

# WATER BOARD MINUTES

July 20, 2020

This Water Board Meeting was held remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic

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## REGULAR MEETING

The July 20, 2020 meeting of the Longmont Water Board was called to order by Chair Todd Williams at 3:05 pm via remote Zoom meeting connection.

### 1. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Todd Williams, John Caldwell, Kathy Peterson, and Roger Lange

Board Members Excused: Renee Davis

City Staff Members Present: Ken Huson, Wes Lowrie, Kevin Boden, Francie Jaffe, Jason Elkins, David Bell, Dale Rademacher, Becky Doyle, Annie Noble, Lisa Knoblauch, Barbara McGrane, and Heather McIntyre

Council Liaison Present: Marcia Martin

### 2. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

There was a quorum present with four board members in attendance.

### 3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

Chair Williams asked if there were any questions or comments on the June 15, 2020 meeting minutes. **Board member Caldwell moved, Board member Peterson seconded, to approve Water Board's June 15, 2020 minutes. The motion carried 4-0.**

### 4. WATER STATUS REPORT

Staff member Wes Lowrie gave the current water status report. The flow of the St. Vrain at the Lyons gage at 1:15 pm today was 127 cfs, with the 124-year historic average of 240 cfs for this date.

The call on the St. Vrain Creek is the James Ditch, Admin #6756 with a priority date of 6/30/1868, and the call on the Main Stem of the South Platte River is the Fort Morgan Canal, Admin #11979, with a priority date of 10/18/1882.

Ralph Price Reservoir at Button Rock Preserve is currently full and spilling. Union Reservoir is down approximately ½ foot. Local reservoirs in the basin at the end of June 2020 were approximately 90% of capacity (about average over the last 12 years).

**5. PUBLIC INVITED TO BE HEARD AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

None

**6. AGENDA REVISIONS AND SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS**

None

**7. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

**A. North Star Filing 1 Final Plat**

North Star Filing 1 Final Plat is a 34.768-acre parcel located northeast of Plateau Road and N. 79<sup>th</sup> Street, west of Renaissance Drive, and south of Clover Basin Drive. All historic water rights were transferred to the City at the time of annexation; there was a deficit of 69.466 acre-feet. Water Board approved a recommendation that North Star Filing 1 Final Plat would be in compliance with the Raw Water Requirement Policy upon satisfaction of the 69.466 acre-foot deficit at time of final plat approval.

**Board member Lange moved, seconded by Board member Peterson, to approve. The motion carried 4-0.**

**8. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**A. Climate Action Task Force Recommendation – Water Conservation**

Staff member Lisa Knoblauch, Sustainability Program Manager, gave the Board an overview of the recommendations included in the final report of the Climate Action Task Force (CATF). This report was presented to City Council at their meetings on June 30 and July 7, 2020. Feedback from the City's various advisory boards regarding recommendations that were relevant to the boards.

The main CATF recommendation applicable to the Water Board's purview was that of the Adaptation & Resiliency recommendation related to Water Conservation. This recommendation suggested expanding and creating new programs and initiatives to achieve a 35-40% reduction in overall water consumption below a 2019 baseline by 2025. Staff member Knoblauch noted that staff identified this as a very aggressive goal requiring significant financial resources and redesigns of current parks and golf courses within the City. She further expressed recognition for a need to further analyze and discover financial impacts to navigate the feasibility of this recommendation.

Board members Peterson and Caldwell expressed significant concerns regarding the viability of this recommendation, noting extreme impacts to city parks and trees, downstream water rights, return flows, and the agricultural community. The five-year window to achieve the stated water consumption reduction recommended by the task

force was also of concern. They questioned the source and data used to identify a need for such a drastic reduction in water consumption and suggested looking at cuts that were achieved during the drought of 2002 for guidance in recommending a reduction that was realistic.

Chair Williams read a statement from Board member Davis, a water conservation expert, regarding her thoughts on this CATF recommendation, in which she noted that the effort of the recommendation was plausible, though unattainable as it was presented. Board member Davis referenced the 2015 Pacific Institute Paper shows a 10% decline in water use over 10 years (2000-2010) and stated that these numbers were typical both nationally and locally.

Chair Williams added that the recommendation for a 35-40% reduction would negatively affect low-income residents, as it would demand significant increases in water rates. He and other Board members stated that the City has already adopted a water efficiency master plan and a raw water master plan, which address reducing water consumption over a longer period.

Board members expressed a willingness to revisit the numbers in the current plans to determine where there might be areas to plan for additional conservation. Staff member Jaffe reported that data collected from 2004-2010 and 2015-2019 from the metered water usage show a 12% reduction in overall water consumption and added that this reduction has met the goal stated in the most recent plans. She suggested that staff could conduct further analysis for conservation to honor the intent of the CATF recommendation. Council member Martin echoed Staff member Jaffe's suggestion.

