

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
316 North Park, Room 330
Helena, MT 59602
October 23, 2018

Members Present

Stan Frasier, chair
Commissioner Andy Hunthausen (arrived @ 5:50 p.m.)
Randall Camp (arrived @ 5:45)
Dick Sloan
Amanda Harrow (departed @ 5:37)
David Donohue
Jeff Ryan

Members Absent

Kammy Johnson
Mayor Jamie Schell, vice-chair

Staff

Kathy Moore
Jennifer McBroom
James Swierc
Pete Schade
Jolene Helgerson
Drenda Niemann

Guests Present

See Attached Sign-In Sheet

Stan Frasier, chair, called the 233rd 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 and guests were made.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were made.

MINUTES

Mr. Frasier asked if there were any corrections or additions to the August 28, 2018, minutes. David Donohue made a motion to approve the amended minutes as written. Stan Frasier seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Kathy Moore, Environmental Services Division Administrator, presented the WQPD 2019 fiscal year cash flow statement budget (page 9 of the board packet). As of October 16, 2018, beginning cash is \$133,726; total revenues received are \$10,793 or 2.5% amount budgeted; total expenditures are \$29,556 or 14% amount budgeted; revenues are under expenditures by \$18,763; ending cash balance is \$139,418. Jennifer McBroom, Watershed Outreach Coordinator, briefly highlighted the Lake Helena Watershed Restoration budget (pages 10-11 of the board packet) along with the WQPD Donated Funds budget (page 12 of the board packet). No public comment was given.

EAST NORTH HILLS PROJECT UPDATE

James Swierc, WQPD Hydrogeologist, discussed the work plan for the East North Hills Groundwater Characterization Study (pages 14-17 of the board packet). The general work plan is based on the collection of hydrogeologic data to characterize the local aquifer system in a study area comprising the eastern portion of the North Hills of the Helena Valley, north of the main Helena Valley Irrigation Canal. In answer to a question from Jeff Ryan, Mr. Swierc, stated that we need a full year of monthly

water level data to assess seasonal high and low conditions for comparison with previous years. With only limited data, conclusions may be in error as a seasonal high water level may be interpreted as showing no problems when compared with only a seasonal low water level for a previous year. To assess depletion, we need to be able to compare the seasonal high and low measurements with previous years. We can consider a high precipitation year in the analysis but we do not have the data that shows this much precipitation results in this much recharge. There is not enough data to make that correlation. With 20-years or more of data, we can look back at precipitation data and compare that to water levels. If we did our analysis now, there would be a precipitation high due to the seasonal high but it would be addressed as a climate change.

Mr. Frasier opened the meeting to public comment.

In answer to questions from Val Jaffe, 2623 Tea Road, Mr. Swierc stated that at this time, there has been no discussion on having US Geologic Survey (USGS) or Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) do any additional drilling of wells for further information. Mr. Swierc stated that staff might consider adding additional private wells to their list of wells to monitor (page 17 of the board packet). If the wells are located near each other and completed at a similar depth, then only one monitoring well needs to be measured. If one shallow well were next to a deeper well, then consideration would be made to add those wells to the monitoring list so that vertical gradients can be assessed. The wells on the list will be monitored monthly. Mr. Swierc discussed briefly the WellIntel use on personal wells. Commissioner Andy Hunthausen stated that he would bring to the commission for discussion and vote on a possible 3-year pilot project to fund the subscription cost of 10 WellIntels within the WQPD boundaries. The homeowners would be responsible for the purchase of the hardware. Ms. Moore stated that staff is considering the pilot project to add some of the WellIntels to monitor the flood plain areas of the Helena valley. In answer to a question from Ms. Jaffe, Ms. Moore was unsure of the number of WellIntels that would be used in the East North Hills project. The County Commissioners will need to prioritize where the data from monitors will be needed.

CARROLL COLLEGE INTERN REPORT

Mr. Swierc discussed the draft Spokane Creek Report (pages 19-43 of the board packet). The study was designed to obtain water level and water quality data to characterize current conditions, and to serve as baseline data for comparison with future data. The report represents the results of hydrogeologic data collected during summer 2018 to characterize the groundwater system along Spokane Creek and the residential areas near Three-Bars Rd.

In answer to questions from Denny Haywood, 2485 Three-Bars Rd, Mr. Swierc stated that the recharge in the Spokane Hills area is small. Precipitation is the primary recharge source. Mr. Swierc also stated that in his review of data from the area west of Spokane Hills area, some residents around Diehl Lane were having trouble finding water. Some wells were drilled to 900 feet. In answer to a question from the public, Mr. Swierc stated that building high density housing units around the north or west areas of Spokane Hills may cause the water levels to drop in these areas. Developing a groundwater flow model for the area would be the best way to understand the system, including the connection to surface water. This would be the same approach that the District is using for East North Hills Project to obtain data to develop a model for this area. Kathy Moore, Environmental Services Division Administrator, stated the Spokane Hills Study was outside of the WQPD boundary and was financed by the County Planning Department. Ms. Moore stated that she was unaware of how the District chose the boundary in 1992 but that districts can be reevaluated. In answer to a question from

Ms. Jaffe, Ms. Moore stated that she would look into how the district could be reevaluated to include Spokane Creek area.

In answer to a question from Mr. Donohue, Mr. Swierc stated that data found in GWIC is insufficient to indicate water level trends at this time.

UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watershed: Pete Schade, Water Quality Specialist, announced that the 2nd round of high and low flow surface water sampling along with aquatic sampling of Prickly Pear Creek, Ten Mile Creek, Seven Mile Creek, and Silver Creek has been completed. The data package will be submitted to the standards program of the Department Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the assessment of the rewatering of Prickly Pear Creek.

Big Sky Watershed Corp (BSWC) Member: Valerie Stacey's 2nd year as a BSWC member is ending in November. The District along with Environmental Division have proposed creating an Environmental Tech position and hopes that she will apply. The District is truly grateful to Valerie for all the work she has done on behalf of the BSWC for the District.

CARROLL COLLEGE INTERN REPORT (continued)

In answer to a question from Drenda Niemann on behalf of Loni Van Slyke, 5924 Three-Bars Drive, Ms. Moore stated that staff submits their sampling data into data bases that are publicly accessible like GWIC. Members of the community can access GWIC data in order to make comments to county on various issues. Staff also writes subdivision comments that are submitted to the county commissioners. Staff works closely with MBMG and often requests a peer-review of the District's data.

Commissioner Hunthausen discussed how the Subdivision and Platting Act, subdivision regulations, and the DNRC allocation of water rights bind the commission. Only the Montana Legislature can make changes to the Subdivision and Platting Act. Ms. Jaffe discussed the need for major and minor subdivision well log data collection to be entered into GWIC for Commissioner review before decisions are made regarding new subdivisions. Ms. Moore explained the health department's role in the Sanitation and Subdivision Act regarding minor and major subdivision lots.

In answer to a question from Jeff Ryan, Mr. Swierc stated that staff would be working with MBMG for the peer review of data collected from the East North Hills Project.

In a response to a question from the public regarding how to collect groundwater information when the WQPD staff are not available for such a project or the location is outside of the WQPD boundary, Mr. Donohue informed the public that they have the option to hire consulting firms regarding the monitoring of their wells.

There being no further public comment, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Stan Fraiser, Chair