



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Water Resources Board**

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RHODE ISLAND WATER RESOURCES BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING # #464

October 9, 2007

Members Present:

Daniel W. Varin, Chairman
William Penn
William Parsons
Ian Morrison
Jesse Rodrigues, Jr.
June Swallow, P.E.*
Harold Ward, Ph. D.
Frank Perry, P.E.
Robert Griffith, Ph.D.*
Richard Mignanelli
Michael Sullivan, Ph. D.
William Stamp, III

Staff Present:

Juan Mariscal, P.E.
Kathleen Crawley
Romeo Mendes, P.E.
Beverly O'Keefe
William Riverso
Elaine Maguire
*Member designee

Members Absent:

Pamela Marchand, P.E.

Guests

Elizabeth Scott-RIDEM
John Paul Verducci-House Finance
Heidi Green-Quonset Development Corporation
David Lamb-URI Water
Carissa Richard-Providence Water
Alicia Good-RIDEM
Rob Breault-USGS
Henry Meyer-KWD, RIWWA
Anthony Caliri-CCJ,CPA's
Eugenia Marks-Audubon Society
Wayne Sonntag, US Geological Survey
Gardiner Bent US Geological Survey

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Varin called the meeting to order at 12:11 p. m. noting that a quorum was present.

Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Mr. Perry to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2007 Board Meeting #462. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chief Business Officer's Report

Motion by Mr. Penn, second by Mr. Morrison to approve the September 2007 Chief Business Officer's Report as reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee. The vote was in favor with one abstention, Dr. Sullivan who indicated that he had not received the email copy of the report in advance. The motion carried.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Varin said that he was sorry to announce that Elaine Maguire, the Field Office Manager is retiring at the end of this month. He recognized her efforts over the years in dealing with the tenants, managing all of the many people that we have over the years authorized to use the management area and also managing those who are not authorized to use the area.

He stated that board has discussed the length of the meetings and the difficulties finding adequate time to spend on matters of policy and more important presentations. He stated there is a procedure in place for items less than \$1,000 but it doesn't save much time. He distributed a proposal and asked members to review, offer changes and prepare to discuss at the next Board meeting. It will require a one paragraph amendment to the Board's rules.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Mariscal stated that his report would be brief as there are a number of substantive items on the agenda. He asked Ms. Beverly O'Keefe, Supervising Planner to report on weather conditions in the state.

Drought

Ms. O'Keefe reported weather conditions remain very dry and a Drought Steering Committee meeting will be convened on Monday October 15 (time and place to be confirmed). She stated the state has experienced over two months of very dry weather conditions after experiencing a very wet spring. She reported the crop moisture index is abnormally dry, recorded streamflows in all cases is below normal, and several wells are recording very low levels for this time of year. She stated the Scituate Reservoir level was recorded at 278 feet yesterday, and continues to decrease 0.02 feet each day. The Providence Water Supply Board Drought Management Plan "Advisory" Phase will kick in when the water level decreases to 273 feet so staff will be closely monitoring the reservoir level. She reminded members the fall time period is typically the time of increased precipitation and recharge which has not yet started. The Drought Steering Committee will convene to review the indicators and conditions. Mr. Frank Perry commented on a recent news article which described the extreme drought conditions in the southeastern United States with Atlanta projecting only a one-year water supply remaining without significant recharge. The Chairman asked Ms. O'Keefe to send the notice of the Drought Steering Committee Board members once a time and place is set.

Discussion

Mr. Perry commented that there was an article in yesterday's paper about the South and how bad the drought is. Atlanta is worried about running out of water completely within a year. Chairman Varin asked and Ms. O'Keefe confirmed that an email notice would be sent to board members with the drought meeting time and place.

Pawcatuck Optimization Model Results- Presentation by US Geological Survey

Ms. Crawley introduced the project noting that it had begun in 2002, was federally funded and was a partnership between The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the Water Resources Board (WRB). The goals of the effort were to advance the overall understanding of the basin, to advance model techniques, evaluate alternatives for agriculture, and to evaluate water supply issues. She recognized NRCS and noted that they were unable to attend today's meeting but they are working very closely with the board on a public relations and outreach effort. She introduced USGS representatives- Mr. Wayne Sontag, Director of the MA-RI Water Science Center, Mr. Rob Breault, RI Director, and Mr. Gardner Bent, Chief of the Data Center. Mr. Bent then made a presentation to the board on the following topic areas (presentation attached):