After further discussion, the Board voted with four thumbs down not to support the Climate Action Task Force's water conservation recommendation. They unanimously agreed to appoint Chair Williams to compose comments to submit to Council on the Board's behalf giving context to their decision to reject the recommendation and stating great concern for needed analysis of the environmental, economic, social impacts on such extreme conservation measures. Added to those arguments would be a statement of support for evaluating increased conservation levels beyond those already included in the City's Water Efficiency Master Plan and Drought Management Plan and an acknowledgement of the City's historical success in planning and preparing the community for drought with a reliable water supply. Chair Williams' summary would be forwarded to Council with preliminary Board approval, subject to official approval at the August 17, 2020 Water Board meeting.

## **B. Windy Gap Firing Project Update**

Staff member Huson updated the Board on the status of the Windy Gap Firing Project, which was also provided in the July Water Board packet. He then reviewed a draft allotment contract and staff's recommendation for the City's participation level. After further financial analysis and in light of the current forecasted budget constraints, staff presented an option for moving the City's participation level in the Project to 7,500 acre-feet (AF). This alternative participation level provides the opportunity to evaluate the

cost benefits of participating at a slightly lower level than Council's originally approved 8,000 AF.

Board member Caldwell suggested that the City of Longmont consider the value of the Windy Gap Firming Project as a significant investment due to the current prices of a share in the Project. Deputy City Manager Dale Rademacher expressed understanding and appreciation for Board member Caldwell's perspective, particularly given the value of water in the western US. However, he stated that the cost of balancing the City's overall water utility needs was more significant than that associated with decreasing the City's water supply by 500 AF; therefore, staff submitted the proposal for a final participation level in the Project of 7,500 AF.

Board member Lange asked for clarification on the cost "pain" associated with the 8,000 AF participation level. Staff member Becky Doyle, Assistant Director of Business Services, stated that calculations with the higher participation level showed other areas of asset management for the City's water supply system would be more limited, whereas participation at 7,500 AF opened up additional resources for replacing treated water storage, for example. She stated that there would be significant impacts to other assets in the system should the City remain at the 8,000 AF level.

After further discussion, **Board member Lange moved, seconded by Board member Peterson, to recommend that City Council approve a 7,500 acre-foot participation level in the allotment contract for the Windy Gap Firming Project. The motion carried 4-0.**

### **C. Cash-in-Lieu Review**

Staff member Lowrie reminded the Board of City Council's approved Resolution R-2020-18 establishing the fee for cash-in-lieu of water right received at the current rate of \$17,683.00 per acre-foot.

The Board reviewed and discussed the current cash-in-lieu rate with no recommendation for change to the fee at this time.

## **9. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

### **A. Water Conservation Update**

Staff member Jaffe presented an update to the Board on overall water conservation since 2006, which included a couple of statistical graphs (originally part of the Water Efficiency Master Plan and extended to include data through 2019). These graphs depicted a reduction in annual metered water consumption from 2007 to 2019 and in water use per capita per day in Longmont's service area from 2006 to 2019. She noted a 5-year average of 12% reduction in water consumption since 2004 and a 5-year average of 18% reduction in water use per capita since 2007, particularly highlighting that Longmont's population continued to increase during that time.

Staff member Jaffe also reported on community participation in the various water conservation programs offered by the City in conjunction with Resource Central and Efficiency Works. She explained that the City's toilet and irrigation rebate programs transitioned to being part of Efficiency Works' program at the beginning of 2020. Though we have seen a decline in the number of approved toilet rebates so far this year, Staff member Jaffe noted stricter requirements for receiving the rebate than the previous program. Additionally, she reported a more concerted effort in promoting the irrigation rebate, which has paid off with increased participation in 2020. Other programs mentioned in her update included the Garden in a Box, Water-wise Webinars, Slow the Flow, transitioning 1.25 acres to water-wise turf, and an indoor fixture upgrade pilot with the St. Vrain Valley School District.

**10. ITEMS FROM BOARD**

**A. Review of Major Project Listing**

A review of major project listing was provided in the agenda packet.

Board member Lange asked for a report to the Board on the Water Bond Ballot issue. Staff member Huson stated that he would send out information that was presented to Council recently and that there would be a presentation to the Board at their August 17, 2020 meeting.

Board member Caldwell asked Staff member Huson a follow-up question to the Windy Gap Firing Project participation level discussion regarding the sales process if Council were to approve a lower participation level for Longmont. Staff member Huson explained how that process would work if Council approved the 7,500 AF participation level.

**11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND WATER BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Williams thanked Board member Caldwell for his continued participation in Water Board until a new Board member was appointed by Council. He again acknowledged his service to the Water Board, with great appreciation for his time and insight. Deputy City Manager Dale Rademacher added his thanks to Board member Caldwell as well.

**12. ITEMS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS**

The next cash-in-lieu review is scheduled for the September 2020 meeting.

**13. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before Water Board, Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 5:24 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Longmont Water Board is scheduled for August 17, 2020, at 3:00 pm. The location will be determined by the pandemic guidelines at that time.

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**Todd Williams, Water Board Chair**

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**Date**

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**Heather McIntyre, Recording Secretary**

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**Date**