

**TRI-STATE WATER RESOURCE COALITION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2009 – 9:00 A.M.
BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM – JOPLIN, CITY HALL**

Welcome & Introduction:

Chairman Bob Nichols called the meeting to order and welcomed those present for attending. The following were present:

Lynn Calton – City of Lamar, Missouri
Hal VanDaGriff – Verona, Missouri, representing Empire District Electric
Gary Pearman – Blue Ribbon Real Estate, Neosho, Missouri
John Hoagland – Ashland, Missouri
Brian Fredrick – Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, Missouri
J. Fred Schlegel - Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, Missouri
Jan Tupper – Joplin, Missouri
Pete Rauch – City of Monett, Missouri
Roddy Rogers – Springfield City Utilities, Springfield, Missouri
Tom Pittman – City of Carthage, Missouri
Gary Pearman – Blue Ribbon Real Estate, Neosho, Missouri
Matt Barnhart – Missouri American Water Company, Joplin, Missouri
Carl Hayes – Cherokee County Health Department, Columbus, Kansas
Don Lucietta – Congressman Roy Blunt’s office
Steve McIntosh - Congressman Roy Blunt’s office
David Rauch – Senator Claire McCaskill’s office
David Hertzberg – City of Joplin (arrived at 9:30 a.m.)
Susan Champlin - City of Joplin

Approval of Minutes of July 15, 2009:

Mr. Nichols asked for comments or corrections to the minutes of the general assembly meeting and the board of directors meeting of July 15, 2009.

Hal VanDaGriff moved, seconded by Jan Tupper, that the minutes of the general assembly meeting and the board of directors meeting of July 15, 2009 be approved as written. The motion passed, with all voting “aye”.

Mr. Nichols asked about placing the minutes on the web site and asked the City staff to forward the minutes to Pete Rauch to place on the web site.

Report of the Treasurer:

Mr. Barnhart has received an invoice for \$250.00 for preparation of the 2008 income tax return. He also must pay the Missouri Municipal League for advertising for the new created executive director position. The current balance before paying those is \$76,917.30. He has a deposit from

HDR Engineering Firm for \$1,000.00 for underwriting the water conference that will be taking place on September 17 and 18.

Report of Membership Committee:

Mr. McCoy was not present to discuss the activities of the Membership Committee.

Implementation of Dues:

Mr. Nichols recalled that a dues structure was adopted at the last meeting but did not set an implementation plan in motion. He assumed that many of the coalition members are in the budget preparation process at the present time, and that the collection of dues was not anticipated until January 1, 2010. He asked about sending statements so the coalition members may incorporate the dues into their budget. He suggested a transmittal letter explaining the coalition's goals.

Mr. Pearman asked about finding out who is supposed to receive the statements, and Mr. Nichols thought the statement for the cities would be mailed to the city manager. Mr. Pearson thought statements to the chambers of commerce should be mailed to the executive director, with the statements to the counties being mailed to the presiding commissioner.

Report of the Search Committee:

Mr. Blasé was not present to discuss the activities of the search committee. Mr. Nichols explained that a job description for an executive director was adopted last month. Mr. Blasé has placed an advertisement on the Missouri Municipal League's web site. Mr. Nichols asked about other places where the advertisement should be placed. Suggestions included the American Public Works Association, the American Water Works Association, Missouri Rural Water, and the Missouri Public Utility Alliance.

Report of Technical Committee:

Future Activities:

Pete Rauch explained that the technical committee has not met since the last coalition but have had some informal discussions regarding future activities. He stated that the coalition should be addressing becoming a legal entity to be able to continue their activities, with the existing funding and the money that the coalition anticipates coming in. He did not believe this is the time to be spending any more money on additional studies for reservoir sites, and that the focus needs to be securing impounded water and becoming a legal entity.

Mr. Nichols explained that he and Pete Rauch made a presentation to the Elk River Watershed partnership. He stated that it was a good meeting with a lot of discussion, but that several people expressed concern about taking water from existing reservoirs.

