWC shall adopt a resolution delegating to staff or the NNWPC that function. He added that the feedback he has received is that the WRWC would delegate that authority to staff and the NNWPC with an appealable right if the protestant is not satisfied with the finding.
- Report on NDEP / EPA Storm Water Audit, if the written report is available
- Possible update on the Central Truckee Meadows Remediation District (CTMRD) – Mr. Smitherman will check with CTMRD staff
- Standing Items

- Program Manager's Report
- Status update on STMGID merger

Commissioner DeMartini asked if it would be appropriate for the Remediation District to provide an update to the NNWPC. Mr. Smitherman stated it is appropriate and offered to invite staff to provide an update.

Commissioner Erwin asked when the next Water Plan update is due. Mr. Smitherman replied January 2016.

Chairman Solaro made a motion to schedule the items as discussed by Mr. Smitherman. Commissioner Erwin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

11. Commission Comments.

None

12. Staff Comments.

Mr. Smitherman reported that the TMWA Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting of September 3 was canceled, which is why this item was not included on this agenda.

13. Public Comments.

Chairman Solaro called for public comments and hearing none, closed the public comment period.

14. Adjournment.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Niki Linn, Recording Secretary

Approved by Commission in session on _____ 2013.

David Solaro, Chairman