Meeting called to order at: 7:00 by John Zerba

Minutes approved

**Feasibility Study Update: Chris Hyland**

Update: “The Feasibility Study is finally moving forward” including a look at aquifer recharge. How long we’ll do it, where it will occur. Technical work is done and has been done for awhile. Now we’re beginning to answer specific questions.

John Brough: What’s the estimate recharge (what’s the acceptable number?)

Don’t know yet

Margie McGill will be Chris Hyland’s replacement on the project. Anticipate a draft and final come out in Jan-March of 2009. The study will undergo an internal review process before the draft and final will be released. Anticipate for the next few months that Chris will assist as needed. He still has a stake in the process personally and will be available for questions.

Cost benefit analysis: Are they looking at the tax base covering the cost or the irrigation districts? A: Hasn’t been determined yet. Chris thinks that the tribe will go to BPA for the cost to operate. The answer has yet to be determined.

Tom Page...what’s the alternative? Chris: personal opinion: probably exchange will occur. Less costly and is the most feasible ... problems: will you even be able to divert the water? The aesthetic nature of having the project go through someone’s yard. Cited an example from the everglades as an example of how the eminent domain process isn’t a very appealing process. Bob: Only one alternative? An: Probably a combination. Exchange, SAR, exchange, storage.

John Brough: BPA is cutting back on O and M projects, how does that fit into the overall equation? An: Not sure. Bottom line...it’s not cheap
Update on the OWRD water supply and conservation initiative and funds available for water supply feasibility studies as part of Oregon’s Ag and Community Water Act of 2008. By Brian Wolcott

Senate bill 1069 passed and has funded the Umatilla River Aquifer recharge. Additional funds are available for other projects throughout the state. If the USACE needs funding for the feasibility process this could be an avenue of additional funding. Out for discussion: Williams...we should move on it quickly due to the fact that the funding is available. What are the first steps to take? Brian: We need to look at what our current situation is, use the collected data and see what the recent trends are. The new water demand created due to the fact that additional water is being left in the river. Aquifer recharge in the LWW system. Feasibility study is presenting a plan this winter, a possible use the funds would be to help implement one or more of the components.

Need a list of projects

Funding per year? Ans: No, once. There will be a second phase.

Focus one: One shot for feasibility.

Small or big project? Brian, not sure of the size, maybe a smaller size project would be conducive for the funding application. Williams: Not sure if we need to decide at this point. John: Get a list of possible projects to Brian.

Tony Justus: “dollar for dollar match”

Kevin Scribner: “Trying to understand the basalt aquifer could be a possible application for the additional funding”. Does it have to be hooked to a project?

If you could argue that there’s a big enough problem you could use it as a general application. John Brough, “we could argue with the shallow system”

Bob....Be aware of the issue that will occur with the addition of new projects wanting allocation of the Walla Walla river water.

Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Taskforce Plan Update by Jamie Clark

Power Point Presentation on the Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Taskforce Plan

Four proposed management alternatives

Alternatives: Identify the problem, solution, and strategy to achieve the solutions.
Four critical groundwater areas, only 7 in the state. Designated by the OWRD. Three in the basalt, one in the shallow aquifer.


Section 6 Draft plan (it’s time for review process), Section 1-5 Background information

Not the last opportunity to make a comment, but could be the last opportunity to make a change in the final plan.

Williams: Are there any recommendations? An: There are a few, specific basin and county wide.

Bob: Discussion on jurisdiction. Brian has already started a draft letter of response in regards to the process. What are the general ideas?

1. Walla Walla Water management board and a Umatilla Water Board instead of one County board.
2. Regulations
3. Develop projects to recover aquifers
4. Funding mechanisms should be local and fund projects in their own valleys, WW, Uma, Ukiah

What are responses we should make?

Brian hasn’t sent in the comments yet. The comments should be in before mid may.

If there is a board, what are its capacities? Ans: Hasn’t been decided yet.

Ron Williams: It definitely has to be separated by basin. If they don’t there will be a fight over who gets the funding.

Kevin Scribner: Should the council urge that there is a WW Water Management Board?

Jamie: We’re not looking to form anything specific at this point. It’s up to the general public to come up with the solutions.

Vern: Why do we even want anything to do with it since we’re doing a very good job of managing our own water?

Jamie: Senate Bill 1069. The task force as brought the money to the area for potential. All of the money currently is being directed to the west part of the county.

Ron Williams: How should we form our letter?
John Brough: If they’re going to form the water board we want our own and not part of theirs.

Brian: If a water management board is formed that we would like the Walla Walla valley to have its own district.

Bob: Why not be a part of the district?

Vern R: Cause you only have one critical area

Ray Williams: We want to have local control, county wide will not lend to local control of the issues and funding.

Keith Woods: Could have a county wide board that decides for county taxation and the money focus is only on the west side of the county?

Bob: If there was a taxing system set up we would want representation.

Jamie Clark: Decisions need to be made, no actions have been taken.

Majority of what was said by the people attending the meeting was that they are against county wide taxation or county wide board for water management.

Kevin Scribner: In terms of the council giving input, Brian, if you don’t get input by April 17th they would still take our comments?

Need input tonight. If the county wide funding base is established the local funds should be used locally. If a board is formed the Walla Walla should have its own board instead of basin wide?

Ray Williams: We commend the plan it’s designed for the western part of thee county but we would like to stay separate from the west county. “All actions are applied to the western county basin”. Have direction in the process that states that it’s not affecting the east end of the basin.

Bob: When he was in Phoenix he saw an example of management processes that looked at snow pack run off and it was a forecasting tool of use for the year.

Ray Williams: A board in itself will not give us the direction that we need. How would the board change our world?

Staffing update: Jacki resigned and we hired Wendy Harris and she will be starting this Wednesday. Introduced Nella Parks, new monitoring Technician

Kevin Scribner: are we fully staffed? Brian: At this point we’re fully staffed.

Announcements:
Bob: Wed. Recharge tour for the WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Information was presented on USFS information regarding the four-wheel drive information to hopefully prevent the damaging of the county and federal roads.

**Adjourned at 8:40**

*Change in minutes for the March Council Meeting:* The month is incorrect; it should be March instead of February (pointed out to me by Ed Chesnut)