

RM129 Weber-Box Elder Conservation District Weber Ann Baynard

DAN VAN HORN moved the board authorize and commit 60% of the project cost, up to \$10,029,111.11, as a secondary meter grant, with up to an additional \$1,449,488.89 depending on the availability of additional funds at the time of reimbursement. Also move that the board authorize up to \$7,737,000 as a loan, and that the bonded indebtedness be returned at 1% interest over 15 years with annual payments of approximately \$600,000 (including reserves). SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RM130 South Ogden Conservation District Weber Ann Baynard

DANA VAN HORN moved the board authorize and commit 60% of the project cost, up to \$1,784,942.07, as a secondary meter grant, with up to an additional \$403,857.93 depending on the availability of additional funds at the time of reimbursement. Also move that the board authorize up to \$1,584,000 as a loan, and that the bonded indebtedness be returned at 1% interest over 15 years with annual payments of approximately \$123,000 (including reserves). BRIAN STEED seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RM131 Morgan City Morgan Brad Caldwell

DANA VAN HORN moved the board authorize and commit 60% of the project cost, up to \$173,000, as a secondary meter grant. BRIAN STEED seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RM133 Marriott-Slaterville City Weber Ben Marett

DANA VAN HORN moved the board authorize and commit 60% of the project cost, up to \$306,000, as a secondary meter grant. BRIAN STEED seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

RE445 Veyo Culinary Water Association Washington Tom Cox

TOM COX presented the report.

SPENCER JONES moved the board reauthorize 85% of the project cost, up to \$1,076,000, and that the project be purchased at 1% interest over 30 years with annual payments of approximately \$41,700. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE471 **Woodland South Hills Irr. Co.** **Wasatch** **Russell Hadley**
RUSSELL HADLEY presented the report.

SPENCER JONES moved the board commit an additional \$102,000 and amend the purchase agreement to state the board will provide 85% of the project cost, up to \$719,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 30 years with annual payments of approximately \$24,000. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RM022 **South Davis Water District (Withdrawal)** **Davis** **Ben Marett**
MARISA EGBERT presented the report.

WILLIAM MERKLEY moved the loan funds for this project be withdrawn from further consideration by the Board. BRIAN STEED seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

WATER BANKING UPDATE:

SHALAINE DEBERNARDI summarized the report. As stated in Utah Code §73-31, the governing body of each bank must report to the board regarding its operation during the prior reporting year, and also requires that the board provide an annual report to the legislature. Information about the two approved banks was presented, and there has been no activity in either banks since approval.

Division staff also submitted a report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee on behalf of the board in November.

BOARD MEMBERS and staff discussed the sunset date of the Act, and the lack of bank interest and activity. There may be further analysis needed in the future.

GSL BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN: MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES REPORT:

SHELBY COOLEY presented a summary of the report, which is available on water.utah.gov

ELECTION OF 2026 BOARD OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICERS

BLAINE IPSON moved to appoint MIKE DAVIS as Chair of the Board for the 2026 year. SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

BLAINE IPSON moved to appoint DANA VAN HORN as the Vice-Chair of the Board for the 2026 year. BRIAN STEED seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

SHALAIN DEBERNARDI read the public comment into the record. This comment is from Rick Smith with Davis and Weber Counties Canal Company. "We wanted to publicly thank Tom Cox for the many years and projects he has helped us with over the last two to three decades. We have had several projects, secondary water and canal, with the Board of Water Resources with the majority overseen by Tom. He has been a great asset to Water Resources and has done his job well. He is a friend to the water community. We wish him the best in retirement. We would also like to thank Candice Hasenyager for her work with the Division of Water Resources and most recently as the Director. We wish her the best too in her new role.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

CANDICE HASENYAGER Following our discussions in the Briefing and Board meetings, I would like to officially recognize our retirees. I want to give a significant shout-out to Tom Cox for his 36 years of service and Russell Hadley for his 35 years. Additionally, our Finance Manager, Jim Egbert, is retiring at the end of the year after 15 years with the division. I am incredibly grateful for the decades of hard work and dedication these three have contributed to our team. I thank them for all of their efforts.

We are already prepping for for the legislative session. It's crazy that it's only roughly a little more than a month away. The Governor released his proposed budget and one of the highlights was the dam safety upgrades recommending that \$6.2 million ongoing funds be committed to that effort which is well overdue. It's really great to have ongoing funds recommended for that. We still have to go through the legislative process but it's high hopes there.

The State Water Plan is moving right along. Our team completed all of the water talks through October and got some really good feedback.

