

4410 LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY  
WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
Helena, MT 59624  
316 North Park, Room 226 So.  
March 27, 2018

Members Present

Mayor Jamie Schell, vice-chair  
Dick Sloan  
Amanda Harrow  
David Donohue  
Randall Camp  
Jeff Ryan  
Kammy Johnson

Members Absent

Stan Frasier, chair  
Commissioner Andy Hunthausen

Staff

Kathy Moore  
Jennifer McBroom  
Pete Schade  
Jolene Helgerson

Guests Present

Michelle Cummings, University of Mary Student  
Mark Ockey, Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Hannah Regal, Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Travis Meyer, Morrison & Maierle

Mayor Jamie Schell, vice-chair, called the 227<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Lewis and Clark County Water Quality Protection District (WQPD) Board of Directors to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established. Introduction of Board members, staff and the public, were made.

**MINUTES**

Mayor Schell asked if there were any corrections or additions to the January 23, 2018 minutes. David Donohue requested that the WRP acronym be defined. In answer to a question from Mr. Donohue, Pete Schade, Water Quality Specialist, stated that the WQPD does have access to Energy Lab's data online and the WQPD does store surface water data in-house. Mr. Donohue made a motion to approve the amended minutes as written. Randall Camp seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were made.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**PRESENTATION**

Travis Meyer with Morrison and Maierle gave a presentation Titled: Evaluation of the Helena Valley Irrigation District (HVID) canal as receiving water for Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Discharge (see Attachment "A"). Mr. Meyer presented a review of relevant technical documents and reports relating to the canals potential use as receiving water, and highlighted possible steps forward to address the issue. (Generalized Watershed Loading Function)

In answer to a question from Mr. Camp, Mr. Meyer explained that a B1 waterbody classification must support a variety of beneficial uses, including growth and propagation of cold-water fisheries. Mr. Schade added that when the canal ditch is shut off every fall and the canal dries out, fish

mortalities are very high, making its designated beneficial use of ‘growth and propagation of cold-water fishes’ very questionable. Mark Ockey with the Dept. of Environmental Equality (DEQ) said that the DEQ should be protective of its downstream receiving waters along with upstream waters.

Kathy Moore, Environmental Services Division Administrator, and Mr. Schade spoke about the recreational beneficial uses afforded by B-1 based on the classification, and that the HVID canal is seen as a privately owned and maintained canal system and that HVID does not allow recreational access (as attested by the NO TRESPASSING signs along the canal).

Possible leakage of the canal and its effect on residential wells was discussed. In answer to a question from Ms. Moore regarding treated waters reaching residential wells, Mr. Meyer said effects to residential wells depends on how much natural treatment overburden and soils provide as well as the downward gradient acting in the area of question. Mr. Meyer also noted that studies completed by James Swierc, WQPD Hydrologist, shows that shallow subsurface flow influenced by the canal flow is at a higher elevation than the depth of most drinking water wells. Future investigations into this issue will be necessary in order to inform appropriate approaches regarding discharge of featured effluent water into the canal.

In answer to a question from Mr. Ockey, Jennifer McBroom, Outreach and Watershed Coordinator, said that the district did collect data at the Lake Helena Causeway. Mr. Ockey spoke briefly on the three primary sources of nitrogen and phosphorus in the watershed, which are agriculture, septic systems, and point sources. The reduction of all three sources is needed to reduce the nutrient loading into Lake Helena.

In answer to a question by Mayor Schell, Ms. Moore stated that those living near the canals would be angered by possible contaminants leaking from the canals into private wells. Well sampling would be required to determine if residential wells were under the influence of canal water and whether the canal is leaking into those domestic wells. Ms. Moore indicated that GIS mapping of individual or domestic wells would be needed to see which wells could possibly be affected, including public water system wells. Ms. Moore noted that the canal is mostly unlined and where it is lined, the lining material may be clay, concrete or asphalt of unknown condition. Ms. Moore also noted that she wants to know how much water is put into the canal and how much water exits the canal at its mouth at Lake Helena. Kammy Johnson said that she would be in favor of sampling wells along the canals for various contaminants.

