

**MINUTES**  
**of the**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid North Hotel**  
**Albuquerque, New Mexico**  
**October 19, 2017**

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**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

<b>ALASKA</b>	Dave Schade
<b>ARIZONA</b>	Einav Henenson
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	Jeanine Jones
<b>COLORADO</b>	Rebecca Mitchell
<b>IDAHO</b>	Jerry Rigby Mat Weaver
<b>KANSAS</b>	Tracy Streeter
<b>MONTANA</b>	Tim Davis
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	--
<b>NEVADA</b>	Jason King
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	Tom Blaine
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	Garland Erbele
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	Julie Cunningham
<b>OREGON</b>	Tom Byler
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	Kent Woodmansey
<b>TEXAS</b>	Jon Niermann
<b>UTAH</b>	Eric Millis
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	--
<b>WYOMING</b>	Pat Tyrrell

## **STAFF**

Tony Willardson  
Michelle Bushman  
Sara Larsen  
Cheryl Redding

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Jerry Rigby, Chair of the Executive Committee, called the meeting to order, and requested folks introduce themselves.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held in Rohnert Park, California on June 28, 2017 were moved for approval by Pat Tyrrell. The motion was seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **REPORT ON BUDGET AND FINANCES**

Jeanine Jones advised members of the Executive Committee that the Council's pro forma profit and loss statement as of September 2017 may be found under Tab D in the briefing materials.

Tony Willardson remarked that since the June meetings, the final financial statements have been prepared, although there will be an audit this year. The audit is performed every two years, but covers all years. He noted that Council members agreed to use reserves to purchase the new office space. While we pay property taxes and HOA fees, the office expense is now some \$20,000 less than we had been paying in rent. We also have a equipment replacement reserve fund, which would cover any costs should there be a furnace failure, etc. Tony is the office "handyman."

The majority of our member states have paid dues for FY2016-2017. David Schade is continuing to try to get his colleagues in Alaska to join as a dues paying member.

The contract work for the Water Data Exchange (WaDE) program with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has concluded, but work continues under a contract with the State of California.

With respect to revenues, the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab's Western Water Applications Office will be providing about \$40,000 towards a jointly hosted Water Information Management Systems (WIMS) workshop to be held January 14-18, 2018 in Pasadena, California. In addition, Tony has heard from Ted Kowalski, now with the Walton Foundation, that they may be able to provide some funding support for WaDE. The Aspen Institute Group would also like to offer some funding on WaDE project work. Sara will also be submitting another EPA Exchange Network grant as well for WaDE related work.

Tony noted that membership dues have not been raised for nearly a decade. We also have not filled a professional staff position since 2009. This year there has not been a significant increase in our healthcare costs. The leave account reserves are fully funded, so those obligations are covered. Tony commented that he will retire at some point in the future.

Jerry stated he appreciates the staff continuing to seek additional funding support.

There was a question about how the dues work. Tony provided a brief history on membership dues. Also, Jerry commented on the fact that the flat dues schedule has been discussed on previous occasions, and a 20% increase discussed, but has not ever been developed further.

Tony then talked about the possibility of another contract between the WSWC and the California Department of Water Resources to fund workshops related to sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) precipitation forecasting. It is contemplated these would be workshops held jointly with NOAA.

## **SUNSETTING POSITIONS**

Chairman Rigby asked Tony Willardson to provide a brief summary with respect to the sunseting positions being addressed at the meetings.

Tony commented that the Executive Committee had no specific sunseting positions to address at the meetings. The Water Resources Committee adopted a new position this morning on the Farm Bill, and also discussed Position #372, which was in the form of a letter commenting on the USFS proposed directive on groundwater resource management that will sunset, but will be rescinded and could form the basis for future action should USFS again raise the now withdrawn directive. The Water Quality Committee has a couple of positions to consider during their meeting. The Clean Water Act position regarding the former Administrations rule will not be renewed, but will be maintained on the Council's records as a historical document that was submitted to EPA as part of the record. The Legal Committee will take up the Indian Water Rights position and discuss continuing support for the Dividing the Waters program, which helps judges understand water matters.

**Questions:**

**Pat Tyrrell:** Tony raised an interesting point about positions. I'm wondering if there has ever been a tipping point where a position was 15 years old, for example, and the Council needed to hearken back to the language, but it may be so far in the rearview mirror that we need to revisit the position before providing comments?

**Tony Willardson:** We coordinate with the WGA on our policy positions. We have rarely been in a position where our policies were no longer relevant. WGA and WSWC positions sunset after three years, and are reconsidered, revised, readopted or allowed to sunset. Therefore, we usually don't have to go too far back to find a position on any particular water issue.