- Project Objectives

- Study Benefits
- Products
- Data Collection
- Major Findings

Discussion

The following comments and/or questions were raised:

- Ms. Scott asked whether there is a possibility for a user friendly interface so that the model may be widely available. Mr. Sontag indicated that some work of a similar nature had been done in Massachusetts and it is something they can further explore with the board.
- Mr. Gardner stated that USGS trainings are available to the public which may also be of benefit.
- Chairman Varin noted the pattern of low density development which brings more problems than just water. He requested additional detail about residential density used in for the category “medium to low.”
- Mr. Penn state that from policy standpoint does this report say that surface water withdrawals should be discouraged and groundwater withdrawals should be encouraged in the basin? USGS is demonstrating the impacts through the model so that policy makers can make those decisions. There was considerable discussion about policy implications and implementation of the studies the board has commissioned and what direction the board should take. Mr. Perry related the discussion to Mr. Varin’s earlier comments about the need to allow more time for policy discussions, and implementing the studies that have been completed. This study demonstrates that the impacts of withdrawals on the streams could be delayed if direct stream withdrawals were moved to groundwater wells. Policy and technical questions remain. Mr. Bent stated that this was part of what NRCS was interested in exploring with the model-are groundwater withdrawals a viable alternative to current practices? Mr. Mariscal added that some analyses regarding the South County well acquisitions have been enhanced; the model also assists in location and potential pumping thresholds. Dr. Sullivan noted the importance of the model globally, beyond the water Resources Board, for water resource management.
- Ms. Scott cautioned that pumping groundwater can impact the temperature of the stream.
- Every water use within the basin is included.
- Members requested a copy of the presentation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

Water Resources Protection & Use Committee - Robert Griffith, Chair

Water Facilities Assistance Program:

Motion by Dr. Griffith second by Mr. Perry to approve a Shad Factory Pipeline progress payment (Requisition #3) in the amount of \$21,659.00 to Bristol County Water Authority. The vote was in favor with one recusal (Mr. Morrison). The motion carried.

Discussion

Mr. Penn stated that the Finance Committee had reviewed the request and recommended payment. There was discussion about the amount of time it took to pay BCWA. The transmittal letter to the board was dated September 7 which was too late to be included in the September Board meeting [packages had already been mailed]. The payment was included on the October Committee and Board agendas. There was also discussion about the level of detail included with the invoice. It was agreed

that future payments would include a narrative report outlining where they are in the project along with the tasks that are completed.

Water Supply Systems Management Plan Program:

Kingston Water District - Five-Year Update

Motion by Dr. Griffith second by Mr. Perry to approve the Five-Year Update with additional conditions to be submitted with the Thirty-Month Interim Report. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

Discussion

Dr. Sullivan noted a correction on page two, line 3 of the transmittal memo to change the word “line” to the word “lime.” He requested clarification on numbers of irrigation accounts, projected savings, and the existence of “do-it-yourself” irrigation systems not using the larger meters. He asked Mr. Henry Meyer, Manager, Kingston Water District, for system management water loss information. Mr. Meyer provided clarification to the Board. Dr. Sullivan noted the University of Rhode Island leases over 200 acres of land to area farmers, and he recommends the University incorporate into its leasing plan a reasonable stewardship of the area’s ground and surface water resources. He recommended stewardship of groundwater policies related to the specific watershed be considered by the University and the Board as it moves forward. Dr. Ward concurred stating the Board should take a stronger stand on water withdrawals through coordination and guidance. Mr. Mariscal stated staff is putting together the 2005 water use reporting report which will provide the most current non-account water information. He also noted a letter on today’s actions by the Board will be sent to Kingston Water District and the University of Rhode Island which will request a meeting with the suppliers to review the findings and conditions. Staff will work with the suppliers on coordination but he noted the responsibility for coordination rests with the water suppliers. The Board does not have the capability at this time to make sure the recommendations are implemented. Mr. Griffith summarized the discussion by stating the Board currently influences policy but will need to increase the focus on the implementation of policy over the coming years. He noted historically the Board has had the legislative authority to implement policies but as the State moves forward, management and implementation of increasing scarce resources, not the least of which, is water will require the Board to take action. He proposed a meeting of the Strategic Committee be convened at some convenient early time to address some the above questions. He noted much of the discussion involves the work of the Water Allocation Advisory Committee although a Final Report still has not been produced.

