



# Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

## Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 am, Monday, December 17, 2018

Pioneer Seeds Meeting Room, 240 W. US Highway 24, Downs, KS

### Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Donald Hellwig (Chair)	Solomon, KS	Agriculture	2021	Yes
Mike Brzon	Courtland, KS	At Large Public	2021	Yes
John Cockerham	Osborne, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	No
Raymond Debey	Cawker City, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2019	Yes
Timothy Driggs	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	No
Stacey Forshee	Ottawa County, KS	At Large Public	2019	No
Keith Houghton	Tipton, KS	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation	2019	No
Terry Nelson	Phillips County, KS	Irrigation West	2021	Yes
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2021	No
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2019	Yes

### Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Travis Sieve	KDHE	Megan Lambert	NRCS
Kelly Stewart	KDA/DWR	Robbin Dibble	OS Cons. Dist.
Pete Gile	KBID	Dan Meyerhoff	KACD
Monty Breneman	NRCS	Donna Meader	KDA/DOC
Tj	KWO		

**I. Welcome and Introductions:** Donald Hellwig, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am with self-introductions around the table. There was a little discussion about changes in the Water Office with Tracy's retirement and how that could change things. Earl will be interim Director until one is appointed by the new Governor, office should function as normal.

### II. RAC Business:

- a) **Review of July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting notes:** Don asked if there were any additions or corrections to the July 23rd meeting notes, there were none. They stand approved as written.
- b) **Review of August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting Manhattan:** Don mentioned that this was a while ago however he did get to present on the transfer of water from the Platte into the Republican River during high flow periods. The proposal met with pretty stiff opposition from both Nebraska and Kansas entities and will be continued in the courts. Governor Colyer sent a let objecting to the transfer. Don also mentioned the Docking Institute Economic study on Keith Sebelius Reservoir. There was also a presentation by Ted Harris on Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) research he is conducting at the KU research facility. There was also discussion on the Reservoir Protection Initiative to reduce reservoir sedimentation in 4 watersheds.
- c) **Filling of Scott's vacant position on the RAC (At Large Public):** Don brought up the two vacant positions that need to be filled, Scott's and JP's. A few names have been mentioned however if anyone has possible replacements please pass those on to Tj. They have to fill out an application and are submitted to the RAC Operations Committee to be voted on, hopefully by spring we would have those positions filled.

- III. Update from KBID-Project Status:** Pete Gile made this presentation and the presentation is available [here](#). To date using multiple sources of funding KBID has buried approximately 109 miles of pipe, ranging from 10-36". Of the original \$2.5 million of the SCOTUS money over \$1.7 million remains with additional BOR WaterSMART grants this will be stretched even further. He has two small projects that will begin shortly, Ridge 5.0 and the 31.1 lateral which will amount to around 3 miles of pipe. Pete is looking at using slide gates instead of the large heavy butterfly gates that he previously used. These gates cost around \$2,000 each and are much easier to work with, ability to seal is the only question he has. The future is in automation of the delivery system using other Districts knowledge on how to accomplish this. There is a good deal of interest in complete automation of the Courtland Canal from the Guide Rock Diversion dam to Lovewell Reservoir, 35 miles and 12 check structures. Nebraska is interested in this and is considering partnering with KBID using their water sustainability fund, there have been some initial meetings. Pete said the Harlan County Tainter gate project was completed however KBID may have been over charged on their share of the \$38 million project. An ongoing audit may reduce the KBID charges by millions.
- IV. Update from KWO on KGS study:** Tj led this discussion with a ppt developed by the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) that is available [here](#). With the conversion of open canals to pipe there was a question about recharge and the 4 year study by KGS is meant to try and answer some of these questions. KBID had a significant amount of historic water level data that KGS continues to enter. There were a total of 7 wells that were selected and were fitted with sensors and started collecting data in December of 2017. Water samples have also been collect for isotope analysis to determine where the recharge water is coming from. A couple of the wells showed little response to the filling of canals in June, some showed more response to rainfall events while other showed a much dampened response. KGS will continue to monitor the wells collecting levels, complete the analysis of the isotope samples and present at a meeting next fall with more information to draw conclusions from. There were several questions raised about how streams had dried up after the conversion and especially where there was no return water to some tributaries.
- V. Update from KDHE on WRAPS:** Travis Sieve went through a ppt that had been given to agency and contractors which can be found [here](#). A couple large changes are in the making with more emphasis on delisting of water bodies (S21) EPA reporting and reallocating funds to high priority projects. The new funding approach reclassifies projects into Active or Partnership. The Partnership projects will compete annually for a pot of money around \$300,000 using the Watershed Plan as the guiding tool and BMP funding based on efficiency. Prairie Dog Creek, Kirwin and Waconda WRAPS all fall into the Partnership category. The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) will be the grant coordinator for all of the Partnership projects. Active projects will develop a strategic plan with the help of KDHE to attack TMDL's and work on delisting water bodies. KDHE intends to get out and meet will all the SLTs as they are scheduled through the winter months.
- VI. Update on the two public meetings held on the Sebelius Economic Report by the Docking Institute:** Tj started this discussion noting the difference in attendance at the two meetings, the second was much more informative. Terry talked about the contract and the value to the Irrigation District. As long as the annual \$100,000 payment is made in January things are good however if not or when the contract comes up again more money might be required to satisfy the irrigators. The final economic report produced by the Docking Institute is available [here](#). The report is a good tool to point to when considering the value of reservoirs to counties and surrounding communities.

**VII. Update from KWO-Milford lake Watershed RCPP:** Tj led this discussion with the aid of a Factsheet and more information can be found at [www.milfordwatershed.org](http://www.milfordwatershed.org). There was a formal signing of the RCPP at the Kansas Water Authority in August however the program wasn't officially launched until the Governor's Water Conference in Manhattan on November 14<sup>th</sup>. There are more than 30 partners that have joined together to make this multi-million dollar effort a success. Financial assistance is being offered to landowners with the goal of reducing the nutrient loading in the Milford watershed by 31,000 pounds of phosphorus annually. The Milford watershed includes portions of Jewell, Republic, Washington, Mitchell, Cloud, Clay, Riley, Dickenson and Geary Counties. Funding is available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to implement practices on land in Milford watershed to address water quality concerns. Some of the water quality improvement best management practices that are available for funding are: nutrient management, residue management, filter strips, grass plantings, cover crops and several others. Two approaching sign-up dates have been set, December 21<sup>st</sup> and March 15, 2019. There was considerable discussion with some feeling that this program was pointing the finger at producers as being the cause of the Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). In addition to the RCPP several other in-lake activities are going to be tried over the next couple of years to help deal with the phosphorous that is already in the lake.

**VII. Comments:** Kelly, KDA-DWR, brought up that there will be a \$20 fee for not filling water use reports on-line. He stated that their on-line reporting system has been in place for 5 years and there are approximately 27% of water right holders that file on-line. It is the hope of DWR to hold some outreach events at multiple locations where producers can file their reports on-line with the help from a DWR employee. There will be some exemptions for those who can't file on-line. There was some discussion about the unwillingness of producers to change to on-line reporting.

### **VIII. Future Meetings:**

- a. Kansas Water Authority: December 19<sup>th</sup>, Ag Credit Wichita, KS.
- b. Kansas Water Authority: January 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>, Topeka, KS (Legislative Visits)
- c. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (March 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>)
- d. Don adjourned the meeting with no further business a little after 12 pm.