

South Platte Basin Roundtable Meeting

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Weld County Administration Building

1150 O Street

Greeley, CO 80631

4:00pm–7:00pm

**South Platte Basin Roundtable Business Meeting Minutes – Updated October 2019**

**1. Welcome/Introductions (G. Varra – 5 min)**

The meeting started at 4:10pm.

In attendance: Garrett Varra\*, Craig Godbout, Sean Conway\*, Kent Swedlund\*, Shane Miller\*, Lisa Leben\*, Larry Howard\*, Kelsea Holloway\*, Bill Szmyd\*, Jim Hall\*, Deb Daniel\*, ~~Chuck Powell\*~~, ~~Bruce Gerk\*~~, Gene Manuello\*, Jim Yahn\*, Joe Frank\*, Dick Elsner\*, Casey Davenport, Daylan Figgs\*, Joel Schneckloth\*, Allyn Wind\*, Matt Jones\*, Dan Brown\*, Jason Roudebush\*, Kevin Lusk\*, Sean Cronin\*, Christy Wiseman, Ruth Quaid, Audrey Butler, Royal Koepsell, Corey DeAngelis, and multiple members of the public.

23 SPBRT voting members were present (\* denotes a voting member).

**2. Approval of July 2019 Meeting Summary (G. Varra – action required)**

Sean Conway made a motion to adopt the July 2019 minutes as presented and Jim Hall seconded. The motion passed without discussion or contest.

**3. August Agenda Additions or Changes (G. Varra – action required)**

There were no proposed changes to the August meeting agenda.

**4. Water Plan Grant Presentation for the Water Legacy Project (Kathleen Benedict, Executive Director of Poudre Heritage Alliance – action required)**

Jordan Williams presented on behalf of the Poudre Heritage Alliance (PHA). PHA was seeking a letter of support from the SPBRT as part of their Water Plan grant application. Jordan Williams noted that PHA presented at the Metro Roundtable on August 8 to request a letter of support. To provide an example of the Water Legacy Project, Williams played a video interview of Thomas Sharp. Williams then noted that PHA already has funding from multiple sources, including the CO Bar Association, Northern Water, and the Upper Yampa Conservancy District.

After Williams' presentation, Garret Varra asked if the Metro RT granted PHA the requested letter of support for the Water Legacy Project. Jordan Williams confirmed that the Metro RT provided a letter of support. Responding to a question from Sean Conway, Williams clarified that the Water Plan grant request is for \$30,000; PHA has already secured \$36,000 of matching funding. Jim Yahn praised the project and noted that video interviews are a great way to preserve history. Joe Frank motioned to provide Poudre Heritage Alliance with a letter of support; Jim Hall seconded the motion. Sean Cronin then asked Williams a few clarifying questions on the cost breakdowns for the project. After Williams answered Cronin's questions, SPBRT members voted unanimously to approve the motion and provide Poudre Heritage Alliance with a letter of support for the Water Legacy

project. Jordan Williams then invited SPBRT members to a PHA Emeritus Board dinner on September 7 at Greeley Country Club.

## **5. Committee Updates**

### **a. SPBRT Basin & Statewide Account Balance (C. Godbout – 10 min)**

Craig Godbout noted that the statewide and basin account balances have not been updated since the last SPBRT meeting on July 9.

### **b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) Workgroup (C. Davenhill – 10 min)**

Casey Davenhill took the floor to provide a PEPO update. Davenhill reported that the PEPO workgroup met before the Metro Roundtable meeting on August 8; the meeting included a recap and reminder of guiding documents such as the Education Action Plan. PEPO members discussed the communications strategy, which has been continually reevaluated and revised since 2016. In particular, the workgroup is trying to strategize different communications messages for different audiences. PEPO members plan to present an updated communications strategy document, separate from the Education Action Plan, to the SPBRT in the future.

Davenhill then reminded SPBRT members of the South Platte Basin website: <http://southplattebasin.com/>. The website has a lot of information and is a useful educational resource, especially given that SPROWG has been featured in the press recently. The website is also a tool to host large documents and provide public-facing information on WSRF guidelines beyond the CWCB website. Davenhill noted that environmental and recreation groups have been identified as a key target audience for outreach and education. PEPO has a WSRF grant to support outreach activities and is considering creating videos to host on the South Platte Basin website. A member of the Poudre Heritage Alliance then offered the idea to display PHA-created videos on the South Platte Basin website.

