

Saroni Canal Advisory Board Meeting

February 3, 2021

Walker River Irrigation District

Present in Person:

Bert Bryan

Jessica Halterman

Taylor Thomas

Joanne Sarkisian

Richard Nuti

Peter Fenili

Present via Phone:

Marianne Leinassar

Kris Leinassar

Steven Fulstone

Dave Hockaday

Lynne Heller

Dean Heller

Gary Garms

Gunnar Garms

Meeting Called to Order

Bert called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

Public Comment

None Presented

Consideration of Minutes of the September 2, 2020 Annual Meeting.

Kris questioned the comment made in the Ditch Tender Update that stated, 'If the water is put in the canal at 6am, it must get to the end of the canal before deliveries can be made.' Kris requested to know where that statement came from and what is meant by it. Historically, the canal has been ran as when the water is at the gate it is delivered. Jessica stated the comment was made at the meeting and was written as it was on the recording. Jason was brought into the meeting to clarify. Jason stated before deliveries could be accurately made, the water must 'pool' to ensure the delivery is correct. Steven stated he was under the impression that when the water reached the delivery point, regardless of where it was on the canal, the delivery was made. Those that are turned on first, are shut off first. Jason stated he

cannot make a delivery until the water gets to the last point of delivery then he can go back to make the deliveries. Kris stated it did not make sense to allow the water to get to the Williamson before the Main can be turned on. Kris stated that is not how the canal has been historically run. Jason stated that is the way he was taught and has run the canal that way since he started. The water must make it to the last point of delivery then he will go back up the canal and start turning water on so that the canal is leveled out. Steven stated the way Jason is delivering is making more problems. If the end of the canal is dry, the deliveries could be delayed at that point, but if the ditch is wet, there is no reason to delay deliveries. Steven stated if the water is in the canal the water should be delivered as it gets to the delivery point. Jason stated everyone must have share in the shrink- all the way to the last user. If they have 10 feet at A and 10 feet at Main, everyone should share in the shrink. If he turned on the Main as soon as water gets to it, there would be more shrink getting down to Lateral A. Kris stated that is the nature of the beast. If he wants water at the Williamson and the canal is dry, he modifies his order to account for the extra shrink, and then, once the ditch is wet, he modifies the order again. Kris stated it is not on the rest of the users to get the water down to the Williamson. Steven stated the problem will not be solved in this meeting; he suggested an Advisory Board and Ditch Rider meeting prior to the irrigation season. Kris stated he does not recall conveyance loss ever being equal to everyone on the canal. Dean would like to know the history of deliveries, how to measure water flow if ditch is not full and go backwards. Turning a valve open when ditch has not been full does not make sense and the question needs to be answered. Dean felt as the message being sent is only those at the end of the ditch would have to suffer the shrink of the rest of the ditch; those at the beginning of the ditch would get all water they want. Steven stated Jason has not been running the canal the way he is stating. Jason stated he would work with Jessica on rewording the minutes.

Steven made a motion to approve the minutes with an amendment; Pete Fenili offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

Consideration of minutes of the January 12, 2021 Advisory Board Meeting.

Richard Nuti requested 'Peavine' be changed to 'Pinegrove' on Page 2.

Peter Fenili made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Lynne Heller offered a second. The vote was called for and passed.

