

Minutes of the Red Deer River Municipal Water Users Group, September 20th, 2007, 2:00 p.m., Civic Centre, Drumheller, Alberta

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Co-Chairs John Sparling – Town of Drumheller and Reeve Earl Marshall, County of Stettler.

Present: Ray Romanetz - Town of Drumheller, Redford Peeples – Town of Stettler, Bryce Nimmo – Town of Drumheller, Lorna Watkinson-Zimmer – City of Red Deer, Cliff Soper – County of Lacombe, Doug Jones – Town of Oyen, Patt Churchill – Town of Innisfail, Tim Ainscough – Town of Innisfail, Ken VanDewark – County of Red Deer, George Taylor – Town of Sundre, Bill Shaw – City of Red Deer, Ray Reckseidler – Village of Delburne, Dug Major – Special Areas Board, Wayne Richardson – County of Paintearth, Cody Berggren – Town of Bowden/Mountainview Water Services Commission, Marlene Kortzman – Village of Alix, Len Waters – Village of Big Valley, Phil Frere – Town of Trochu, Art Grenville – County of Starland, Lynda Fiedler – Town of Sylvan Lake, Pat Burns – Town of Hanna, Warren Smith – Town of Olds, Al Kemmere – County of Mountain View, Bob Cammidge – Town of Bashaw, Earl Marshall – Co-Chair/County of Stettler, John Sparling – Co-Chair/Town of Drumheller, Keith Ryder – RDRMUG, Linda Handy – Recording Secretary/Town of Drumheller

2.0 Introductions

3.0 Adoption of Agenda

Peeples, Churchill that the agenda for the September 20th, 2007 Red Deer River Municipal Users Group Meeting be adopted as presented. Carried

4.0 Adoption of Minutes

Smith, Reckseidler that the minutes of the July 19th, 2007 Red Deer River Municipal Users Group be adopted as presented. Carried

5.0 Review current financial status

K. Ryder Executive Director provided an overview of the financial status to August 31, 2007 as follows:

Balance Sheet - Cash on hand: \$14,722.40; Investments include \$50,000 term deposit @ 3.1% and the membership approved an additional \$90,000 investment at their meeting of March 15th for a total investment of \$140,000.

Actual Expenses to date are \$25,219.19

Memberships reviewed. Memberships are budgeted on a 1/12 basis.

Smith, Churchill moved the adoption of the financial statement report as presented. Carried.

6.0 Executive Director's Report

a) Conservation Project with RDRWA

K. Ryder provided the following action items for conservation and best practices:

- continue to share information and conservation projects with the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance;
- keep website current with new links and ideas (new Conservation page);
- provide newsletters and articles relating to conservation facts;
- share members conservation successes with other members (several RDRMUG members have their own conservation strategies in place).

The Conservation Strategy includes: Inform, Educate and Get Public Buy In & Support.

b) Update on Red Deer River Allocations

K. Ryder provided an overview on the water allocation licenses in the South Saskatchewan River Basin. The legislation supports four principles of allocation since 1894:

- 1) The Crown owns the water.
- 2) Allocations are designed to promote development.
- 3) Licenses will be issued for allocations, and
- 4) There will be a priority system for allocation.

He stated that the 1999 Water Act confirmed these principles and instituted new approaches based on conservation and water management planning. The priority of water use in Alberta is based on a "first in time – first in right" principle. A household user has priority over all licensed or registered allocations.

He provided the following facts:

Current status of Red Deer River: Annual Median Flow: 1,586,657 dam³; Allocation Limit: 550,000 dam³; Current Allocations: 458,465 dam³ (84% of allocation limit – including pending applications); Volume remaining for Allocation: 91,535 dam³.

Alberta Environment has confirmed that with the pending and current application that there is 16% to 18% of the Allocation Limit is available.

He presented the action items for RDRMUG as follows:

- get study of future needs completed and presented as soon as possible;
- continue to monitor license applications;
- provide members with additional; and
- provide members with additional and current strategies to make the most of their current allocations.

7.0 Old Business - No items

8.0 New Business

a) Update from Steering Committee on Call for Proposals

K. Ryder advised that the Steering Committee has worked hard on the task of selecting a firm to undertake the Study. The Committee received proposals from five firms with Associated Engineering and Hart Water Management being awarded the contract to complete the RDRMUG Water Needs Study. The proposal outline includes:

- review existing information;
- population projections;
- current water use;
- projected future water use;
- water management in the Red Deer River Basin;
- storage possibilities;
- return flow and reuse;
- conservation
- recommendations for long term security of supply

The Steering Committee will kick off the first meeting with Associated Engineering and Hart Water Management on September 25th. The final report and presentation of this study will be presented at the RDRMUG meeting in March, 2008.

The membership congratulated and thanked Ray Romanetz, Patt Churchill, Tim Ainscough, Dug Major, Bill Shaw, and Keith Ryder for their involvement.