University of Rhode Island – Five-Year Update

Motion by Dr. Griffith second by Mr. Ward to approve the Thirty-Month Interim Report,” subject to” several conditions which include a basic water metering plan and budget within one year (which rewrites the last bullet on page 2). The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried

Discussion

Dr. Ward stated the Water Supply System Management Plan Rules and Procedures require meters, and he recommended monitoring the plan rather than granting approval. It was his opinion a delay until submittal of the Five-Year Update in September 2009 would not improve the water demand and system management program. Mr. David Lamb pointed out the high expense for meter installation and the current lack of state funds. He agreed it may be possible to implement a 5-year program of meter

installation if the resources were available. Mr. Mariscal reminded the Board the Report is a data report but the Board does have the opportunity to remind the University of these current concerns and requirements which at the very least must be addressed prior to or at the time of submittal of the Update. Dr. Sullivan recommended a water reuse plan should be implemented on campus. He noted the saving of 4 million gallons of water a year from updates to the steam plant is excellent which can be used to support the increase in student enrollment. He agreed more metering is needed on campus but the Board should provide guidance. Mr. Perry steps need to be taken now so that there will be a developed plan and possible implementation by the 2009 Update. Mr. Henry Meyer cautioned the Board to be realistic, and perhaps recommend the new buildings coming on line be built with meters. He agreed that increased coordination between URI and Kingston needs to occur.

Mr. Penn left the meeting at 1:30.

Property Committee - Chair Frank Perry

The committee did not meet.

Construction, Engineering and Operations Committee – Pamela Marchand, Chair

The committee did not meet.

Finance Committee - Chair William Penn.

Chairman Varin introduced the item and Ms. Crawley reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the budget request and recommended approval. She indicated that the water allocation program experiences the largest cuts in order to meet the target set by the Budget Office. In order to fund the Big River RFQ/P, Water Allocation Projects are delayed. Chairman Varin stated that this is uncomfortable but the agency has to adhere to the across the board reductions requested from all agencies.

Operating Budget (Final FY2009 and FY2008 Revised Budget Request)

Motion by Dr. Sullivan second by Mr. Perry to adopt the Budget as presented. The vote in favor was unanimous and the motion carried.

Discussion

Dr. Ward asked about the priorities, how they are set and timing. As a new member he indicated his desire to participate in future sessions. Chairman Varin stated there will an opportunity to discuss program priorities in the development of the next program budget and that the process could certainly be accelerated.

Legislative Committee - Chair Daniel W. Varin.

Chairman Varin stated that the group continues to examine the two legislative bills that are presumed to carry over to the next legislative session. He noted that the Senate Policy appointment is Marie Gannon.

NEW BUSINESS/OTHER BUSINESS

There was no new business or other business to discuss.

RECESS OF BOARD FOR BOARD CORPORATE BUSINESS

Without objection, Chairman Varin recessed the board meeting and started Board Corporate Meeting at 1:44 pm

RETURN FROM BOARD CORPORATE BUSINESS AND EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board Corporate meeting ended at 2:10 pm and return to the board meeting Chairman Varin asked if there was any other business to come before the Board.

Chairman Varin entertained an open call for an executive session in accordance with RIGL Section 42-46-5(5) Acquisition of Property. **Motion** by Dr. Sullivan second by Mr. Perry to go into executive session. Roll call vote:

Mr. Perry	Yes	Dr. Ward	Yes
Ms. Good	Yes	Ms. Swallow	Yes
Mr. Varin	Yes	Dr. Sullivan	Yes
Ms. Marchand	Yes	Mr. Morrison	Yes
Mr. Rodrigues, Jr.	Yes	Mr. Mignanelli	Yes

The vote was unanimous.

The Board returned from the executive session at 2:28 pm.

Motion to approve the purchase of the well site property at the purchase price of \$470,000.00 and to authorize the WRB Board Chairman and the General Manager to enter into and sign a Purchase and Sale Contract upon review and approval of such by the State Properties Committee and to expend associated costs (e.g. Class I Survey, Legal) needed towards a successful closing was made by Dr. Sullivan second by Mr. Perry.

Motion by Dr. Sullivan second by Ms. Swallow to seal the executive session minutes until such time as the matter has been resolved. The vote in favor was unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dr. Sullivan second by Ms. Swallow to adjourn. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Juan Mariscal, P.E.
General Manager, Secretary/Treasurer