

Minutes Middle Snake Regional Water Resource Commission

January 18, 2023

The meeting of the commission was called to order by Chairman Lew Pence at 1:09pm. Members present were Dan Suhr, Kerry McMurray, Duane Turner, Dean Edgar, Gale Kleinkopf, Arlen Morgan and Bob Muffley, Executive Director. Also present were Nathan Schutte our new county commissioner from Lincoln County and Aaron Trevino and Sue Switzer of the IDEQ regional office.

Lew asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. Kerry McMurray moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Dan Suhr and approved.

Lew asked Bob for the bills since the last meeting. Bob said the bills include his compensation of \$550.00, his mileage for \$38.88 to meet with the Twin Falls County Commissioners and \$38.88 for this meeting. Other bills are mileage for members who are present. Dean Edgar moved to pay the bills. The motion was seconded by Duane Arlen Morgan and approved.

Lew asked Bob if there had been any correspondence since our last meeting. Bob said he hadn't received any since the last meeting, but he'd talk about some things later in the meeting.

Lew introduced Aaron Trevino to give us an update on the happenings at the IDEQ regional office for the last couple of years. Aaron then introduced Sue Switzer his Regional Director who said she would be willing to come speak with us any time and said she had started her career with IDEQ working in water quantity and quality. Aaron said he was a drinking water analyst and proceeded to give us a snap shot of the region. He said there is about 211,000 people in the region, four major rivers, 246 public water systems and lots of agriculture and recreation. He said there is no surface water intakes as the regions domestic water is supplied by springs and wells. Aaron went on to give us the names of the people working in the various jobs at the regional office. He said the waste remediation and hazardous material manager is Tiffany Bowman, The surface water quality manager is Sean Woodhead and the engineering manager is Raphael Erickson. Their staff include a water quality scientist, 2 NPDES officers and 3 water quality analysts. The question was asked as to when the IDEQ took over the NPDES permitting from the EPA. Sue said Idaho took it over because permit holders and potential permit holders wanted better communication with regulators and the EPA was too slow because it came out of Seattle. She believes the state has done a much better job with the back log, but could do better with with more money.

Water quality is a big issue in our region. They have people who check waste systems and make sure proposed water systems are appropriate. They have source water protection analysts who look at wells both during and after construction. New money coming from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will help by replacing old systems with new ones using filters for per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS). The EPA is also looking to revise the copper and lead rules (LCR) by requiring more testing and more often. Aaron also said the IDEQ and IDWR are looking at some potential new managed aquifer recharge (MAR) guidelines and, as always, they would like to see a continued improvement in funding.

Aaron said we have 5 nitrate priority areas in the region. They just added the fifth in the south-west Jerome area. He said they are scored by the agency, Well data is monitored so they can determine what areas are the worst in the state. Catherine Elliot at their Boise office says that nitrates can fluctuate during any given year. Nitrate loads become hard to analyze because of this phenomenon. Heavier nitrate loads are usually found in slow moving aquifers with shallow wells. Aaron put up the 5 priority areas in our region. They found that trends were going up in Minidoka and Jerome, but they didn't have sufficient data to look at the trends in the Marsh creek area, Bliss or Twin Falls. He did say that Twin Falls climbed in score and ranking in 2020. Aaron was asked if they were monitoring for Phosphorous. He believed this was being added to their monitoring routine.

Aaron said currently the IDEQ is moving forward with developing a ground water monitoring program. Funding has been secured and a Quality Insurance Protection Plan (QAPP) is being developed to adhere to current standard of sampling. Currently they are ironing out specific well locations and how the IDEQ will fit into the multi- agency sampling effort. He also knows that we are interested in what is happening with the WAG and load allocations for the IPDES on the Snake. He said the WAG received 4 proposals from various entities in the region, but it was unable to agree on any of them. He said leadership made an executive decision to go with the proposal from the municipalities. He said the agency is now developing waste load allocations for both point and nonpoint sources which will then be presented back to the WAG.

Lew thanked both Aaron and Sue for filling us in on what is happening in the region and went on to tell the commission that he and Bob had visited with Twin Falls Commissioners on January 4. He said the meeting went very well and it's obvious we have their support. He said we visited with them about the history of the commission and how we work with various agencies. We also covered the changes to our plan

Lew asked if there was any new or old business hearing none the meeting was adjourned at 2:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Bob J. Muffley, Executive Director