

**MINUTES
OF THE
LA PAZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Monday, March 5, 2018, 9:00 a.m.
Worksession**

Chairman Wilson called the March 5, 2018, worksession of the La Pa County Board of Supervisors to order at 9:00 a.m. Elected Officials and Department Heads present were: Chairman Wilson, Supervisor Minor, Supervisor Irwin, (County Administrator Drake was away on annual leave), Finance Director Krukemyer, Public Works Director Simmons, Community Development Administrator, and Deputy Clerk of the Board Green.

Telephonic discussion with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Alamo Dam Flushing Flow Release

Chairman Wilson introduced the Supervisor's present, and other County personnel, for the benefit of those attending telephonically.

(Those attending telephonically from the Los Angeles office of the Army Corps of Engineers were: Lillian Doherty, Debra Ford, Rene Vermeeren, Steve Dwyer, and Pam Kostka, John Sweeten).

Trevor Pearson and Penny Paw were present telephonically from Congressman Gosar's office.

Chairman Wilson introduced those present from the Army Corps of Engineer, Colonel Kirk Gibbs, District Engineer; David Van Dorpe, Deputy District Engineer, and Dave Palmer, Public Affairs Specialist.

Col. Kirk Gibbs, District Engineer, thanked the Board for the opportunity to come and explain the proposed plan. He stated that two questions will be answered: 1) Why they need to do the release and 2) Why they need to do it now. He stated that it "is a very critical mission" for them and "it was not lost on us of the impact of downstream communities".

He apologized to the Board that they did not reach out directly to them sooner although they have been communicating with the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee since September. He stated that they now understand that none of the Federal or State agencies are a part of that committee, or adequately relayed the information, or engaged all stakeholders to include La Paz County.

He beseeched the Board to understand that it was important to him personally to establish relationships, and they were at this meeting to begin building that relationship; to listen and address the Board's concerns.

David Van Dorpe, Deputy District Engineer, began his power point presentation giving the history and profile of the Alamo Dam and a detailed description of the inspections to be done, noting there had never been a spillway event from this dam; April would bring the five year

manual inspection process; inspection to the upper conduits had not been done since 1970; funding was the one of the issues in the timing of these process, along with concerns of the condition of the upper conduit, and level of particular gases that have an attacking affect on concrete and steel.

Col. Gibbs reiterated that more funding had been seen lately for the 27-year deferred maintenance to be sure the dam works right, which he described as “exciting” for them; to be sure the dam was operating as it was intended in the event that there was a very large storm that could have devastating impacts downstream if it did not work well.

Mr. Van Dorpe continued, adding that the flushing release is for the critical need of inspections, and the additional drop in water surface elevation to 1100 feet made it safe for divers to inspect. He added that the amount of sediment required the flushing flow to be able to expose the sill for damages and to replace the bulkhead gate; and would reduce the hydrogen sulfide gas levels within their outlet works.

Discussion ensued regarding the final target levels, environmental assessments, current list of stakeholders; comments/concerns received so far from the public; and the strategic aspects of the timing of the release.

He stated that the peak release would happen at night and would take 12 hours to reach Planet Ranch; with a sharp drop off the next day.

Col. Gibbs added that they would be able to see the equipment during the daylight hours and monitor the effects of the release.

Mr. Van Dorpe stated that they are awaiting the results of the February 26 inspection of the bulkhead gate; March 12 would initiate the flushing flow, complete by April 1; and inspections are to be done approximately in June.

He stated that there are expectations of a certain amount of water loss in the release; the flow should spread out considerably although the velocity was uncertain; and they hoped to get a better idea through their monitoring plan completed by March 12. He added that they hoped to get aerial photos and videos done.

He stated that public safety was their #1 concern, as well as the critical and well-over-due inspections. He further added that they expected the impacts to be “short-lived” and would be doing a cleanup afterward.

Supervisor Minor asked what the rationale was for the release as planned versus a slower release.

John Sweeten, responding telephonically, stated that the release was planned to create a velocity that bring a “scouring effect”.

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Discussion continued on the method of dredging, the safety concerns and requirements for divers, and the prohibitive costs associated with the extent of dredging; noting there were also no concerns on contaminants in the sediment.

Supervisor Minor asked that the Board be included in the steering committee in the future.

Rene Vermeeren (attending telephonically) stated that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be formulated; and attendance at the meetings were also possible.

Supervisor Irwin asked why studies were not done when the lake was low, relating to the safety concerns.

Mr. Van Dorpe answered that they had been working on some of the problems for the past couple of years and found there was significant sediments noted and evaluations were made at what to do next, all an evolving process.

Chairman Wilson recessed the worksession to 11:30 a.m. due to another scheduled meeting of the Board.

Recessed: 10:00 a.m.
Reconvened: 11:37 a.m.

Supervisor Minor stated that there were citizens concerned over the about of debris that would accumulate, including large dead trees.

Mr. Van Dorpe answered that it was doubtful that such debris would be carried the distance to the Bill Williams refuge; and it would come with a wide disbursement.

Discussion ensued over flooding occurrences of the past and the damage it had done to Planet Ranch.

Mr. Van Dorpe stated that there would no doubt be an impact, and the road would have to be re-established. He stated that they would be observing the impacts with hopes to work with the County and other agencies on the impacts.

Supervisor Irwin asked why the event was not done in the summer.

Col. Gibbs stated there was quite a difference on the environmental effects to species, and listed those, noting that the time scheduled would provide the least amount of impact. He added that if it was done in late November or after the nesting season, there would be a great risk of monsoon water levels.

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Supervisor Wilson asked that correspondence has been sent to landowners, referring to power lines.

Discussion ensued noting that landowners were notified, contacted and concerns were addressed, advising landowners to keep their floodways clear; and a reminder that any and all flooding issues were something understood in the flood plain.

Mr. Van Dorpe added that they would “double back” to see that a good plan was in place and try to “dig up” a map on this issue.

Discussed ensued summarizing the discussion, reiterating the desire of the Board to have a seat on the steering committee.

Col. Gibbs stated that information would be sent through the Clerk of the Board for dissemination.

Chairman Wilson thanked the Army Corps of Engineer team for coming, adding that the Board had given them some things to look into in the interim before the release.

Col. Gibbs stated that he felt everyone had hopes there would be no risks; and expressed appreciation for the “lesson” in conversing about the “downstream responsibilities” to others.

Chairman Wilson adjourned the worksession at 12:12 p.m.

APPROVED:

D. L. Wilson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Diane Green, Deputy Clerk of the Board