**PURGATOIRE RIVER WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

**MINUTES, THURSDAY December 7, 2023**

**Board Meeting:** Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District monthly meeting was held on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. City Hall Chambers, Trinidad, CO.81082

**Directors Present:**

Frank Milinazzo, Joey DeGarbo, David Philpott, Tony Paradisa, Jeremy Yoder, Tom Verquer, Joe Amato, Jarrod Tortorelli & Daryl Aubuchon

**Directors Absent:** None

**District Staff:**

Steve Kastner; General Manager, Connie Mantelli; District Secretary

**Guests:** Michael Yoder (Enlarged SouthSide), Sammie Molinaro (NRCS), Jeff Montoya (Water Commissioner), TJ Verquer (Chilili Ditch), Kim Falen (Corps of Engineers), Julie Knudsen (PWP), Hattie Jolly (Picketwire Ditch), Robert Philpott (John Flood Ditch), Connor Philpott (John Flood Ditch), Holden Philpott (John Flood Ditch)

**Enterprise Account**

There was an internal deposit made by First National Bank for earned interest.

**Board Meeting Minutes & Cash Disbursements**

Tom Verquer made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 2023 meeting. Joe Amato seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed.

Tom Verquer made a motion to approve the Financial Statements and Cash Disbursements for the month of November 2023 as printed. Tony Paradisa seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed**.**

**Chairman’s Report:**

Nothing to report at this time.

**NRCS:**

Sammie Molinaro reported that the SnoTel report showed 6” of snow and 2” of precipitation. The highest yield was on December 6, 2023.

Mr. Molinaro talked about the WaterSmart initiative. The Baca and Picketwire Ditch Companies have obtained funds through the program. Their plans are to install a ditch lining. This will help get the irrigation water to the fields more efficiently.

Another possibility for more efficient water usage is to replace the 50-psi pipe which was installed in the 80’s and 90’s with gated pipes and sprinkler systems. This is a 3-year program.

Sammie has a 5-year plan before he retires. He would like to get more weather stations installed throughout the district. He would also like to increase the farmer’s knowledge within the district by providing healthy soil education.

**District Manager’s Report – December 7, 2023**

**A. Trinidad Reservoir and PRWCD Operations Report**

* The total content of Trinidad Reservoir on November **20**th was 18,279 acre-feet. A net increase in storage of 802 acre-feet from the end of October.
* The Project Account currently contains 1,305 acre-feet. A monthly storage amount of 593 acre-feet.
* The Model Account currently contains 575 acre-feet. A monthly storage amount of 297 acre-feet.
* Average reservoir inflows at the PURMADCO stream gage for November were 23 cfs.
* The Joint Use Pool currently contains 3,314 acre-feet. A net decrease of 38 acre-feet.
* The Permanent Fishery Pool currently contains a total of 13,086 acre-feet.
* The Southside Ditch diverted a total of 309 acre-feet of stockwater from the river from October 17 – November 20. The John Flood Ditch has diverted 34 acre-feet of water from river supplies from December 1st to the present. The Picketwire, El Moro and Baca Ditches are also currently diverting stockwater from reservoir supplies at a rate of approximately 25 cfs. No other ditches have diverted stockwater to date.

**B. Stockwater Management Plan**

The District held a held a board workshop session meeting on November 16, 2023. At this meeting, discussion was held between the board and input from water users present was also taken on the subject of stockwater.

From these discussions, the District general manager was tasked with outlining a management plan for the District’s management and allotment of Non-Irrigation Season stockwater supplies. The plan was to cover how to most efficiently use its stockwater resource, allocation to ditch companies and balancing of river supplies vs reservoir supplies.

The general manager presented his proposed stockwater management plan at the December regular board meeting to the board. The District board approved this proposed management plan.

**C. Arkansas River Compact Administration**

The annual Arkansas River Compact Administration (ARCA) meeting was held in La Junta, Colorado on December 6 & 7, 2023. The District’s general manager attended this meeting and its associated committee meetings. The general manager made a presentation to the administration regarding an overview of the District’s operational year for 2023. Information was also presented regarding the District’s and its local partner’s efforts at making efficiency improvements within the District and at removing certain sedimentation from the Purgatoire River. No questions were asked of the District by ARCA.

