

UTAH WATERSHEDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 18, 2024

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Department of Natural Resources Auditorium
1594 W. North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT

Council members present:

- **Scott Paxman**, Chair, Reclamation Project Rep.
- **Rikki Hrenko-Browning**, Industry Rep. (virtual)
- **Nathan Daug**, Bear River Watershed Council
- **Marcelle Shoop**, Environmental and Conservation Groups Rep.
- **Warren Peterson**, Water Attorney
- **Mark Stratford**, Utah League of Cities and Towns (virtual)
- **Sterling Brown**, Utah Lake Watershed Council
- **Robert Moore**, Utah Association of Special Districts
- **Kim Shelley**, Department of Environmental Quality (virtual)
- **Rick Smith**, Weber River Watershed Council
- **Soren Simonsen**, proxy for Laura Briefer, Jordan Valley Watershed Council
- **Paul Monroe**, proxy for Brett Palmer, West Desert Watershed Council
- **Joel Ferry**, Department of Natural Resources
- **Judy Watanabe**, proxy for Kris Hamlet, DEM Director

Others present:

- **Todd Stonely**, Division of Water Resources (DWRe)
- **Carly Payne**, DWRe
- **Hannah Freeze**, Presenter, UDAF
- **Candice Hasenyager**, DWRe Director (Virtual)
- **Andy Rasmussen**, The Langdon Group
- **Peter Gessell**, Smith Hartvigsen
- **Christie Hansen**, Bear River Watershed Council
- **Marty Bushman**, Utah Attorney General's Office
- **Eric McCulley**, Jordan River Watershed Council
- **Peggy Killian**, Uintah Watershed Council
- **Andy Nickle**, Sevier River Watershed Council
- **Brett Prevedel**, Uintah Watershed Council (virtual)
- **Cynthia White** (virtual)
- **Dex Winterton** Uintah Watershed Council (virtual)
- **Michael Larson** (virtual)
- **Mindy Mees**, Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council (virtual)
- **Rachel Shilton**, DWRe (virtual)
- **Scott Taylor**, Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council (virtual)

- **Mike Noel**, Kanab Creek Virgin River Watershed Council (virtual)

Meeting Minutes

1:00-1:05 - Welcome and introductions

Chairman Scott Paxman conducted the meeting. He announced the resignation of Corey Cram and welcomed the new representative from the Association of Special Districts, Robert Moore. He also welcomed new member Rick Smith, representing the Weber River Watershed Council. Several UWC council members sent proxies to the meeting:

- Soren Simonsen was proxy for Laura Briefer
- Paul Monroe was proxy for Brett Palmer
- Judy Watanabe was proxy for Kris Hamlet

Two member terms will expire at the end of this year: Mark Stratford and Marcelle Shoop. According to the code, the Governor appoints this position from three nominees selected by the Division of Water Resources. Marcelle Shoop expressed interest in serving another term.

1:05-1:10 - Approval of minutes, October 12, 2023 meeting

Warren Peterson motioned to approve the October 12, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Marcelle Shoop seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1:10-1:13 - Discussion on the election of Vice Chair

Chairman Paxman asked that nominations for vice chair be submitted to himself via email over the next few weeks. The election will take place at the April 4 meeting. Any council member who would like to submit a nomination should email it to Paxman by March 15. He will send a reminder two weeks before that date.

1:13-1:39 - Anticipated certification of Kanab Creek/Virgin River and Sevier River Watershed Councils

Kanab Creek/Virgin River

Chairman Dave Jessop, Vice Chairman Scott Taylor, Mindy Mees and Mike Noel attended the meeting on behalf of the Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council. Jessop reviewed the council membership. Scott Paxman noted that the Letter of Application listed 15 members, but the Organizing Document only listed 13 names. This was due to two people being unable to join the council. Those two interests were non-essential.

Jessop recognized the high percentage of council membership from Washington County Water Conservancy District and noted some difficulties in convincing non-conservancy

district people to participate. Marcelle Shoop acknowledged the difficulty of getting people to serve on councils as they are being formed and asked that the council work to diversify as time goes on.

Marty Bushman of the Attorney General's Office previously reviewed the Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council's documents and found only non-substantive edits that could be made to remove inapplicable template language if desired.

Warren Peterson asked about the "local sponsor of reclamation projects" position and suggested removing it if not relevant. Mike Noel told him that there is a reclamation project—the Lake Powell Pipeline.

Warren motioned to certify the Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council. Rick Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mike Noel became an active member of the UWC as Kanab Creek/Virgin River's chosen representative.

Sevier River

Chairman Andy Nickle attended the meeting on behalf of the Sevier River Watershed Council and reviewed the council membership. The council attempted to achieve diversity in both interest and geographic location. Nickle will also serve as the representative to the UWC.