Finally, Davenhill recapped an environment and recreation committee meeting that occurred after the recent PEPO meeting. She noted that Chris Stern and Nicole Seltzer with the River Network were at the meeting. The meeting focused on the concept of stream management, planning, and grant funding for environmental and recreation projects, such as the surf wave on the South Platte in Sheridan. Kelsea Holloway then noted that the meeting also covered the history of the environmental and recreation committee.

### **c. Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (J. Roudebush – 10 min)**

Jason Roudebush took the floor to provide a WSRF update. He reminded SPBRT members that they approved two applications at the July meeting; those projects' statewide packages are now ready to submit. Roudebush then asked Craig Godbout and Garrett Varra a clarifying question about the process for providing official SPBRT approval letters to the WSRF applicants. Godbout noted that as CWCB staff, he is **not** responsible for writing the letters. **The Chair of the SPBRT is responsible for writing the letters.** Roudebush then noted that there are a couple of applicants planning to apply for WSRF grants in the November funding cycle.

### **d. Groundwater Update (J. Hall – 10 min)**

Jim Hall took the floor to provide a groundwater update. He reported that the groundwater technical committee met on August 2 to look at water levels in Gilcrest, which is

experiencing low water table levels. In addition, the committee continues to look at alternatives to provide relief for high groundwater levels, considering solutions such as pivot ponds and cost sharing with farmers. Hall noted that the next groundwater technical committee meeting is on September 27. The committee is working with CSU on modeling inputs and outputs to the water table.

After Hall's update, there was further discussion of various areas in the basin with problematic ~~low or high~~ water table levels. This discussion led Craig Godbout to remind SPBRT members that there is a lot of funding for WSRF and Water Plan projects. Godbout reported that WSRF alone should get 10.5 million dollars this year; this will be distributed on the same schedule as in the past but is not yet showing on the statewide and basin account balance sheets. Godbout clarified the timing and application deadlines for both upcoming WSRF and Water Plan grant cycles and brought up the point that though timing can be tricky, CWCB encourages applicants to apply for both funding types. WSRF applicants can even use Water Plan and Watershed Restoration grants as part of the required match for WSRF money. Bruce Gerk then suggested the SPBRT review their WSRF criteria soon. Jason Roudebush and Garrett Varra agreed and invited SPBRT members to send ideas on how the WSRF criteria can be reframed (e.g., to address applications that are considered deferred maintenance projects).

After a comment from Sean Cronin, SPBRT members then discussed the volatility of severance tax funds. Craig Godbout noted that though it used to be based on projections, it's now based on actual revenue (thanks to a change in state legislation). Members discussed how the proposed sports betting bill could help fund water projects in the face of declining revenue from oil and gas development post-Senate Bill 181. The sports betting ballot item will go before voters in November.

#### **6. SPROWG Update (J. Frank – 10 min)**

Joe Frank took the floor to provide a SPROWG update. He reported that there was a SPROWG task force meeting earlier in the day. With assistance from consultants, the task force has conducted numerous outreach meetings and surveys to develop recommendations for the future of the organization. The next advisory meeting is a conference call on September 18; the next task force meeting is on October 10. Frank noted that in light of recent press about SPROWG efforts, the group is working on their communications strategy in an attempt to be more proactive than reactive. Casey Davenport asked Frank if SPROWG will present their recommendations for next steps to the Roundtable. Frank replied that they will; the current efforts will wrap up in February of next year. However, with as much interest in the group as there is, there will probably be a next phase of SPROWG.

#### **7. IBCC Update (J. Yahn/S. Cronin – 5 min)**

This item came after the CWCB update by Jim Yahn.

Sean Cronin took the floor to provide an IBCC update. At the joint IBCC/CWCB Board meeting on July 18, CWCB staff presented on drought contingency planning and demand management. Cronin was selected to talk on a panel, mediated by Russ George, to respond to questions about those topics. Cronin read the panel questions to SPBRT members and invited them to further discussion.

Cronin then noted that he is serving on the local government and economics workgroup for the CO River Drought Contingency Plan. Cronin brought up the concept of equity in drought contingency planning, as economic activity varies drastically between each basin. The Front Range Water Council is working on this question by looking at economic value generated by water on the east slope versus the west slope. There was further discussion about the inter-basin equity topic.