In answer to a question from Ms. Moore, Mr. Camp stated that the Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant receives a majority of the septage from area septic tanks. Ms. Moore noted that Environmental Service Division does permit land application sites. Ms. Moore would like to know how much septage the WWTP receives and suggested exploring land application treatment options for septage. Mr. Meyer said that typically 1 percent of the flow and 10 percent of the load is from septage.

Mr. Ockey discussed potential nutrient reduction management strategies that could be made to irrigated lands through the conversion to more efficient irrigation and tillage practices by farm and ranch operators.

Mayor Schell said that due to time, the board will consider writing a letter of recommendation regarding the potential solutions presented at the next meeting.

## **FY2018 BUDGET & FY 2019 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

Kathy Moore, Environmental Division Administrator, presented the WQPD 2018 fiscal year cash flow statement budget (see Attachment “B”). As of March 20, 2018, beginning cash is \$170,207; total revenues received are \$225,244 or 59% amount budgeted; total expenditures are \$225,666 or 52% amount budgeted; revenues are under expenditures by \$422; ending cash balance is \$177,702. Jennifer McBroom, Watershed Outreach Coordinator, briefly highlighted the Lake Helena Watershed Restoration budget (see Attachment “C”) along with the WQPD Donated Funds budget (see Attachment “D”).

Ms. Moore announced that she would provide the FY2019 preliminary budget at the April board meeting for the board to review.

## **2014-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW**

Ms. Moore presented the 2014-2019 WQPD Strategic Plan accomplishments, challenges, and goals (see Attachment “D”). The Board will need to create a new 3-year strategic plan in September. Ms. Moore suggested and the Board agreed to have a strategic planning session in September from 4-8 pm.

## **UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Bio Blitz: Ms. McBroom announced that Valerie Stacey, Big Sky Water Corp intern, applied for but did not receive a \$500 grant for the May 24 Bio Blitz 1-day science event for high schoolers to collect and study species and plant life in the watershed. The WQPD will donate the \$500 to the event, which will cover the cost of the pavilion, transportation, and shirts. In answer to a question by Mr. Donohue, Ms. McBroom said that Ms. Stacey had not looked for donations for the event.

Fencing Project: Ms. McBroom highlighted the Lake Helena Watershed Restoration Plan Project: Riparian Fencing and Off-Stream Watering (pages 16-22 of the board packet) which is intended to improve water quality within the Lake Helena Watershed by installing riparian fencing and a solar powered, off-stream watering tank in the spring and summer of 2018.

Willow Harvesting Event: Jeff Ryan said that the Willow Harvesting Event was a success. 25 individual has participated in the event and >2000 willows were harvested. Mr. Ryan showed a picture of a round hay bale enclosure that was constructed to provide cold storage for the willows until they could be planted.

Story Map Feedback: Mr. Schade has updated the Emerald Ridge Subdivision Groundwater Story Map based on the feedback from board members. He will send a link to the revised storyboard to the Board. WQPD staff has begun to develop a story map on the Helena Valley Aquifer.

## **BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION**

The East Helena Public Water Supply Water Master Plan is now online. The plan segues into the Natural Resource Damage (NRD) Funds for the restoration plan for potential projects to be paid for either by the Montana Environmental Trust Group or through the NRD funds. The plan shows the need for replacement of a 1928 and a 1946 water tank, a new water line replacement under Main Street, replacement of well #3 on Wylie Road upgradant from the wastewater treatment plant, and the TCEP application. Both the City of East Helena and the Prickly Pear Land Trust are asking for their projects to receive NRD funds.

The Montana Environmental Trust Group (METG) meeting on the Corrective Measures Study Report Review will be on April 11 at 6:30p.m. at the METG office.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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Mayor Jamie Schell, Vice Chair