

Lake DeSmet Advisory Board Meeting
April 17, 2019
3:00 PM

Board Members Present: Mike Whitaker, Commissioner Bob Rolston, Bert Jellison, Jim Fennema, Dave Belus

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

Public in attendance: John Mumm, Dennis Lawrence, David Schroeder, Amelia Rothleutner, Dick Hall

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Chairman Whitaker. Chairman Whitaker asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19 meeting. Mr. Belus moved and Mr. Rolston seconded that the minutes be approved as written. Motion carried.

Ms. Benner submitted a department report.

- The elevation of the lake April 1, 2019 was 4609.69.
- The tunnel was opened on April 9 to start filling the lake.
- Operating department personnel finished monitoring wells October 24. All were within normal limits.
- Trash rack was not working properly last fall, and it appeared to be a problem with the electric motor. An electrician was called to inspect the motor in November and discovered a PREC transformer had been blown out. PREC replaced the transformer and the motor seems to be working fine.
- Ms. Benner attended the Lower Piney Water Users meeting February 11. The group is always receptive to information.

Mr. Fennema updated the board on the Leiter Ditch project. The contractor is waiting for the ground to dry out before beginning construction. Mr. Belus asked how much would be done this year. Mr. Fennema stated that there would be substantial completion by fall. Chairman Whitaker asked if it would be possible to tour the project at the September 18 meeting. Ms. Benner will make arrangements if the project is ready for viewing.

Jason Mead from the Wyoming Water Development Office called in and gave a report on the purchase of the SASOL assets by the State of Wyoming. He also updated the Advisory Board on the feasibility study for Healy and the State's share of Lake DeSmet. Important components of the study are:

1. Identification and evaluation of possible methods of utilizing the water recently purchased by the State of Wyoming in both reservoirs; and
2. Evaluation of the feasibility of constructing a low level outlet at Healy Reservoir in order to eliminate the need to pump water back to Clear Creek during the summer months.

Consultant selection process was finished in October, and Entech from Sheridan chosen to complete the study. They have already started scheduling meetings with other agencies. Mr. Belus asked if Healy would need to be drained to install an outlet. Mr. Mead stated it would depend on the alternative chosen. Mr. Jellison asked if and when an environmental assessment would be done. Mr. Mead stated that Entech would research the need, but the EA wouldn't be done until an

alternative was chosen. Mr. Belus asked Mr. Crowe if gravity feed out of Healy was practical. Mr. Crowe stated he did not think that it was.

Mr. Whitaker then advised the group that Mr. Rolston was not removed from the LDAB as the Sheridan County Representative after he did not run for reelection as a commissioner. Mr. Rolston stated his willingness to continue serving on the board.

Mr. Mead asked Commissioner Greenough about the draft water agreement that was sent to Johnson County earlier this spring. Commissioner Greenough explained that the Johnson County Deputy Attorney had suggested a few modifications, and she would see how the changes were progressing.

Mr. Mead advised the group that the Wyoming Water Development Commission and the Select Water Committee would be coming to Buffalo on August 15 to tour Healy and Lake DeSmet. They will also hold their August meeting in Buffalo.

Mr. Mead also advised the group that there is a 10-year management agreement being processed between the WWDO and Game and Fish for management of the Healy Reservoir area for recreation.

Mr. Mead presented the State of Wyoming's first annual report to the Board of Control in February. He stated the Board of Control felt Johnson County's annual report was a little light on information and was geared toward irrigation and lacked information about industrial usage. Ms. Benner will follow up.

Mr. Schroeder from Board of Control updated the group on the Yellowstone Compact Decree. He stated that it required Montana to manage their water more conservatively. Discussion was held on selling water from Lake DeSmet to Montana irrigators. There is a statute that prohibits the delivery of more than 1000 acre-feet per year out of state without legislative approval. Mr. Whitaker stated the matter had been discussed several years ago and there were concerns about water loss during conveyance.

Next meeting will be September 18 unless the Johnson County Commissioners request one earlier.

As there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 PM with a motion from Mr. Rolston and a second from Mr. Belus. Motion carried.


Michael Whitaker, Chairman