The District’s presentation was included in the board member’s packet for this December regular monthly meeting.

**C. General Items**

Trinidad Project Annual Operating Principles Meeting. The Trinidad Project Annual Operating Principles meeting was held on November 3rd at Trinidad State College. The federal agencies of the Bureau of Reclamation, Geologic Survey and the Corps of Engineers made presentations at the meeting. The state Division of Water Resources also made a presentation. The District and the Purgatoire Watershed Partnership also made presentations for the local entities. The State of Kansas and Water District No. 67 representatives were also present. A review of 2023 operations and water supplies were discussed as was the upcoming Trinidad Project Operating Principles 10 Year Review for the 2015-2024 period.

Chilili Ditch Meeting

The general manager met with Julie Knudsen of the Purgatoire Watershed Partnership and T.J. Verquer of the Chilili Ditch Company on November 30, 2023 regarding desired infrastructure improvements for the Chilili Ditch. The discussion also included a plan for seeking any appropriate partners in this project and a strategy for seeking needed grant funding.

Roundtable C9 Summit

The general manager attended the Colorado Water Conservation Board’s “C9 Summit” meeting in Westminster on November 14. The purpose of this meeting was to bring together the nine basin Roundtables in the state and to have mutual discussions to learn what each basin Roundtable is doing. Presentations were also provided regarding the Colorado Water Plan, ways to move projects forward, the Colorado River Drought Task Force, Colorado River Compact current status and Drought Resiliency.

**Secretary’s Report:**

Connie Mantelli reported that due to some changes made at the state level the deadline to finalize the 2024 budget has been extended until January 11, 2024. Our office should receive the final certification from the County Assessor’s office by January 3, 2024. Since our next board meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2024, it was suggested to change the date of the board meeting to January 9, 2024. This will give the board time to approve the budget with the final certification numbers before the anticipated January 11, 2024 deadline.

Connie reminded the board that the Christmas Dinner was scheduled for December 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Smokehouse in Trinidad.

Connie invited the board and members of the audience to visit the District’s updated website at prwcd.com. She asked for any suggestions for improvement or additions to be added to the site.

**Water Commissioner’s Report:**

Jeff Montoya attended meetings in Gardner with Rachael Zancanella, Division Engineer. The main topics were pond management, futile calls and administration. The Division Engineer has definite timelines in mind to make sure administration is adhered to legally. Ms. Zancanella is planning on visiting Trinidad to talk to the board about her visions for the District. She thought the ARCA meeting discussions were very detailed. The communication from Kansas with the State office is much appreciated.

Jeff complimented Steve Kastner on his presentation given at the ARCA meeting.

**Corp of Engineers:**

Kim Falen stated that she felt that the ARCA meeting went great.

She reported that the Rip Rap Project has been approved. This is a 9 million dollar bi-partisan infrastructure project.

There is a re-organization plan to take place in the Trinidad Corps of Engineer office. Ms. Falen’s position will be changing to Lake Manager. The remaining positions in the re-organization will be announced by February.

**City of Trinidad:**

No one present

**Purgatoire Watershed Project**

Julie Knudson reported that she and Gil Ramirez had given a joint presentation at the Annual Project Meeting in November.

Julie is presently trying to get funding for various projects. In 2024 she is planning to acquire funds for a stream management plan.

Ms. Knudson is excited to get started on the Equip WaterSmart grant project which includes the ditch lining for the Baca and Picketwire Ditch Companies.

**Other Business:**

Tom Verquer made a motion to go into Executive Session. Daryl Aubuchon seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed. The audience exited the meeting room. The board went into Executive Session at 8:01 pm. Frank Milinazzo made a motion to exit Executive Session. Tom Verquer seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed.

Executive session ended at 8:24 pm.

Tom Verquer made a motion to adjourn the meeting Joe Amato seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024 at 7:00 pm.at the PRWCD District Office located at 3590 East Main Street, Trinidad, Colorado in the conference room.

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**Connie Mantelli, Secretary**