**Michelle Bushman:** The Council has written letters based on past positions.

**REPORT ON WASHINGTON, D.C. VISITS**

Jerry Rigby reported on recent visits made in Washington, D.C. Jerry represents the Idaho Water Users and he also represents a number of rural electric cooperatives in Idaho. These Idaho entities unified to go to Washington, D.C. to work the Hill to discuss power issues with respect to Canada and the Columbia River Treaty. Jerry's constituents felt these Congressional and Administration visits were successful. Tony accompanied Jerry and raised issues important to the WSWC. He noted it is much easier to get an appointment with a Congressional office when someone from that Congress member's state is along.

Jerry noted there are several states involved with the Columbia River Treaty. The states involved as part of the Columbia River Treaty including Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. If these states can all come to agreement, it may be possible to ask the Western States Water Council to adopt a position on renegotiation of the treaty. As background, the Council has taken positions in the past on issues that have only directly affected a minority of the Council member states.

Tim Davis requested that Jan Langel be kept in the loop on the Columbia River Treaty discussions so Montana has appropriate input in the process.

Tony talked about the viewpoint of the Canadians with respect to future flood control storage, built with U.S. funds under a 50-year agreement that soon expires, as well as hydropower generation that U.S. entities now pay a premium for compared to spot market rates. Mat Weaver of Idaho remarked that the treaty ends in 2024. This could benefit power users, but will raise issues related to flood control, and the use of existing U.S. reservoirs.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT / WSWC ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

Tony Willardson shared information about recent WSWC activities and events. First, he remarked that the WSWC had held its biennial symposium together with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) in August. In terms of financial earnings, we came out about \$15,000 in the black on that meeting, and will divide that amount equally with NARF.

The Ad Hoc Group will be making visits to Washington, D.C. next week. They will be meeting with Alan Mikkelsen and a host of others including the Office of Management and Budget, Department of the Interior, Reclamation, Senators Tom Udall (D-NM), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), James Risch (R-ID), and members of the House Resources Committee staff.

Tom Byler suggested Tony ought to try to meet with representatives from Hawaii about their interest in joining with the WSWC again. Becky Mitchell, the new director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, is from Hawaii.

Tony talked about a WSWC letter of support for principles and actions that the WGA and others interstate natural resources organizations have adopted on improving federal-state relationships. He added that he and Ward Scott, WGA's water program manager, typically have a call about once a week to coordinate.

Tony cochairs with NOAA's Roger Pulwarty, the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Executive Council, which is meeting next Tuesday in Washington, D.C. He commented on some of the other task forces and work groups with which he and other staff participate.

## **SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL NOMINEES**

Chairman Jerry Rigby raised a question with respect to President Trump's potential federal nominees, for Administration positions, and asked whether or not the WSWC would be willing to support particular nominations?

**Tim Davis:** I think it is a good idea to avoid supporting nominees, unless it is a rare or unique individual such as Mike Connor, which the WSWC did support in the past Administration for Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. He eventually became Deputy Secretary of Interior, and was always responsive to Council interests.

**Jerry Rigby:** When and if a unique nominee comes forward that we believe meets our specific qualifications, then we can discuss WSWC support. It is a safer bet to write a congratulatory letter following a candidate's confirmation.

Tony Willardson and Roger Pierce are preparing a congratulatory letter to newly appointed NOAA Assistant Administrator Timothy Gallaudet.

### **FEDERAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**

Jeanine Jones reported that in this era of continuing resolutions, they are looking for opportunities such as the Farm Bill and NIDIS reauthorization language for hints on the federal budget. There is not much to report. Many anticipate additional budget cuts for FY2019. As has been mentioned, the President proposes and the Congress disposes of the Executive's budget.

### **FUTURE WSWC MEETINGS**

The WSWC will host a Water Information Management Systems (WIMS) Workshop in January 2018 at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) campus in Pasadena, California. JPL and the Western Water Applications Office (WWAO) will be co-hosting the meeting with Stephanie Granger's assistance.

The WSWC Spring Meetings are scheduled to be held in Arlington, Virginia at the Crystal Gateway Marriott on March 14-16, 2018. The WSWC and the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) will jointly host a Washington Roundtable on March 15th, and the WSWC and WestFAST Principals will meet on March 16th.

Additional meetings on the schedule include a Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting Workshop in late Spring in San Diego. The Summer and Fall Council meetings will be held in Oregon and Idaho, respectively.

### **SPRING 2018 SUNSETTING POSITIONS**

The positions due to sunset at our next meetings are all under the purview of the Water Resources Committee and will be handled during the meetings in March. They can be found on the WSWC website.

### **OTHER MATTERS**

The issue was raised as to whether or not we want to modify the WSWC web site to include a "members only" section? WestFAST may be considered members.

Jon Niermann offered his belief that there would need to be a very compelling reason to make information inaccessible. Garland Erbele suggested following the lead of the WGA.



After some additional discussion and remarks, it was decided that the Council's legal status may prevent "closing" anything. Tom Byler offered his opinion that we should leave things as they are, maintain the status quo.

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.