Mr. Nichols personally thought the coalition members should devote their energies solely on existing reservoirs and lay the new reservoirs aside until all the possibilities of existing reservoirs are discussed. He asked for discussion from the board members on how they wish to proceed. Mr. Rauch thought that focusing on existing reservoirs is the stand the coalition members have taken for some time, and it has been stated publicly that a new reservoir is not a priority for the coalition.

Mr. Rogers agreed with doing whatever the coalition can to pursue the existing water, but not to totally dismiss the new reservoirs. He thought using the existing water makes the most sense.

Mr. Calton suggested dealing with the Corps of Engineers and discussed the difficulty of dealing with land acquisition for building new reservoirs. He suggested pursuing existing water sources.

Mr. Tupper discussed pursuing the practice of stopping drilling and starting buying. Mr. VanDaGriff suggested looking at the existing water sources but not completely eliminating the new reservoirs.

Mr. Barnhart asked about the next step, and Pete Rauch replied that the next step is to pursue Grand Lake. He explained that with the moratorium being lifted, the coalition members can visit with the Grand Lake authority, especially since the western side of the coalition area seems to have the shortest-term water supply. Mr. Pearman agreed with Pete Rauch to investigate the Grand Lake situation.

Mr. VanDaGriff asked about several coalition members working diligently toward setting this organization up as a legal entity. Mr. Nichols explained that his personal preference would be to have an organization that everyone in the coalition area belongs to. He stated that the organization must meet two criteria, in that it has to have the ability to issue tax-exempt bonds, and it has to have the right of eminent domain. He has met with House Speaker Ron Richard, who will have his legal staff explore these issues for the coalition.

Mr. Nichols explained that the other route is to create a utility similar to Missouri American Water (MoAM) or Empire District Electric. He also mentioned the Joplin Industrial Development Authority that issues bond on behalf of corporations. He explained that the utility companies sell tax-exempt bonds through the development groups. The board members discussed retaining legal counsel to investigate these issues.

Mr. Nichols asked for a motion to retain legal counsel to create an organization that can issue tax-exempt bonds and have the right of eminent domain.

Pete Rauch moved, seconded by Matt Barnhart, that the Tri-State Water Resource Coalition retain legal counsel to explore creating an organization to implement a program. The motion passed, with all voting “aye”.

Mr. Nichols proposed the development of a list of people who need to be contacted, and sample letters that may be distributed to the public. Pete Rauch would like to encourage them to join the coalition, even if they are individuals.

Mr. Nichols explained that the League of Women Voters publish a voter’s guide in which they ask the political candidates certain questions, with the candidates giving a response. He explained that 2010 will be a major election year, with a U.S. senator and a U.S. congressman to be elected, along with various state legislators. He suggested the development of a questionnaire regarding water, pollution, and environmental issues, with the questionnaire being sent to the various candidates to obtain their responses, and to make their responses available to the public.

Mr. Tupper suggested treading very softly on the pollution and environmental aspect. Mr. Hertzberg asked about staying with quantity of water dealings more than quality. Mr. Nichols thought the coalition should be involved in quality, and Mr. Tupper expressed concern about taking on agriculture.

Mr. Pearman mentioned a couple of individuals who have filed for state representative in Newton County, with one being a dairy farmer who is pressing the water issues.

Pete Rauch explained that the questionnaire will be asking what the candidates think. Mr. Tupper expressed concern about making the candidates take a stand on various issues. Mr. Nichols is not trying to put the candidates on a spot but would like to find out what their opinions are.

Pete Rauch asked about sponsoring a forum for the candidates to discuss various issues, and Mr. Tupper thought this would be a better approach than a questionnaire. Mr. Hertzberg explained that several people in the audience work in politics and would welcome their input.

Mr. McIntosh explained that it is not uncommon for political candidates to receive questionnaires, but that the candidates may or may not respond. Mr. Nichols thought it was important to find out what the candidates' opinions are and about the extent of their knowledge on water issues. Mr. Hertzberg asked about approaching a generic group that often does surveys and to make sure that one or two of the coalition's questions are on that survey.

Discussion Items:

Advocacy Committee:

Mr. Nichols explained that the coalition is still trying to form an advocacy committee, but that this has not been pursued very aggressively.

