

**MINUTES  
of the  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
of the  
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL  
Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel  
Washington, D.C.  
March 22, 2016**

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**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

<b>ALASKA</b>	David Schade
<b>ARIZONA</b>	Tom Buschatzke
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	--
<b>COLORADO</b>	
<b>IDAHO</b>	Jerry Rigby
<b>KANSAS</b>	David Barfield
<b>MONTANA</b>	Christian Schmidt
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	Jeff Fassett
<b>NEVADA</b>	--
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	--
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	Jen Verleger
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	J.D. Strong
<b>OREGON</b>	--
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	Kent Woodmansey
<b>TEXAS</b>	Jon Niermann
<b>UTAH</b>	Walt Baker
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	--

**WYOMING**

Pat Tyrrell

**STAFF**

Tony Willardson

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

WSWC Chair Pat Tyrrell welcomed Executive Committee members and noted that this particular Committee would be meeting in executive session as the Committee would be discussing sensitive staffing decisions as part of the budget. The WSWC staff, with the exception of the Executive Director, was excused. Introductions were made around the room.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held October 8, 2015 in Manhattan, Kansas were moved for approval, and the motion was seconded. With no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**REPORT ON BUDGET AND FINANCES**

**A. FY2015-2016 Budget Status Report**

Jerry Rigby led an extended discussion of the Council's current and future budget outlook. While fiscally sound and operating in the black, Council membership has been steady, but dues have not been raised since 2009 and the WaDE Program Manager's position has been funded with contracts based on federal grants. Further, for some time, the Council has been operating without an Assistant or Deputy Director and Tony and staff have picked up the slack, resulting in extended hours, particularly for Tony.

At its last meeting, the Committee approved a tentative dues increase, if needed, from \$30,000 to \$36,000 for FY2017-2018, a 20% increase. The intent was to be able to hire an additional staff member, and provide for related cost increases. The Committee considered information provided by staff that for the first time took an extended view of future Council finances and staffing. Without current grant funding, expected to expire in 2018, a decline in revenue without a substantial dues increase would lead to a precipitous drop in net income and equity given current staffing. Financial projections were presented to the Executive Committee during a call that was held prior to the meeting in order to prepare for the discussion.

For the present, with or without a dues increase, Tony suggested any consideration of hiring of additional staff be deferred given support for existing staff could be difficult without either continuing contractual support or instituting a dues increase. A number of possible actions and scenarios were discussed.

The Council has been in its current office space for seven years, and with the lease expiring on June 30, 2016, staff investigated a number of options and suitable alternative space had been found. A move might result in some cost savings, while providing space for interns or eventually another staff member. One suggestion Tony presented for consideration was a lease of half of a building that included an option for the Council to buy the space. The purchase price would be around \$300,000 or about half the Council's current reserves, and would eliminate the cost of leasing space, though there would be a continuing common property maintenance fee. The savings would be substantial and significantly more than the current rate of interest earned on reserves held in the Utah Public Treasurer's Investment Fund. The purchase, without a dues increase, would slow but not reverse the potential decline in revenues.

Following discussion, it was determined to authorize the Executive Director to decide on whether or not to move and to enter into any related contract, including any contract for new space that would include a purchase option. However, reservations were expressed over the Council's purchase of a building, particularly the drawdown of reserves, given the fiscal challenges facing some states (dependent on energy revenues).

Kent Woodmansey, South Dakota, suggested that the Council consider reducing the number of meetings from three to two annually, with perhaps more conference calls. He noted this was the practice used by the Association of Clean Water Administrators. Jennifer Verleger, North Dakota, expressed her appreciation for the personal benefit that frequent association with other Council members provided and favored retaining the current number of meetings. The general tone of the discussion favored the status quo, though other meeting changes and more webinars and conference calls are possible.

Jeanine Jones, California, suggested that a Strategic Planning Work Group be formed to look at future alternatives and options. For one, she favored finding a separate home for WaDE, once deployed as in her experience the maintenance of databases is a time consuming and expensive process. The Management Subcommittee together with J.D. Strong, Oklahoma, Tom Byler, Oregon, and Walt Baker, Utah will comprise the strategic planning group. Others that may wish to participate are welcome.