Mike Noel requested that Kane County Water Conservancy District have a seat on the Sevier River Watershed Council. They can attend the next Sevier River meeting to discuss this further.

Marty Bushman of the Attorney General's Office previously reviewed the Sevier River Watershed Council's documents and found only minor edits similar to the document submitted by the Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council.

Warren Peterson motioned to certify the Sevier River Watershed Council with the council membership list incorporated as part of the organizing document. Nathan Daug's seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Andy Nickle became an active member of the UWC.

1:39-1:45 - Anticipated follow-up and full certification of West Desert and Jordan River Watershed Councils

West Desert

The West Desert Watershed Council previously received conditional certification with the conditions that they designate a tribal member and make changes to their organizing document as suggested by the Attorney General's Office. The council has accomplished both of these tasks.

Marcelle Shoop motioned to approve a full certification of the West Desert Watershed Council. Sterling Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Jordan River

The UWC and Attorney General's Office previously requested some adjustments to the Jordan River Watershed Council's bylaws. With those changes being incorporated, Todd recommended the council be fully certified.

(Soren Simonsen) The Jordan River council anticipates adding some members to represent industry.

Nathan Daugs motioned to approve full certification of the Jordan River Watershed Council. Mark Stratford seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1:45-2:14 - Presentation on the Agricultural Water Optimization Program

Hannah Freeze, from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, presented on the Agricultural Water Optimization Program. (A copy of the presentation was subsequently emailed to the council.)

2:14 - 2:45 - Discussion of future council meetings and tours or creation of a subcommittee to do this

(Sterling Brown) People on local councils see where projects are needed, but this council may be in a better position to convey funding resources. Can there be some state council education efforts that specifically address real, practical funding opportunities that local councils can use or implement? Do local councils apply for and use funding, or does someone else do that? I would love to have this discussion.

(Scott Paxman) Currently, the UWC does not have any funding authority or mechanisms. It's all about the local councils coming to the UWC and reporting any issues or needs they have, or even making recommendations for legislation. They report on what they're seeing in their watersheds so we can understand and convey it to the legislature when we give our annual report. We can make recommendations to the legislature, whether that be changes in rule, requests for funding, or something else. We should have a rotating schedule for local councils to report to this council and provide us detail into what is happening in their watersheds. I also have a list of a dozen or more ideas for presentations and subjects on which the UWC should be educated.

(Sterling Brown) Utah Lake Watershed Council aims to have something prepared for the state council by our one year anniversary. You can put us on the agenda for July.

(Dan Adams) I was contacted this week about doing western states watershed council coordination. I joined the Southwest Collaborative meeting. All of their watershed councils have an annual meeting where they share with each other what they've learned, how to work with their legislature, how to find funding, etc. I'll keep reporting back on what I learn.

(Soren Simonsen) Eric McCulley and I attended the Utah Lake Watershed Council meeting in December. We'll continue attending as an interested stakeholder because our watersheds are connected. In the future we may like to create a more formal connection with that council. This cross-collaboration could be an important discussion point in the future as it could be of value to other watershed councils as well.

2:29 - 2:31 - Public comments

Paul Monroe asked about legislation related to watershed councils. Warren Peterson pointed him to House Bill 280.

2:31 - 2:45 - Administrative updates

Todd Stonely gave the following administrative updates:

- The Division has been looking into hosting a watershed councils training in conjunction with the Utah Water Users conference in March. If it won't work in this time frame, we would like to do it at Water Users next year or at another large event.
- The Division is hiring a full-time watershed council coordinator in the next month or so. The reason we have held off until now is because we have had the Langdon Group helping us organize these councils.
- We have heard from at least one local watershed council that the quorum and voting requirements are a challenge. It might be helpful if that were slightly relaxed in the legislation.
 - Marcelle Shoop pointed out that allowing proxies could help with this issue as well.
- We would like to create some branding and logos for this council and each local council. We will pursue an RFP if there is no objection.

Paul Monroe mentioned the issue of local councils losing A/V support from the Langdon Group when their work is done. Is there something the Division could do to provide assistance with communication in the future?

Todd Stonely responded that the A/V team at the DNR has offered various levels of support to local councils. The Division is looking into it and will decide how to move forward.

Rick Smith asked about the status of the Great Salt Lake Watershed Council and was told that there is some proposed legislation for the GSL Advisory Council to act as the GSL Watershed Council.

(Scott Paxman) At every UWC meeting there should be a brief report from each council, or at least a space where they are allowed to report.

2:45 - 2:45 - Wrap up & confirm upcoming council meeting

Next meeting: April 4, 2024 - 1 - 3 p.m., Department of Natural Resources

2:45 - Adjourn

Nathan Daugs motioned to adjourn. Soren Simonsen seconded. Meeting adjourned.

