

WASHOE COUNTY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Special Meeting
August 18, 2020
Via ZOOM

DIRECTORS:

Louis Damonte
John Capurro
Bill Hauck
Cory Casazza

ABSENT:

Robert Quilici
Lawrence Belli
Doug Avanzino

GUESTS:

Michael Pagni, Attorney
George Ball, Engineer
Shane Dyer, Dyer Engineering
Ben Volk, JUB Engineers
Chad Blanchard, Water Master
Dave Wathen, FWM office
Pat Fritchell, FWM office

STAFF:

Mary Pat Eymann

1. **DETERMINATION OF QUORUM AND CALL MEETING TO ORDER –**
Vice-President Casazza called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., quorum present.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS – None**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA – No changes to posted Agenda**
4. **DISCUSSION AN DPOSSIBLE ACTION ON REQUEST TO SERVE AS A SPONSORING LOCAL ORGANIZATION ON WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION PROGRAM FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAM FOR STEAMBOAT CANAL AND IRRIGATION COMPANY AND ORR DITCH AND EXTENSIONS WATER COMPANY – Michael Pagni & Ben Volk**

Mike - Steamboat has qualified for a federal grant from the Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service for up to \$25 million to improve agricultural water management by converting open channel canals to pipe. This will conserve water, improve efficiency and reliability of irrigation operations, and reduce flood risks, among other benefits. To receive the grant, the ditch company needs a sponsoring local organization (SLO) that is a public agency with the power of eminent domain and authority to impose assessments, in the event either are needed to implement the project (neither is anticipated here as all work will be within the existing irrigation easement through federal grant funds). The discussion item for the Board will be whether the District wants to act as the SLO and partner with the ditch companies to facilitate getting these grant funds. Orr Ditch is submitting a similar application next week, so the Board would consider being an SLO to both ditch companies.

Ben – This grant has been used before in other States with good success. The grant is a National Watershed Program. They fund an environmental study at 100%. The unique thing about this grant is that you do not actually have to do what you propose. If you get into the environment assessment and there are other ideas, you can change the focus of the project. The other part of the program would be flood protection by eliminating stormwater collection and management. These funds are generally 100% for any kind of flood management and 75% grant for agricultural management. The sponsoring agency must be a quasi-municipality. JUB Engineering and Dyer Engineering manage the process. Asking that WCWCD be the sponsoring agency for both the Steamboat and Orr Ditch projects.

Mike – The first phase mentioned is 100% funding from the grant so the study, engineering phase that JUB is handling is there any risk to the sponsoring organization? Ben advised that there is not all that is asked of the sponsoring agency is to accommodate the grant.

Ben – The next phase is to apply for design funding. That is also generally 100% grant. And the next phase would be to apply for the construction funding which would be 100% for flood, 50% for recreation.

Mike – Once you get to that final phase where you are identifying the construction at that point it would be identified if it was 100% funding or 75% or some other lower level where there would be an outside funding requirement? Ben advised that yes and the outside funding could be match, in kind services, water rights. The match can come from any number of sources.

Mike – For this Board if they got to that point in time and there is a match required and they can't find it, and the Board does not want to pay for it would they have the ability to say they are not going to pursue that phase and let that money go away? Ben – yes, at that point the Board could say this is not feasible. One alternative is a no action. At that point just would not apply for the construction funding.

Mike – JUB would be administer the grant and all reporting requirements and the cost would come out of the grant funds? Ben – yes, JUB works with the District to do monthly reporting and invoices.

Shane Dyer – There may be a little bit of administrative work the District has to do. Should not be extensive work for the District office to do, a thought if it did is to be pay a person as a sub. It is not anticipated there will be a lot of work for the staff.

John Capurro (Orr Ditch) – Believe we need to move forward with this for both ditch companies. The problems that are affecting all the irrigation ditch companies are increasing, costing more to maintain, health issues, flood issues. Need to have these 2 studies so we know what needs to be done so that ditch companies can go out and see if they can find matching monies to do the rest of the work to really solve this problem.

Mike – Couple recommendations if the Board wants to move forward are: 1. Separate contracts with the Steamboat and Orr Ditch Companies for their cooperation and coordinating this effort and that they will communicate with the District if there is any potential cost exposure to the District. That the District is sponsoring these Ditch Companies and if there are any expenses, they would be handled by the Ditch Companies. 2. Letter acknowledging that JUB would handle the reporting and administrating of this grant program for the District as the SLO. The other part of the Orr & Steamboat would be that before any final decision is made on the installation and construction the District must consent and have input on. To make sure the District does not have any exposure or if the District wants to contribute it can.

Bill Hauck – Is there any potential conflict of interest with Shane Dyer already being under contract with the District and funneling this work to his own company? Mike – no, the grant was put in and Steamboat and Orr are also working with Dyer/JUB to facilitate this grant. More of a coincidence than a conflict.

Ben – One of the things that will come out of the environmental assessment is that a memorandum of understanding between the major stake holders to say that if we go forward with design and construction who is going to pay for what. At the end of process want to have an idea of who is paying for what.

Bill Hauck – who pays for the money spent in trying to get these grants. Shane – Dyer/JUB just eats the money spent. They only go after grants that they believe they will get.

Cory Casazza – What is or is there liability to the District? Shane – in the initial study do not believe there is any liability, with this study it is only a study and is 100% funded. Might be a little more liability as construction comes up.

Mike – looks at it as a multiple phase project. From this Districts perspective act as the sponsoring agency for the study but want to have that look back before any construction. At that point can determine if it is going to cause the District any liability and costs. At that time con consider if the District still wants to act as the sponsoring agency for the last round. Do not think there will be any liability as the District is a sponsor on a grant for a study. The work itself will probably be done by the Ditch Companies. WCWCD would have to agree as the sponsoring agency at the last phase of the funding.

Ben – 2-year study, under contract must be completed in 2 years. Then apply for design funding which would take approximately another year and then construction. The earliest construction would start is 3-4 years.

- ❖ Director Capurro made a motion that the WCWCD be the sponsoring organization to the NRCS program for the Steamboat and Orr Ditch studies, and direction to staff together the ancillary agreements with Steamboat and Orr Ditch Companies and JUB Engineering; seconded by Director Hauck; motion carried.

5. FEDERAL WATER MASTERS REPORT – Chad Blanchard

A complete copy of the Water Report is available at District Offices or on the internet at troa.net.

6. UPDATE, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF SAFETY OF DAMS PROJECT – Shane Dyer

At the July 22 project management meeting everything was going well, there was a \$30,000 change order that BOR was going to do, they do not have to notify this District unless it is over \$100,000. They have paid out \$15 million of the \$19.7 million on the contract. The final walk thru is scheduled for the 3rd week in August. Will need to have a representative from the District at this final walk thru. Finish date is September 2.

7. DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF ON IMPLEMENTATION OF TROA REIMBURSEMENT UNDER SECTION 7.A.2(b)(3) – Michael Pagni

Have been working with the Watermaster's office on the formula for the reimbursement. The Watermaster has spreadsheets done and will discuss with Mr. Pagni who will bring back to the Board prior to discussing with the other TROA parties.

8. LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT – Michael Pagni
Nothing additional

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

10. BOARD COMMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
Board Comments – None

Future Agenda Items – #7

11. ADJOURNMENT -

- ❖ Director Capurro made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Director Damonte; motion carried.

****The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 1:30 pm.****