

NLFCZD Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Spokane County Public Works Building 3:00pm-5:00pm

Present:

Board Members: Jane Takai, Lorne Burley, Judy Gibbs-Foy, Laurie Keaton, Laretta Block
Alternate Members: Quincy Edmonds, Sharon Cusic, Kim Jones (via conference call)
Staff: Marianne Barrentine, Jacob McCann, Jane Anderson
Other: Barry Moore (WSU), Wendy Burley

Items Discussed:

Lake Level –

The lake level today is 2125.56 with both gates closed. This is about 1/10th above the goal elevation at this time of the year. The gates will be opened in the next day or two to drop the level down closer to the goal elevation.

Alum System NPDES Permit –

Staff has an e-mail into the Department of Ecology (DOE) to set up a meeting to discuss the status of the permit.

Milfoil –

Treatment is scheduled for June 30th and will focus primarily on open water areas with big concentrations such as the south end of the lake, the north end of the lake where the island is located, and the bay by Warren Heylman's home. Liquid 2,4-D will be used with a higher concentration that almost doubles that which was used in previous years and will be injected at specific depths in the water column. Staff is unsure at this time if this treatment will be the only one this year. Not much improvement has been seen with treating around docks and at this time does not appear to be cost effective. The goal is to treat the large open water infestations that are a high risk for spreading so future management can employ less impactful and costly treatment options (such as hand pulling) and be more of a maintenance situation. The liquid treatment does not have a swimming restriction and within a couple of weeks the plants should look affected and should disappear soon after. Tom Wimpy with Inland Water Pest Control & Consulting is the contractor again this year and will be sub-contracting the work with Lakeland Restoration. Cost wise the liquid is cheaper than granular; raising the concentration will increase the cost, but it still is cheaper.

Education on how to pull the milfoil is important as not to continue spreading it, but to allow for residents to possibly remove it from their dock areas. It would be beneficial to discuss the proper pulling technique at the summer meeting.

Jacob is waiting to hear back from Kathy Hamel at the Department of Ecology (DOE) regarding how much energy should be spent into applying for another grant as the NLFCZD has been under grants for 7 years and Ecology's grant application structure is built to give preference to projects that have not previously received State funds.

January 6th Hearing –

Sharon asked what \$30,000 was used for and mentioned that there was no discussion about this during the last Advisory Board meeting. This was due to the excessive amount spent for milfoil that was not originally budgeted; however, most of the milfoil expenses were reimbursed through the DOE milfoil grant. The County tracks expenses and reimbursements separately and because the budget did not take into the account the extra amount spent, the Commissioners decided to put an extra \$30,000 in the budget to cover what was spent. Staff can't spend more than that total expense line budgeted without going to the Commissioners for approval.

2008 Budget –

The 2008 expenses were very close to what was budgeted. Salary expenses were approximately \$2,400 under what was budgeted. A brief explanation on salaries: Jane Anderson is the NL Engineer, Jacob McCann is the NL Technician, Dean Franklin is the FC/Aerator Tech, and Other Staff consists of other County employees that occasionally help with District activities such as take the NLFCZD boat to/from the lake and aid in facility inspections. On the FC/Aerator Tech salary expenses, this includes Dean's salary and full benefits, although he is an extra help and the benefits are closer to 15% of his salary rather than approximately 50%. Accounting needs to back this out and staff is in the process of requesting this be updated. What is budgeted and not spent goes back into the reserves. On Flood Control, we have approximately \$102,000 in reserves and would like \$40,000, so we are trying to spend down the reserves closer to \$40,000. Water Quality maintenance was spent over the \$5,000 budgeted due to replacing AirSep valves and filters and 8,000 hour services on the compressors. The aerator pump was last pulled in the Fall of 2006 for maintenance and we anticipate continuing pulling the pump every five years for preventative maintenance. Electricity was a little under budget due to the late startup. Alum was right on target, with 14 deliveries. Only one newsletter was prepared in 2008. The new boat motor was not budgeted, so not as much was added to the Water Quality reserves as anticipated.

2009 Budget –

So far to date we are in good shape. Don't anticipate any issues or concerns.