Budget and assessments for FY2021/2022

Bert stated the regular assessment had been set at \$11.00 per acre and a special assessment had been set at \$5.00 per acre, but there has been a request to consider changing the special assessment. Bert stated he spoke to Gary Garms who expressed his support in bringing the special assessment to at least \$10.00 per acre. Gary is concerned with running the canal at a net zero with a long list of repairs to be made and not having reserve money for future large projects. Richard stated he would like to bring the special assessment to \$10.00 per acre. The Teranap section has been completed, but the concrete section below the SV was a high priority on the ITRC list of repairs and Richard would like to see the canal proceed on fixing that section. Steven requested to know when BOR would be reimbursing the \$54,000; Bert stated it is unknown. The request has been submitted and all the necessary account information has been given to BOR. Kris requested clarification on the grant reimbursement as he understood the grant was for \$71,000; Bert stated there is a 50/50 cost share requirement and BOR pays half of all the bills submitted. Peter shared concern of not having enough money in the project fund to meet future cost share obligations. Peter recommended the canal seek financing on the list of repairs needed and to get the list completed. Peter also expressed concern that the canal would be 'in the red' if the special assessment is kept at \$5.00 per acre. Dean stated he agreed with Richard and Peter with needing to keep the assessment at \$10.00; projects will not getting cheaper in the future. Dean stated he respects everyone's position, but the canal needs repairs, and the repairs will help everyone on the canal. Dean would like everyone to recognize the impact on lowering the assessment. Kris asked why there was no special assessment in 2014-15; Bert stated there was not a special assessment that year after coming off years of being 'in the red' from the laser leveling project. Steven stated over the past 5 years of special assessments, approximately \$200,000 had been put into the canal as special projects. Steven requested clarification on the special project breakdown; Bert explained the laser leveling and ledging in 2015-16, Desert Creek safety valve in 2016-17, spillback replacement in 2017-18, drain maintenance and spraying in 2018-19, and the modernization match in 2019-20. Bert stated individuals have paid for their own turnouts (Garms, Nuti/Fenili/Weaver, etc) and the WaterSMART grants have and will pay for most of the upgrades at Christof/Carrasco, Main, Cardone, Straub, Wedertz

#5, Lateral A and the terminus at Lateral B. Richard clarified that once BOR sends the reimbursement, it is not being put into the Saroni fund- it will be reimbursing WRID to zero out the account. Peter stated when the concrete was installed in the 1950's, the assessment was \$6.00 per acre and concrete was cheaper, but now the concrete is worn out and the cost to replace it is going to be much higher. If the canal does not have the money in the fund, financing or bonding may need to be done. Even if that means paying \$12.00 per acre for the next 20 years. Everything done on the canal has been progressive, but if a link is pulled from the chain, it will cost the canal more in the future. Bert stated projects on the list have been modified and new projects are consistently being added. Some problem areas have been addressed, but there are more problem areas that have not been, and they are getting worse. The area below SV is costing the canal to constantly do ledging, and pipe could be installed, but it will have a high cost. Steven stated good progress has been made on the canal with the special assessments, but he calculates approximately \$41,000 unaccounted for. Steven would like to know where that money is. The first WaterSMART grant has been completed, the second will be started soon. Steven requested to know when another WaterSMART grant could be applied for; Jessica stated if BOR paid soon, another application could be submitted in October. If BOR does not pay soon and the first grant is not closed out, the District has been advised not to apply for anymore grants until one can be closed and the other has started. Bert stated the District will keep looking for funding opportunities.

Richard made a motion to set the special assessment at \$10.00 per acre; Peter offered a second. The vote was called for with Richard, Peter and Lynne being in favor; Steven and Kris opposed. The acres represented by the opposition failed the motion.

Lynne asked if the opposition would be willing to compromise with something lower than \$10.00 per acre; Kris stated, with the conditions of this last year, some users need relief on the assessments. Kris stated the assessment can be reassessed next year and he recommends pursuing grant opportunities to fund future projects. Steven agreed with leaving the assessment at \$5.00 per acre and stated he needs to understand the finances better.

Planned upcoming scheduled maintenance and projects.

Bert stated the gates have been ordered for the Straub, Wedertz #5 and Cardone. As moving forward in the summer, Bert will meet with Steven and Kris regarding installing the gates and gate reimbursement.

Public Comment

Dave Hockaday stated he is the new commissioner in the District and would like to stay informed on the activities on the Saroni and Plymouth. Bert stated the District will keep him informed and he is welcome to contact our office at any time.

Adjournment

Peter made a motion to adjourn; Steven offered a second. The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 am.

DRAFT