

Great Bend Prairie Regional Advisory Committee Meeting 1:00 p.m., June 4, 2019 St. John, KS

Members Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Berry Bortz (Chair)	Preston, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2019	Yes
Keith Miller (Vice-Chair)	Barton Co., KS	Agriculture 3	2019	Yes
Jay Dill	Kinsley, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2021	Yes
Roy Eckert	Pratt, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2019	Yes
Daniel Filbert	Macksville, KS	Agriculture 2	2021	no
Mark Fincham	Pratt, KS	Groundwater Irrigation	2019	no
Orrin Feril	Stafford, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
John Haas	Larned, KS	At Large Public 2	2019	no
Jeremiah Hobbs	La Crosse, KS	Watershed Protection	2019	Yes
Jeff Holste	Burdett, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2021	no
Kendal Francis	Great Bend, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	no
Tom Turner	St. John, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	Yes
Vacant		Public Water Supply 4	2021	vacant

Others in attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Fran Brownell	St. John News
Steve Frost	KDA
Matt Unruh	KWO
Diane Knowles	KWO

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Berry Bortz welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. Introductions were made.

Approval of Agenda - Agenda was accepted with the addition of an update on the R9.

Regional Advisory Committee Approval of past meeting notes

Motion: RAC accept the meeting notes from March 2019 as presented. Keith Miller made the motion, Orrin Feril seconded. The motion carried.

Kansas Water Authority

The April KWA meeting in Abilene was discussed by Keith Miller, Orrin, and Matt noting there was discussion on the process to merge of the Vision and Water Plan over the next year or so; the Budget process for the SFY2021; and the possible need to look at state policy in regard to the water transfer process to allow conversations with other states. This would need to include identifying any legal road blocks.

Membership Drive

Diane reported that there are sufficient applications to fill the vacant and expiring positions, although the KWA may choose to adjust categories. Recommendations will be developed by the KWA committee in June for the full authority consider in July.

Discussion also occurred on KWA appointments still being processed by the governor's office including the chairman of KWA. The appointment of new RAC chairpersons will be made by the KWA chairman after the new appointments of RAC members. Berry noted he will not continue on as chairperson.

Budget

Matt Unruh, Kansas Water Office provided an overview of the SFY 2020 budget and the draft SFY2021 Water Plan budget, pointing out the major differences. Some of those discussed were the KDHE programs Contamination Remediation and Drinking Water Protection; and KDA's Water Resources Cost-Share, Aid to Conservation Districts and the initial funding for match for CREP in the Rattlesnake Creek basin.

Matt provided explanations about the subbasin management program (KDA), water resources cost share's increase and crop and livestock research. Subsequent discussion involved the suggestion that research of less water intensive crop research might be a better description than the more specific feed wheat research advocated in the regional goal. The outcome of this discussion was the following motion.

Budget Motion 1, Keith Miller made the motion, seconded by Orrin Feril and approved by the committee:

The Great Bend Prairie RAC recommends the addition of at least another \$200,000 to the research line for research of less water intensive crops as alternative crops and livestock feed.

The discussion clarified the technology and crop, water technology farm and irrigation technology budget lines.

It was noted that the review of a list of potential projects for research indicates the feed wheat project is not being considered. It was also noted that the wheat industry is hesitant to support an additional wheat variety that requires handling (storage and transportation) separate from present wheat crops.

Discussion moved to research related to the Sustainability Goal. Noting the need to update and run the area groundwater model and the discussion from a year ago for the State to aid in that model work in GMD5. It was noted that that work would most likely fall under water management rather than the research line.

Budget Motion 2, Keith Miller made a motion, seconded by Jay Dill and approved by the RAC (Orrin Feril abstained) recommending to KWA: *to increase the funding under water management by \$25,000 to provide GMD5 partial funding to update, calibrate and make a run of the GMD5 model, noting this contributes directly to the sustainability goal.*

Other highlights in the budget discussion identified some of the projects in water management such as the KDA water use study; KGS online reporting aid to KDA; USGS aid to KDA for water use date quality control.

Due to some programs descriptions in agencies' budgets, discussion of water plan fund supporting staffing occurred. A request to identify any related regulations was made. It was noted that some positions had been funded in the past but after the initial year it has been policy to move off water plan funds. For clarification purposes after the meeting - Statutes prohibit using State Water Plan Funds for existing FTEs (82a-951).

Discussion of funding water conservation programs verified the importance of adequately funding such programs in the state. It was noted that dollars for CREP go farther than WTAP since it is match to federal funds and WTAP is solely 1 state dollars. It was noted that GMD5 has funds for incentives to reduce water used.

Budget Motion 3, Orrin Feril made the motion, seconded by Tom Turner and passed. *The Great Bend Prairie RAC recommends the legislature increase funding to encourage conservation programs by expanding existing priority areas for CREP and WTAP and support the KDA SFY21 funding requests related to these programs.*

Watershed dams were discussed identifying the current level of dams and noting that if all the “planned” structures were built, the regional goal of at least 50% of the existing watershed districts areas that include the downstream in the Great Bend Prairie Region would be met.

Budget Motion 4, Jeremiah Hobbs made the motion, seconded by Jay Dill and passed. *The Great Bend Prairie RAC recommends to increase of funds allocated to watershed dam construction by at least \$200,000.*

Discussion to identify additional needs for the region did not identify another priority at this time. The four priorities for the Great Bend Prairie RAC, not in a specific priority order are:

- Research for less water intensive crops and alternative feeds
- Local Model Update as a Water Management Tool
- Water Reduction Incentive Programs
- Watershed Dam Construction

Water Vision and Regional Activities

Regional activities were discussed noting the tree removal project occurring in the Rattlesnake basin.

Diane provided a table with action items status identified and then used at a state and regional level to track progress. The objective of the discussion is to begin the thought process related to updating existing goals and action plans and identifying new ones if needed.

Discussion moved to the promise made to develop an inter-agency memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address water issues in the Vision and Water Plan. Discussion noted that a standard operating procedure is needed that will aid in consistency and meeting expectations by including of an implementation process for regional goal implementation and accountability. It was also noted that the governor’s administration needs to support the efforts, without this combined with KWA and KWO support progress will not be made.

Discussion of the need to change goals or actions plans noted that there are expectation to change some, especially timelines. It was discussed previously that the feed wheat goal be adjusted to less specific research, less water intensive alternative crops and possibly cotton gin “trash”.

It was also noted that public input would be better gathered in the winter.

Agency Updates

KDA-DOC- No additional report.

GMD5- Orrin Feril reported that KDA does not agree with the most recent LEMA technological analysis. The GMD is waiting on the formal letter to that effect. The WaterPack request to Secretary of Agriculture Beam in regard to the R9 water right changes was declined. Additional discussion was provided by Jay Dill, noting Water PACK’s has filed for judicial relief in the process of changing the R9 water rights. The issues outlined included questioning the Chief Engineer’s authority to issue a contingent change order.

Adjourn