## **B. WaDE/EN Grants Status Report**

Tony Willardson reported that the Council had received a second grant from EPA for the WaDE program, which was pending but not approved at the last meeting. This grant covers California, South Dakota, and Nevada and extends our Exchange Network funding through 2018. The grant funding will help these three additional states to deploy WaDE, with WSWC

assistance. Of note, Sara and Tony will be demonstrating WaDE's progress at the upcoming Western Governors' Association Staff Advisory Council meeting in April.

### **C. CDWR Contracts Status Report**

As reported previously, the WSWC has received two contract agreements with the California Department of Water Resources to continue work on improving seasonal to sub-seasonal precipitation forecasting and evaluating weather monitoring systems for irrigation management. For a discussion of these contracts, see the Water Resources Committee minutes. An invoice for services from July 2015 to December 2015 has been submitted. This work will continue through 2016. California and the Council reached agreements last summer on the scope of work for both endeavors, and there is more than sufficient funding in the agreements to cover anticipated Council expenses. Current staff resources limit the opportunity to take advantage of these funds. There are only so many hours in a day.

### **D. 2016-2017 Proposed Budget / Dues Increase**

A number of Council member states are facing budget cuts due to the drop in energy prices and consequent drop in state revenues. This is a particular problem in Alaska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming. Both J.D. Strong and Pat Tyrrell have had to go to their governors' offices in order to continue paying current Council dues. Any increase at present would be problematic for them, though they would attempt to secure the additional funds if a dues increase were approved. Jerry Rigby, Idaho, echoed concern with raising dues for the present. Following discussion, the possibility of a recommended dues increase for FY2017-2018 was left open for planning purposes and future approval if and when it is needed and practical for member states.

There was recognition during the discussion of the value of the Council and need to provide the resources for staff to continue to do their job.

### **SUNSETTING POSITIONS**

Chairman Pat Tyrrell briefly reported on the positions scheduled to sunset at this meeting and that were addressed and revised by the Water Resources Committee earlier in the day, and recommended consideration for renewal by the Full Council. Those positions and proposed changes are included under Tab C of the briefing materials, for your reference.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Tony Willardson briefly went through the Summary of WSWC Activities and Events and highlighted meetings and events held since the October 2015 WSWC meetings in Kansas. See Tab P for details of the activities and events.

## **FUTURE WSWC MEETINGS**

### **A. CDWR Workshop Series on Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting**

The WSWC, the California Department of Water Resources, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will hold the third in a series of workshops on April 29, 2016 at NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. A final workshop in this series has been scheduled to be held in San Diego, California on June 6-9, 2016.

### **B. CDWR Workshop Series on Expanding CIMIS into Interstate Watersheds**

The first CIMIS workshop is in the planning stages. Potential participants have been identified, but a date and location are to be determined.

### **C. WSWC Summer and Fall Meetings**

The WSWC summer meetings will be held July 13-15, 2016 in Bismarck, North Dakota. The Fall meetings are scheduled for September 28-30, 2016 in St. George, Utah.

## **WSWC NOMINATING SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pat Tyrrell reported that he has held discussions with members of the Nominating Subcommittee and they will have a determination regarding recommendations for Council officers at the summer meetings.

## **FY2016-2017 DRAFT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

Pat Tyrrell briefly reviewed the draft committee work plan. The Executive Committee's work plan covers first coordination and collaboration with the Western Governors' Association and with our Western Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST). It includes Council contacts and visits with federal administration and congressional offices. The Executive Committee also provides oversight for regular Council meetings, workshops and symposia (though primary responsibility for planning and carrying out these meetings may be delegated to other Committees). The weekly newsletter and annual report also fall under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee and Management Subcommittee also oversee general Council operations, including budgeting, staffing and other major decisions.

**SUMMER 2016 MEETING SUNSETTING POSITIONS**

The positions listed at the end of the agenda are for the purpose of making you aware they will sunset at the Summer 2016 meetings, unless there is a motion to continue the positions or absent any actions to revise and readopt them.

**OTHER MATTERS**

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.