

Lake DeSmet Advisory Board Meeting
September 19, 2018
3:00 PM

Board Members Present: Mike Whitaker, Commissioner Bob Rolston, Bert Jellison, Jim Fennema, Joe Kalus, Paul Mavrakis,

Operating Department Personnel Present: Cheryl Benner, Harvey Crowe, Commissioner Linda Greenough

Public in attendance: Dayton Alsaker, John Mumm, Scott Pehringer, Mark Hines, Dennis Lawrence

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Chairman Whitaker. Chairman Whitaker asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 18 meeting. Commissioner Rolston moved and Mr. Kalus seconded that the minutes be approved as written with the correction of the spelling of Commissioner Rolston's name. Motion carried.

Ms. Benner submitted a department report.

- The elevation of the lake on September 1, 2018 was 4610.41.
- Tunnel opened on April 19 and closed May 24. Lake was filled to the elevation of 4612.50.
- Very wet Memorial Day weekend. Peak flows on Piney Creek were 2283 cfs. Harvey thought that was as high as he'd ever seen. There was a lot of debris buildup on the diversion dam that was removed with the help of Road and Bridge personnel and equipment.
- Wells were monitored in June. All were within normal limits.
- Releases started in June to help with the process of getting the exchange water adjudicated to landowners above the diversion dam. One landowner that has a contract for exchange water will not be using it, so the Board of Control will require a signed statement.

Mr. Fennema updated the board on the Leiter Ditch project. Barnum Construction was awarded the job and may begin construction west of I90 this fall. 1850 feet of 78-inch pipe and a new head gate will be installed, and the entire ditch will be cleaned. Ditch capacity will be 300 cfs. Mr. Jellison asked Mr. Fennema how filling the lake would work, and expressed concern that it may affect the stream flows and impact the fisheries downstream. Mr. Fennema stated that the LCCID would be responsible for filling their permit of 11,800 acre-feet of water starting in the spring of 2020. Mr. Whitaker advised the board that the LLCID would only be able to fill during high water, and that the rights to fill through the tunnel had priority over the Leiter Ditch permit. Discussion was held on the benefits of filling during high water. Elevation of the dam will stay the same.

Ms. Benner updated the board on the sale of the Healy and Lake DeSmet assets from SASOL to the State of Wyoming through the Wyoming Water Development Office. The sale was completed the end of June, and Kerry Money was contracted to continue operating Healy. The WWDO and Johnson County will negotiate a new operating contract in the near future. WWDO released an RFP for a feasibility study to perform a Level II study to investigate potential options to gravity release Healy Reservoir water to Clear Creek, as well as options for the delivery of Lake DeSmet water to the Tongue River Basin in the event Montana calls for regulation. Proposals were due on August 24, and interviews will be held on October 4 to select a consultant. WWDO asked that a representative from Johnson County participate in the selection process. Chairman Bill Novotny will attend the interviews. Mr. Whitaker commented that it would make sense to include pumping water to Sheridan for municipal use as part of the study. Mr. Mavrakis asked if the State would operate the pumps, but there

has been no communication to the Lake DeSmet Operating Department regarding pumping water into the lake.

Mr. Whitaker asked Commissioner Greenough if the Johnson County Commissioners were planning on appointing a WWDO representative to the LDAB. Commissioner Greenough stated that the Commissioners were open that that, but there were no plans at this time. WWDO personnel have been notified of meetings, and plan to attend in the future. Mr. Whitaker then advised the group that Commissioner Rolston had decided not to run for reelection, and this would be his last meeting as a Sheridan County Commissioner. He thanked Mr. Rolston for his service.

Mr. Alsaker advised the LDAB of some interesting studies going on not directly related to Lake DeSmet.

Mr. Mavrakis asked how many private docks had been permitted and if there had been any reports of conflicts. Ms. Benner stated there had been 5 permitted with one application pending, and there had been no reports of conflicts. She went on to explain to the public in attendance that Johnson County owns the property to the 4620' elevation. Many adjacent landowners are uncertain of where that elevation is on their property and what they can be allowed to do below the 4620' elevation. Currently no activities are allowed below that point without a temporary use permit from the Lake DeSmet Operating Department.

John Mumm from Board of Control reported that it was a decent summer, with very few problems. The long term weather forecast predicts lots of snow this winter.

Chairman Whitaker will call a meeting next spring unless the Johnson County Commissioners request a meeting earlier

As there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM with a motion from Mr. Kalus and a second from Commissioner Rolston. Motion carried.



Michael Whitaker, Chairman