2010 Budget –

This budget is assuming the level of service remains the same. The proposed budget increases Water Quality assessments about 9.8% to cover increasing costs. Salaries were increased to cover a portion of the step increase and COLAs. The NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System – DOE and EPA regulated discharges) permit for the alum will be increasing approximately 5% and then 4.5% the following year. The annual fees to cover the maintenance and services for the Quartz Peak Snotel Site provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service are increasing \$500. The NLFCZD is a cooperative technical partner for the Quartz Peak site. The Flood Control sump cleaning was increased to reflect more current costs to scarify the sump. The noxious weed control contract was re-bid to control the different weeds along the channel. Improvement has been noticed along the Starr Road Bridge and sump. Staff feels that milfoil control is still important so budgeted \$18,500 as an average annual amount. Liability insurance rates will decrease so decreased that line item. The 2010 budget presented keeps the Flood Control assessments the same as the previous year and decreases the Flood Control Reserves by \$11,778. The Water Quality assessments are proposed to increase by 9.8% and add \$10,475 to the Water Quality reserves. Again, this budget is assuming the level of services remains the same.

Staff provided a few ideas to discuss to decrease the water quality assessments:

- Spend more from the reserves.

- Don't treat the milfoil for a year or downsize the milfoil treatment.
- Do one newsletter instead of two.
- Cut the electricity budget (aerator operation) which would save on Dean's time as well. Barry noted we have tried this before and it is not beneficial.

Initially began building Flood Control reserves which were depleted in the 1996/1997 flooding. Flood Control reserves were built up again to look at dike repairs as the dike was subsiding. As it has been years since the sump has needed to be scrapped the reserves have continued to grow. At the same time, the water quality funds were depleted with a series of unplanned repairs. The only way to shift the reserves from Flood Control to Water Quality is to do that through the lowered Flood Control assessments as Flood Control has different benefit areas.

Barry discussed talking with an attorney about the connection between milfoil and flooding and seeing if we can charge a portion of the milfoil treatment against Flood Control. This would aid in lowering the Flood Control reserves.

Wendy feels building up the Water Quality reserves is important and needed. She also mentioned preparing one newsletter next year. It is a very good education source and is needed for grants and permitting. Marianne feels the newsletter is well read and provides great education.

Laurie recommended preparing two smaller newsletters rather than one big newsletter. She is concerned with lowering the Water Quality budget and thinks money should be put into the salaries to aid in grant writing so we can obtain the grants. Staff noted that the smaller newsletter does not provide much savings. However, the Winter 2009 newsletter used bulk mailing rates which cost approximately \$340 instead of approximately \$600 for first class postage.

Judy noted there is \$1,000 for septic assistance and we should use this money to educate people or help people to be knowledgeable about what options they have with their failing septic systems.

Sharon asked for a mailing of the proposed assessments prior to the Board of Equalization meeting. Per the Policy of the District, staff does not normally do a mailing unless there is a significant assessment increase.

Lorne would like to see us get the increase down so there is no increase in Water Quality assessments. He also mentioned that new buoys are needed around the aerator. Lorne requested that staff review the budget again and re-send to the Advisory Board for thoughts.

District Staff agreed to look into charging a portion of milfoil costs to Flood Control and review and revise the draft budget for Advisory Board review.

Summer Meeting –

The NLFCZD/NLPOA Summer Meeting is scheduled from 6-9pm on Thursday, July 16th at the Newman Lake Tri-Community Grange. Staff would like the NLFCZD to present during the first half which would allow Barry to present his report earlier. The NLPOA would present during the second half. Staff will post fliers in the gas station, post office, and store as well as asking the Grange to put a notice on the reader board. Staff will also put a notice in the Valley Voice section of the newspaper. The NLPOA would like to have someone from either WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife or Spokane County to discuss shoreline and dock regulations and permits and provide handouts from Fish and Wildlife.

TMDL Update –

Staff will make official comments to DOE next week and have concerns with the monitoring and who will be responsible for it. Volunteers? WSU? Also need clarification on who will be doing the watershed monitoring. Adding watershed monitoring will require increased costs to the District.

Marianne mentioned the Commissioners have tasked staff to come back to them with options for funding for the District. This is pertinent to funding of TMDL implementation activities that may require more watershed based funding. This will consist of presenting the options that were presented to them last year.

Other –

The next Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for September 10th.

Kim would like to discuss the lake level at the next meeting. Laurie requested the fish count information from last year. Jacob will follow-up on obtaining this information.

Judy discussed an opening in the year where the lake level could be dropped for a short period of time to allow homeowners to repair their shorelines and beaches.

Removal of derelict docks requires a WDFW free permit. Suggest a Community Cleanup day organized by a Homeowners group.

Reminder –

The NLFCZD/NLPOA Summer Meeting will be held at the Newman Lake Tri-Community Grange on Thursday, July 16th from 6-9pm.

Submitted by,

Jane Anderson
NLFCZD Staff