Jim Yahn then explained how the CO River Drought Contingency Plan workgroups' confidentiality agreements (as discussed at the June SPBRT meeting) have been removed. Multiple SPBRT members discussed the workgroups' legal and practical ability to have private discussions about the plan. Yahn also noted that CWCB staff presented about the technical plan (SWSI) update at the IBCC meeting. The next IBCC meeting will be a 3-day meeting in Alamosa. Finally, Yahn reported that Becky Mitchell was appointed to the Upper CO River Commission in place of James Ekler.

#### **8. CWCB Update (J. Yahn – 5 min)**

Jim Yahn's CWCB update came before the IBCC update.

Jim Yahn took the floor to provide a CWCB update. Yahn summarized the last CWCB Board meeting, which took place on July 17 and 18 in Leadville. The second day of the meeting (July 18) was a joint meeting with the CWCB Board and the IBCC. Yahn recounted touring the Homestake Pump Plant and learning about the relocation of a high mountain wetland. Yahn then gave an update on the rainwater harvesting pilot program, citing Stirling Ranch in South Denver as an example of a developer storing rainwater to use for landscaping. Ryan Gilliom, a graduate student from CO School of Mines, is assisting with the pilot program. Yahn also reported that the CWCB Board approved the CO Corn WSRF application that the SPBRT supported in June.

Yahn also recapped the CWCB Board's discussion of finances (due to a decline in oil and gas development permitting). Sean Conway commented on the consequences of fewer oil and gas permits leading to funding losses. Yahn then reported that the CWCB Board approved two loans and one loan/grant combination project and approved the in-stream flow acquisition for the City of Boulder (related to Denver Water's Gross Reservoir expansion project).

#### **9. Vacancy Announcement (G. Varra – 10 min)**

Garrett Varra announced that Mike Shimmin's voting seat is now open. The SPBRT is accepting applications for the seat until September 30. Varra encouraged members to pass the information along to any interested parties; applicants must live in the South Platte Basin (but outside of the Metro RT area) and hold private water rights. Varra then noted that the Weld County Municipal seat has been filled by Sean Chambers, representing the City of Greeley.

#### **10. Public Comment (15 min)**

There was no public comment.

Sean Conway announced that his term as a Weld County Commissioner was coming to an end; therefore, his position as the Weld County representative to the SPBRT is ending as well. The September SPBRT meeting would be his last meeting. Weld County Commissioner James will be filling the Weld County voting seat on the SPBRT until the end of the year. Ultimately, Weld County will appoint a permanent replacement for their SPBRT representative.

Garrett Varra reminded SPBRT members to vote for the Water Hero award in advance of the C9 Statewide Summit. Varra noted that he nominated Mike Shimmin due to Shimmin's long history of

service to the SPBRT. Varra then reminded all SPBRT members to register for the C9 Summit if they haven't already.

**Dinner Presentation: Colorado WaterWise - Live Like You Love It Program (Laura Wing)**

Ruth Quaid, from the City of Greeley, presented about the Colorado WaterWise - Live Like You Love It Program. Ruth explained the history of the program (first conceived as the Value of Water campaign on 2010) as well as its three tenants: conserve, care, and commit. She went over the program's toolkit, which contains graphics, messaging copy, stickers, website access, outreach guide, etc. The program's implementation strategies include: 1) co-brand, 2) integrate across all platforms, 3) be seasonally appropriate, 4) utilize free marketing opportunities, and 5) leverage partnerships. Quaid then provided examples of how the City of Greeley has used the program's implementation strategies. After a question from a SPBRT member, Quaid explained that it is very difficult to measure water saved from conservation-oriented education campaigns. You can measure engagement with the program, but not necessarily the amount of water saved as a direct result of that engagement.

After Quaid's presentation, SPBRT members asked about the cost associated with joining the Live Like You Love It Program. Quaid noted that the program needs buy-in to produce more materials next year. CO WaterWise is working on revising their pricing structure to have various partnership levels to encourage more partners. There was further discussion about fees for the program membership versus the CO waterwise membership fee. Quaid clarified that you don't have to be a member of CO WaterWise to pay for the Live Like You Love It program materials. Co WaterWise members have the benefit of influencing the year's priorities on what materials would be made. Casey Davenport and Sean Cronin discussed the possibility of using PEPO allocated dollars to buy in to the Live Like You Love It program, as conservation is a stated goal in the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan. Davenport proposed that PEPO members meet with CO WaterWise to discuss the idea further; there were no objections to this proposal from any SPBRT members.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10pm