

# Minutes

## County of Inyo Water Commission

### January 17, 2013

The Chairperson called the Water Commission meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. at the Inyo County Water Department conference room, Independence, CA. Water Commissioners in attendance were Chairperson Teri Red Owl, Mike Prather, Mike Carrington, Sally Symons, and Bruce Dishion. Present from the Water Department were Bob Harrington and Laura Piper.

#### **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Commissioner Red Owl led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **2. Public Comment**

The Chairperson announced the public comment period and there was no one from the public wishing to address the Commission.

#### **3. Election of Water Commission Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**

Motion to elect Mike Prather, Chairperson and Teri Red Owl, Vice Chairperson. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **4. Approval of minutes from November 15, 2012 meeting**

Moved by Commissioner Red Owl and seconded by Commissioner Symons to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2012 Water Commission Meeting with corrections. Item 3 - change from September, 2012 to September 13, 2012; Item 4 – Public Comment (Sally Manning) changed second sentence from “She stated two wells were on linked to Laws” to “She stated two wells were on, and linked to Laws”. Motion carried.

#### **5. Director’s report concerning Water Department activities**

Dr. Harrington stated the LORP Recreation Plan was close to completion, the LORP work plan for next fiscal year was in the process as well as the annual report for last year. Dr. Harrington stated the e/m project evaluations were moving forward; provided a brief overview on the Salt Cedar project; the hiring of a Vegetation Scientist; Integrated Regional Water Management Plan is submitting its revised plan and round two implementation grant proposals; the grant funding and the County’s request to be the grantee on round two of the grants; the California Energy Commission’s review on the Bright Source project, and the final reports from the LADWP Owens Lake groundwater study.

Public Comment – Mark Bagley asked Dr. Harrington for clarification on the IRWMP grants. Dr. Harrington provided a brief overview on the funding, grant proposal process, and becoming a grantee.

#### **6. Commissioners Report**

Commissioner Prather discussed the Mulholland Christmas Carol musical which was held in Bishop back in November, and an Owens Lake meeting he had attended. He stated the new well is in at the Bairs-George wellfield.

Public Comment – Sally Manning – Ms. Manning inquired if a Technical Group meeting had been scheduled. Dr. Harrington stated tentatively in a few weeks.

## **7. Update on evaluation of enhancement/mitigation projects**

Mr. Freilich of the Inyo County Water Department provided an update to the Commissioners on the e/m project evaluations and ongoing discussions with the LADWP regarding the projects in detail and at length. He stated a draft recommendation has been prepared to present to the Standing Committee at the February 8 meeting regarding the Van Norman field e/m project.

Public Comment – Mark Bagley – Mr. Bagley stated the Van Norman field hadn't been receiving its full allocation of water because the well wasn't producing and that is why there is a new well. Mr. Bagley asked how much shortfall in the allocation there had been. Mr. Freilich stated it has varied from year to year but roughly 100 acre feet less.

Public Comment – Daris Moxley - Ms. Moxley asked if the FFA field is going to receive three acre feet what will the Anchor Ranch receive. She asked if they would receive three or five acre feet. Mr. Freilich stated that project is scoped for three acre feet.

Public Comment – Nancy Masters – Ms. Masters asked when action was taken to reduce the allotment from five acre feet to three acre feet and who took the action? Mr. Freilich stated it was always three acre feet for that project.

Public Comment – Sally Manning – Ms. Manning stated she would be concerned about pumping this new well (W425) and its effect on the water table in that area because LADWP has been cutting back on water delivery in Lone Pine thereby effecting existing pastures and putting more down the aqueduct and less east of the aqueduct. She said if this well is going to be pumped to its full potential, she would be concerned about the other people in the area that rely on the water table for their water.

Commissioner Prather asked if there was an operation plan for the new well. Dr. Harrington stated the Technical Group conducted an evaluation of the new well. He said there was no significant change and it will maintain the status quo in the area.

Public Comment – Mark Bagley – Mr. Bagley stated because it is a new well, protocol will be in place for testing and Dr. Harrington concurred.

Public Comment – Earl Wilson – Mr. Wilson asked if they are seaming off the upper shallow aquifer on this well where the screens were set. He said he is concerned about the shallow groundwater being detrimental to the large trees around Lone Pine. Dr. Harrington stated he doesn't recall the construction details of the well.