Request to Beaver Water District:

Mr. Nichols asked the board members about discussion with the Beaver Water District, and Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Tupper suggested visiting with them. Mr. Nichols has asked Bob Williams to pursue this discussion. Mr. Nichols would like to contact their staff attorney.

Oklahoma Secretary of the Environment Concerning Grand Lake:

Mr. Nichols explained that for some unique reason, Grand Lake does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Secretary of the Environment.

Expand Tri-State boundaries to include Northwest Arkansas:

Mr. Nichols explained that it was suggested that the coalition expand their boundaries to include Northwest Arkansas. He did not believe they would be interested in being a part of the coalition.

Mr. Tupper thought this issue might become important if this coalition were to buy water from them in the future. He thought the officials from Northwest Arkansas might want to become a part of this coalition to be aware of what is taking place.

Meeting with State elected officials:

Mr. Nichols met with House Speaker Ron Richard, who is familiar with this coalition and their activities. He has a very keen interest in the coalition's activities and recognizes that water is essential. He has indicated full support for the coalition's efforts.

Mr. Nichols explained that House Speaker Richard has offered to host a meeting in his office for the water coalition members. Mr. Nichols thought the meeting would take place in early January and would like as many board members to attend as possible.

Meeting with County and City officials:

Meeting with Chambers of Commerce:

Mr. Nichols asked about arranging a meeting with the county and city officials and explained that Mr. McCoy met with the southwest region county commissioners several months ago.

Mr. Nichols asked about scheduling meetings with the chamber of commerce organizations. Mr. Tupper thought these organizations could help the coalition tremendously. Mr. Nichols thought about scheduling meetings in Monett, Springfield, and Joplin. Mr. Rauch suggested one meeting in Monett. Mr. Hertzberg thought people would be more likely to attend another chamber sponsored event. Mr. Nichols asked about Joplin, Monett, and Springfield co-sponsoring an event. Mr. Tupper recommended inviting the officials from Pittsburg, Kansas, and Miami, Oklahoma.

Consider water conservation program:

Mr. Nichols expressed the need to continue to push water conservation, not just during a period of drought, but water conservation year-round.

Status of forming an implementation organization:

Mr. Nichols explained that this discussed earlier, with these efforts being under way at this time.

Public Relations Activities:

Lynn Onstot was not present, and Mr. Hertzberg was not aware of any new activities. Mr. Tupper asked Wally Kennedy about the Joplin Globe providing editorial support for the coalition.

Mr. Tupper asked Mr. Rogers if the Springfield Leader has an editorial board, and he replied that Springfield City Utilities meets with them on a regular basis.

Mr. Hertzberg explained that Mr. Kennedy has done a wonderful job in representing all sides of the issue for the coalition.

Mr. Tupper spoke with Joplin Kiwanis Club earlier this month and got the impression that some people did not believe this water coalition exists any more. Pete Rauch is speaking to a group next week on the U.S. Geological Survey's Ozark Aquifer Study. This meeting will be held at Missouri Southern State University in the Mills Center on Wednesday, August 26, at 7:00 p.m.

Water Conference – September 17 & 18, 2009:

Mr. Nichols mentioned the water conference to be held on September 17 & 18, 2009 at the Doubletree Hotel in Springfield. Pete Rauch will post the information on the conference on the coalition web site.

Comments by Representatives of Federal and State Offices and Agencies:

Senator Kit Bond:

Stacy Burks was not present for the meeting.

Senator Claire McCaskill:

David Rauch had no new information to report at this time.

Congressman Roy Blunt:

Steve McIntosh has no new information to report at this time. Don Lucietta attended the meeting of the Elk River Watershed partnership and thought the meeting went well. He mentioned a lot of discussion before and after the meeting.

Missouri Department of Natural Resources:

Fred Schlegel explained that he is taking Greg Perkins' place with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Schlegel had no new information to report at this time.

Kansas Division of Water Resources:

Mr. Nichols received an e-mail from Morgan Pearman stating he had a conflict and would be unable to attend this meeting.

Oklahoman Water Resource Board:

There was no new information to report at this time.

Old Business:

There was no old business to report at this time.

New Business:

There was no new business to report at this time.

Adjourn:

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, the meeting stood adjourned.

David Hertzberg, Secretary