Present:
Council Members: Ed Chesnut, Steve Irving, Clark Lampson, Malcolm Millar, Vern Rodighiero, Ralph Perkins and John Zerba.

Staff: Brian Wolcott, Graham Banks, Steve Patten, Troy Baker, Wendy Harris, Tara Patten, and Chris Sheets.

Guests: Jon Brough (HBDIC), Chris Marks (CTUIR), Alan Bailey (Valley Herald), Eric Hoverson, Olin Anderson, Bob Lewis, and Ron Brown

Absent:
Council Members: Hulette Johnson, Ray Williams (excused), Kat Brigham, Teresa Kilmer (excused)

Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by John Zerba.

The April 20th, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

John announced the passing of Board Member, Stuart Durfee and let staff and board members know his funeral was going to be Saturday at 9am at the Touchet Fire Station.

CTUIR Walla Walla River Fish Habitat Program presentation: Eric Hoverson, of the Confederated Tribes, gave a recap on what has been done and is yet to be done at the Kentlich project on the South Fork of the Walla Walla River. He gave a presentation of the fish habitat work he was a part of on the Tucannon River and some of the similarities and strategies that will be used on the Walla Walla River. The goal is to slow the river to create better fish habitat.

Watershed Council Self Evaluation Process Complete: Brian announced that he had copies of the results of the Self Evaluation that was done by board members. This needed to occur in order to be eligible for OWEB grants. If any board members would like a copy of the results or to look it over, they can see him after the meeting or contact him later.

Streamflow, fish counts, and drought update: Brian went over fish counts and streamflows. By beginning of May we were down to about 15 c.f.s. for a week at Stateline at the Peppers Bridge gauge, then rain events brought that up to about 80 c.f.s. and it’s back down to 20 c.f.s. At the McDonald Road Bridge by Lowden, flows had gotten down to about 5-10 c.f.s and with the rain events that bumped up to 130 c.f.s. and is now back down to 35 c.f.s. and the flows where the river comes in to town at the Grove gauge were 155 c.f.s., then increased up to 190 cfs during the rain events and are now back down to 155 c.f.s.. Fish numbers so far are: adult steelhead 579 and 108 adult chinook salmon and in the last week with the last rain event we saw another 30 fish move up past town. County Commissioners declared a drought emergency about two weeks ago and that has to be reviewed by a technical review team in Salem, prior to the Governor’s approval. They should be making it official next week sometime.

Walla Walla Basin Groundwater recharge update: Same 5 Oregon sites as last year (Johnson, Barrett, Trumball, Anspach, NW Umapine) and Washington (Stiller and Locher). Total recharge on
Oregon side including ditch seepage is just under 3000 acre feet for this recharge season versus 7200 acre feet last year. Less water went to sites this recharge season due to some ditch work and low River flows. Washington total for season was 250 acre feet vs. last year which was closer to 500 acre feet. Our goal is 15,000 acre feet on Oregon and 5,000 acre feet in Washington. The main reasons why such low numbers was late turn on, low River flows and ditch work. This will give us some interesting groundwater level data when there is limited recharge and give us some unique modeling scenarios.

**Nursery Bridge/Smith Sill Fish Passage Engineering update**: In regards to the Smith Sill fish passage problem, in 2012 we did an emergency fish passage project with a low budget and there is now a need to do a second phase. When BPA was looking at funding the full price for this project the decided they are reluctant to be the primary investor in dealing with what they feel to be a Corps of Engineers caused fish passage problem because the fish passage problem caused by the levee system. All that being said we hope that the Anderson Perry survey crew will have some topo survey data in time for designs to be completed early enough that we can get the permits needed and hopefully do what will likely be a smaller maintenance project this summer. Brian said a similar approach will occur at the Nursery Bridge site where last summer there was an emergency fish passage project done in the summer of 2015 and a more stable, larger follow up project needs to be done. We need to go in and do a longer and less steep project and again BPA feels that this should be cost shared by the Corps of Engineers and other partners. BPA engineers will work with CTUIR, ODFW, and WWBWC staff to complete an assessment and develop alternative options. BPA will consider what they feel they may financially take on and Brian has been looking for additional funds to help fund. The Water Control District met with the Corps regarding these and some other issues and the Corps admits their agency’s responsibility for a lot of these issues, including the gabion baskets installed last year below Nursery bridge drop structure that are now eroding and have failed within a year’s time, but unfortunately now it looks like they don’t have the funding to take care of many of the problems, but they may be able to initiate a study of the problems.

**Announcements:**

Graham announced that he has planned the Annual Watershed Field Day for June 4th this year if anyone is available to run a station it would be greatly appreciated and you can just contact him directly.

Our 1st annual audit is done with no issues found and the CPA Firm that did it will be presenting to the board in a couple of months, once they have finished the report.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

**Next Meeting: June 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m., in the Rotary Room, Milton-Freewater Community Building, 5th Ave. and Ward St.**