Public Comment – Nancy Masters – Ms. Masters stated this is a mitigation measure due to the 1970 export of water from the valley so the application of surface water is to mitigate for the dropping groundwater and asked if anyone knows what the groundwater levels were prior to export beginning in 1970 and what they are now in the Lone Pine vicinity. Commissioner Prather asked Dr. Harrington to provide this data for our next meeting.

Public Comment – Sally Manning – Ms. Manning said she doesn't understand why the County doesn't see that LADWP is systematically withdrawing water from Lone Pine that it should be getting under the Water Agreement. She does not think the County is addressing the issues adequately.

## **8. Status of Owens Lake groundwater evaluation**

Dr. Harrington provided the Commission with a slideshow presentation regarding the status of the Owens Lake groundwater evaluation. The Commission and Dr. Harrington discussed the evaluation in detail and at length.

Public Comment – Mark Bagley – Mr. Bagley asked Dr. Harrington if the water drawn down after 10 years will continue to drop in the curve shown until it stabilizes (shown on Dr. Harrington's 100 year graph). Dr. Harrington stated yes. Mr.

Bagley stated at Boulder Creek which had the greatest draw down you follow the curve and another one that had very little draw down will follow this curve but the totals will be very different. Dr. Harrington stated it will look different at different wells based on the proximity to the centers of pumping but conceptually will be the same.

Public Comment – Earl Wilson – Mr. Wilson stated years 70 – 100 you will see changes from wet and dry years. Dr. Harrington stated from year 0 to 100 you will see that change.

Public Comment – Sally Manning – Ms. Manning is concerned no one is alarmed regarding table 4 (Dr. Harrington's presentation) because within 10 years it is drawing down water tables way to the north of the project and in the community of Lone Pine.

Public Comment – Nancy Masters – Ms. Masters asked if the State of CA owns the water that underlies the property and if so, doesn't the water have a value, and if those resources are being diminished wouldn't the State be interested from a fiscal perspective and because it is their resource. Dr. Harrington stated why should the citizens of the state gift water to the City of Los Angeles. Ms. Masters also brought up that the State could be liable for some of the environmental issues that result from the pumping. Dr. Harrington stated the wells would require a lease from the State Lands Commission to LADWP to construct the wells and operate them and part of that could include some compensation for the State for the value of the water.

Public Comment – Earl Wilson – Mr. Wilson stated that LADWP has a lease for Owens Lake and need only to file a negative declaration to drill a well.

Public Comment – Mark Bagley – Mr. Bagley stated the legend in the graphs does not state which wells are production wells. The labels state production and monitoring wells but the legend doesn't. Dr. Harrington provided an explanation for the graphs from the Owens Lake report.

**Commissioner Prather recessed the meeting at 7:42 p.m. for a break and reconvened the meeting at 7:46 p.m.**

## **9. Public Comment**

Public Comment – Mark Bagley – Mr. Bagley asked if DW-1 and DW-2 in the plan out by the river are going to be production wells. Mr. Bagley inquired if there was any indication how they are going to get water up to the dust control projects. Dr. Harrington stated that is not addressed in the plan. Mr. Bagley stated this is the reason that the MOU parties are not going to agree to a larger pump station because they are going to use it for the benefit of the lake and not the river. So unless there are provisions in the agreement to make a bigger pump station that prevent them from using it for the benefit of the lake instead of the river then it's not going to happen.

Public Comment – Earl Wilson – Mr. Wilson wanted to update the Commission that LADWP is working out by the Indian Reservation in Independence putting in a culvert under the road.

Commissioner Carrington asked Ms. Manning if she received an answer as to why the trees were dying along the canal north of Collins Road. She stated no. Bob Prendergast stated there were more diversions on Rawson Creek and less recharge. Mr. Prendergast stated there is no pumping in that area. He is not sure why the trees are dying and there has been no study.

Public Comment – Nancy Masters – Ms. Masters wanted to inform the Water Commission that subsequent to the diversion of flow on Oak Creek, LADWP received permission to install replacement diversions on Oak Creek. There are additional ones now, not just the primary ones on the south fork. At this low water level, they appear to have the spill gate at only 6-8 inches above the low water level which she is concerned about. She said they have been characterized as recharge diversions.

## **10. Schedule next Water Commission Meeting**

The next Water Commission Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2013 in Bishop and confirmation of a field trip to the McNally Canals on February 20, 2013.

#### **11. Adjourn**

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.