We have completed the 2024 water budget. We are available to provide a full presentation on the results, but essentially, this model estimates all inflows and outflows and is critical to the State Water Plan. Additionally, this data is utilized by the Great Salt Lake Strike Team. Significant effort was dedicated to improving the methodology for municipal and industrial depletion estimates.

I would also like to highlight that we have completed the 2024 water-related land use data. This yearly data provides information on agricultural water use throughout the state. Excluding fallow land, the grand total of irrigated land is approximately 1.7 million acres, with alfalfa, grass hay, and corn serving as our top three irrigated crops. Substantial work goes into gathering this land use data, which serves as a primary input for the water budget.

We are still continuing to work with the Water Development Coordinating Council and the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan. We held public meetings in October and had great responses and got feedback into the prioritization process. So, we're currently working with our consultants to make the changes there. The Utah project portal is now live. While project submissions were previously managed via spreadsheets, users can now submit and maintain their projects through individual logins within the portal. This transition involved significant effort, and we were able to leverage existing work from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget as well as the CIB. We expect to have a draft plan ready in early January and look forward to presenting it to the Board.

We have completed the fee study we previously discussed and presented the findings during the legislative meetings in November. Addressing the state's water infrastructure needs and the associated funding requirements is a significant undertaking. With the study now complete, the legislature has the necessary information to make informed policy decisions on how to proceed.

As far as conservation, we have a transparent water billing grant application that's available through December 19th. So this is really trying to get that smart billing available for water systems and cities, but really at the end of the day it's the end user who will be using that bill to understand how they use water and providing better information. So think of it like a smart energy bill that you've received where it maybe has a smiley face of if you did good or kind of compares you to your neighbors or those types of things. We are looking forward to seeing those grants be submitted.

We are making significant progress with our cloud seeding efforts this year. All generators and drone teams are now fully operational. Now, we just need the right temperatures and clouds.

Regarding the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan, I want to express my appreciation for the ongoing work on this project. We have been working closely with the Bureau of Reclamation and have finalized a contract for the modeling portion of the plan. Hydros and Precision Engineers will be conducting the modeling. Both firms are premier RiverWare modelers with extensive experience across the Colorado River Basin and beyond. We are excited to have them applying their expertise to the Great Salt Lake model. We are currently wrapping up several individual projects, including: The opportunity costs and costs of agricultural water optimization. Dust mitigation options and associated costs for the Great Salt Lake. Functional flows for the Great Salt Lake Basin streams. Quantification of evaporation loss in and around the Great Salt Lake. Regarding evaporation, discussions often rely on "back of the envelope" calculations based on known inflows. We are working to improve this understanding by utilizing actual measurements of evaporation rates.

We had a Bear River Commission meeting on November 18th. The next one will be in Idaho on April 14th.

I would like to share some updates regarding the Colorado River following a recent Upper Colorado River Commission work group meeting. The Bureau of Reclamation provided a hydrology report that is quite concerning. As of December 1st, Lake Powell is at approximately 29% of its live storage. The most probable forecast for unregulated inflows for water year 2026 is currently 7 million acre-feet. This is significantly below the 12 million acre-feet average and represents a 1 million acre-foot decrease from the November forecast, largely due to unusually warm temperatures last month. Additionally, the Bureau's 24-month study indicates that, under minimum probable scenarios, Lake Powell's elevation could fall below the 3,490-foot power pool. While this is at the lower end of their projections, it remains a serious concern. The seven basin states are currently working on a draft operating framework for post-2026 operations. There is still a significant amount of work to be done before the February 14th deadline to reach a final agreement for inclusion in the Bureau of Reclamation's draft Environmental Impact Statement. During the work group meeting, Wayne Pullman of the Bureau of Reclamation noted that "hydrology should drive us together, not apart." This resonates with me deeply; given these challenging conditions, it is vital that we work closely together to find common ground rather than allowing these circumstances to divide us.

This is a bittersweet moment for me as this is my last Board meeting. It feels a bit like the ending of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*; I am not sure if you have seen it, but the film famously features several different iterations of goodbye. I feel I am currently in the midst of those many "last times" that have occurred throughout this month. The last four years as Director have been transformative, and I have learned a great deal from each of you. I am incredibly grateful for the Board of Water Resources and the vital work that you do. Thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve alongside you.

I want to thank the team that I've worked with along the way. I'm so grateful for each of you and the work that you've done. You make a difference to the state and personally made a difference to me in getting to work alongside you. My team has heard this, a lot of the time I've said I'm their backup dancer, I get to showcase the work that they're all doing and it's just been really a privilege to me to work with them and I will continue to cheer on and support the work you do in a different role, but I'm looking forward to continuing our work together and really grateful for all of you.

ADJOURNMENT

SPENCER JONES moved to adjourn the meeting. BLAINE IPSON seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:51 AM.