Discussion held on whether an aquifer was considered (more strain on the river during dry periods). A project with Environment is underway to come up with these projections.

b) Review Eastern Irrigation Project license application and what this means to our basin

B. Shaw explained that the Eastern Irrigation District (EID) has applied to amend two licenses one issued in 1902 and the second in 1903. He stated that the purposes of the current licenses are for irrigation and agriculture (stock watering) purposes. The amendment relates to two EID licenses which provide for a total annual diversion of 762,000 acre feet (939,546 dam³) at the Bassano Dam. The application to amend the licenses has been clarified such that the volume of water requested to be subject to the amendment is 20,000 acre feet (24,546 dam³) or about 3% of the EID licensed volume. The proposed amendment would provide the EID added flexibility to allocate water to users for additional purposes such as municipal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, management of fish, management of wildlife, habitat enhancement and recreation. B. Shaw presented factors that need to be considered in approving the amendment. He stated that the EID is requesting permission to act in a manner similar to a municipality or regional water commission, who are able to distribute licensed water to a variety of users within their community or area. He stated that like

other water authorities, the EID should have to prove need for a defined period of time (e.g. 30 years) and Alberta Environment should only approve an application for that period of time based upon reasonable support information. A written submission must be forwarded to Alberta Environment by October 13, 2007.

Discussion held on the rights to sell water to other communities and at what price.

Reckseidler, Watkinson-Zimmer moved that a letter be forwarded to Alberta Environment advising the RDRMUG is not opposed in principle to the Eastern Irrigation District application's to amend their water license however the amount being requested should be reduced and Alberta Environment should only approve an application for that period of time based upon reasonable support information, and further that the letter be copied to the General Manager of the Easter Irrigation Project. Carried.

c) Discuss and Review RDRMUG's significance in relationship to other water related organizations

Following the meeting with the Minister of Environment on July 19th, some members felt there was a dismissal of the RDRMUG's advocacy role by the Minister. It was noted that some members are joint members with Red Deer River Watershed Alliance and some are not. Discussion was held on the significance of the RDRMUG in relationship to other eater groups. The membership discussed how the Red Deer River Municipal Users Group differs from the Red Deer River Basin Watershed Alliance. The purposes of the Red Deer River Municipal Users Group are to provide a forum for municipalities to discuss water supply, water use and water quality. The group also serves as an advocate of municipal interests in the supply, use, delivery and quality of water. The main difference between the RDRMUG and the Alliance Group is that only municipal elected officials, municipal administrative officers, and municipal appointees serve as representatives on the RDRMUG, whereas the Alliance is represented by both private and public corporations. The RDRMUG focuses on policy, particularly long term sustainability, while the Alliance focuses more on operational management matters and more immediate issues relating to water quality, environmental impacts and such. The RDRMUG has access to a number of MLA's for lobbying on the actions the group pursues.

Membership reiterated that we must continue to work closely with and share in the well being of the Red Deer River Basin with the Watershed Alliance, Alberta Water Council and other water resource groups.

9.0 Review of Municipal Projects

a) Updates from members on water projects in their respective communities

- Village of Delbourne – application for annexation has been granted and water supply to this land is being considered;

- Special Areas Board – SSRB supply and demand study being formulated; it reflects what the RDRMUG would like to see. This study will be carried out on the full basin and the RDRMUG's study will form part of it (5 – 6 months for the RDRMUG's study to be completed); Special Areas Board Water Supply Project will be reducing the irrigation portion of their project - from 76,500 cubic decameters to 32,000 cubic decameters of water annually;
- Shirley McClellan Regional Water Service Commission design should be completed by October put to tender shortly thereafter with water flowing next fall. The Public Hearing process was held and the report has been filed with Environment;
- Mountainview Water Commission is undertaking a feasibility study from their treatment plant north to Spring Brook (and may include as far north as Gasoline Alley, Red Deer);
- Village of Alix – applied for extra dollars for their water treatment plant;
- Village of Big Valley – three wells operating well – new style of chlorination going well (still part of the Shirley McClellan pipeline project);
- Village of Trochu pumping system to be completed by October;
- Pipes are being installed in the areas of Craigmyle and Endiang;
- Bashaw – three wells are working good. They are on the Hwy 21 Pipeline Project (north edge of the Red Deer River Watershed). They have an interbasin transfer approval;
- Sylvan Lake pumps blew after several years of use; Regional Commission discussions ongoing for the supply of water from City of Red Deer;
- Henry Krueger is at double capacity of water reservoir;
- Town of Olds have their conservation measures in place but it appears they used more water than normal this past month;
- Town of Sundre is working with Mountain View County on mutual issues; stand alone system possible through grants; installation of water / sewer lines across Red Deer River; commercial growth anticipated because of this new access;
- Red Deer County on the list of approvals for water license;
- Innisfail – six months no action with regional sewage line; hopefully will move on this in October;
- Oyen's water system will be up and running shortly and is underbudget;
- Lacombe participating in regional studies;
- City of Red Deer working on conservation strategy;
- Drumheller's water line extension to Rosedale and Cambria is complete and the total cost of the project is \$4 million;
- Town of Stettler – Associated Engineering working on their plan design stage 1; working on raw water storage – reservoir and regional water supply;
- Stettler County – putting in sewer system southside of Buffalo Lake – 11 quarters waiting to be developed.

Co Chair John Sparling stated that it was an honor to serve on this Group and he wished the members well in their endeavors.

Adjournment:

The next meeting is scheduled for **November 15th at 1:00 PM at the Civic Centre, Drumheller, Alberta.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.