

**MINUTES
OF THE
LA PAZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Monday, February 5, 2018, 1:00 p.m.
Worksession**

Chairman Wilson called the February 5, 2018, worksession of the La Paz County Board of Supervisors to order at 1:00 p.m. Elected Officials and Department Heads present were: Chairman Wilson, Supervisor Minor, Supervisor Irwin, County Administrator Drake, Emergency Services Director Biro, Community Development Administrator Yackley; and Clerk of the Board Green.

QuadState presentation and discussion regarding services provided to the County

Gerald Hillier, Executive Director of the QuadState Local Governments Authority, gave a presentation to the Board, explaining the purpose of the organization and its history. He stated that the organization started in 1999, with six counties banded together over the issue of the Mohave Desert Tortoise. He stated that it resolved that it would work with Fish and Game to receive 5-year reviews; and is currently engaged in providing information on the Sonoran Desert Tortoise; however, it was ultimately not listed as endangered. He added that the organization is invited to the yearly Desert Tortoise Council.

He shared QuadState's Mission Statement, emphasizing that the group "bends backwards" to work with other Counties and address their issues; shared their proposed work plan for 2017/2018; and encouraged the County to join them.

Chairman Wilson asked if the group was involved in the Lower Colorado River Conservation Plan.

Mr. Hillier stated that QuadState became engaged with them to be sure they involved local government and respected their positions.

He explained briefly the issues with Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), and how QuadState is currently involved in that issue so important to Counties.

Discussion on the Alamo Flushing Flow Release

Mike Wilson from Abbey Stubbs and Ford Consultants asked the Board if they had seen a draft letter he had prepared to Fish and Wildlife regarding the Alamo flushing flow release. He stated that he felt the County had a "valid and existing right" to the renewal of the Planet Ranch Road lease.

Mr. Wilson stated that he felt the lack of communication as a "stall" until the termination date, at which time the County would then have no rights to it.

Supervisor Irwin stated that she had attended a meeting with Fish and Wildlife over a year ago on the renewal with a few interested groups also attending, and Fish and Wildlife were reluctant to talk about it. She stated that she was informed that they were not accepting any renewal applications.

Mr. Wilson questioned what authority came up with what she was told.

He explained to the public that the Corps of Engineers was doing a release in order to provide needed maintenance on the dam; and an environmental assessment would be published.

He stated that 5,000 cubic feet per second of water is to be released from the Alamo Dam to Bill Williams. He stated that the amount of water is 100 times the minimum required, which he termed a "super flood". He called the environmental assessment "completely inaccurate" in terms of the research and analysis; and the public notice was insufficient to all the entities involved with the lake and the dam.

He stated that there is a lot of ATV traffic between Highway 95 and the dam, and there were concerns over safety, and how long the trails would be closed to the public.

He gave a history of the right-of-way grant received by the County and the boundary changes made later so that the Planet Ranch Road became inside the boundaries of Refuge, "subject to valid and existing rights".

Discussion ensued regarding the apparent delays and excuses given by Fish and Wildlife for the County or other interested parties to go in and clear out Planet Ranch Road after the flooding of the past and years of growth.

Supervisor Irwin stated, as an update, that recently John Strong, associated with numerous trail groups, was given the "green light" to clear the road.

Supervisor Wilson stated, in reference to the Alamo Flushing Flow Release, that the County was not opposed to the release, just the process, because no other entity was involved.

Mr. Strong asked if there had been any studies related as to the amount of debris with the flow of the water release.

Mr. Wilson stated that there was not any kind of environmental reporting calculations of water velocity, and the like, in relation to the release and how it would affect the area.

Discussion ensued speculating on how the amount of debris flushed downstream might structurally affect the bridge on Highway 95; many other questions and concerns that were being raised, and what was felt was the responsibility of the Fish and Game to answer.

Supervisor Minor expressed stated that he was concerned with the timing of the water release and the County’s request to renew the Planet Ranch right-of-way.

Supervisor Irwin stated that she had a conversation with staff at Congressman Gosar’s office regarding the release and the concerns relating to the on-going development of the Peace Trail, which spreads over three Counties. She added that it was the lack of proper notification offered the County, or any one else, that continues to be the issue.

Supervisor Minor thanked Mr. Wilson for the letter to the Corps of Engineers recently provided on behalf of the County.

Discussion ensued expressing that government land agencies typically required all kinds of documentation from others, such as environmental assessments, and the like, to be able to do anything on government land; however, when it comes to doing something they want done, they provide nothing to the public with regards to like information.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Refuge and the Dam were managed together, with the Fish and Wildlife as the lead agency on the environmental assessment done by the Corps of Engineers. He expressed that he felt there was “scanty” information given with regard to endangered species.

Supervisor Minor expressed that was the reason he was suspect over the difficulties in obtaining the renewal of the Planet Ranch right-of-way.

Discussion continued with comments made on the need for the interested public, such as those involved in outdoor recreation, to write letters, along with the Board of Supervisors, for the purposes of validating the Counties “existing rights”.

There being no further discussion, the worksession adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

D. L. Wilson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Diane Green, Deputy Clerk of the Board