

STATE ASSOCIATION OF
WASHINGTON IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounting Committee held at the Courthouse in Spokane, Washington, on Saturday, May 21, 1949:

The meeting was called to order at 2 o'clock by Chairman G. L. Sterling. Present were: G. L. Sterling, Chairman, N. D. Thorp, Homer Manley, J. R. Downie, and Earle Buzzell, Committee members, and Clifford Kail, Fred T. Cunningham, and T. Newstrum.

Since Mr. Cunningham could only stay until three o'clock, Mr. Sterling turned the meeting over to Mr. Kail to take up first the questions of the terms of amendatory repayment contracts between irrigation districts and the Federal Government, and the material for the monthly release by the Association which Mr. Cunningham was to prepare, the subject for this month's release to be laws passed by the last State Legislature which affect irrigation districts.

Mr. Kail distributed copies of a draft of a letter to be sent to irrigation districts in the State which are at present operating under contracts with the Federal Government and to those which will eventually operate under such jurisdiction. This letter outlines some discrepancies and differences between those six amendatory contracts which were recently approved by Congress under HR 4152, states that it is believed that some blanket policy should be established for the revision of present repayment contracts and for the preparation of new contracts, and asks for a general statement of present contracts and for suggestions for improvement in the policies under which such contracts are negotiated. Mr. Kail explained that this matter had come up at an Executive Committee meeting of the Washington State Reclamation Assn., at which time it was decided that the State Association should compile such information by contacting the various districts concerned, and pass a summary of the information and suggestions received on to the Washington State Reclamation Assn., so the entire problem could be approached on a National scale. Mr. Kail is to secure from the Bureau of Reclamation at Yakima a list of those irrigation districts in the State which are or will be affected.

There was discussion regarding write-offs on contract indebtedness because of the inclusion within districts of non-productive lands. Mr. Thorp stated that he thought a Commission should be appointed within the State to investigate the lands included in any contract and the sufficiency of the water supply before any project was constructed. Mr. Cunningham pointed out that the demands for write-offs are inconsistent with the policy of reclamation - that it is really a money-lending proposition with the idea that the projects are self-liquidating, or the alternative that the Government should grant money in the interest of reclamation. The point made by Mr. Thorp was that non-productive lands had been included within district boundaries either in the haste to secure the construction of a project or through carelessness in preliminary investigations.

The draft of the letter submitted was approved.

Mr. Downie proposed that the President of the State Association of Washington Irrigation Districts should be reimbursed for his expenses in attending meetings, and that a note should be made in the minutes to that effect.

Mr. Cunningham then discussed briefly the passage by the State Legislature of two laws which will probably affect irrigation districts: The general election laws, and the law eliminating the rebate for early payment of property taxes. He stated that he had not completed his study of these laws, but would prepare a

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statement concerning them in time for the issuance of a bulletin to all irrigation districts on the laws passed by the Legislature.

There was discussion regarding the classification of irrigation districts. Mr. Downie argued that the classification should be put through without waiting for a general recodification of irrigation laws. Mr. Sterling disagreed with this, stating that the idea of the recodification was proposed to eliminate just that sort of piece-meal revision of the laws and that the classification should wait until the recodification was ready to be put into effect. Mr. Cunningham stated that in any event nothing could be done until the next Legislature, which is two years away, and that the basis for the classification of districts is still to be decided. He suggested that the matter should be considered further by the Auditing Committee and then passed on to the Recodification Committee for action.

Mr. Sterling then brought up the matter of accounting for irrigation districts, stating that it was his idea that some basic minimum practices in irrigation district accounting should be established that would enable the Board of Directors of a district to determine the district's financial status, and the Dept. of Municipal Corporations to determine what their transactions are. After consultation with Mr. Buzzell and Mr. Cunningham, it was determined that no legislation was required for this, that the State Auditor is empowered to issue instructions to irrigation districts as to the accounting system they should employ, and that all that it is necessary to determine is exactly what is desired and request the State Auditor to approve and number the forms required. The first point brought up was the recapitulation of money paid out by voucher, it being suggested that a distribution should be made on the back of each voucher by the district Secretary setting forth the account numbers covered by the expenditure. Mr. Manley displayed a list of accounts which have been in use in Spokane County. There was discussion as to whether such a list should be condensed to a minimum or expanded to meet any contingency. It was decided the best policy would be to draft a set of minimum records to be kept and permit any district to enlarge upon them as desired. The matter of receipts for cash income and expenditures was then discussed. It was decided that standard forms should be used, with receipts in triplicate, one receipt for the payor, one for the district, and one for the County Treasurer to be turned in to the Treasurer with the remittance to the Treasurer by the district.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Manley:

RESOLVED, that in accounting by irrigation districts in the State of Washington the following practices be adopted: (1) That there be uniform triplicate receipts, ~~uniformly~~ numbered by the printer, showing the source from which the revenue is derived and the segregation to the fund to which it is to be credited, the idea being that a copy of the receipt should be forwarded to the County Treasurer at the time of remittance by the Secretary of the district. (2) That all vouchers should be made in duplicate and upon being sent to the County Auditor for payment should show the classification account which is to be charged. That there should be a uniform distribution system adopted. (3) That a minimum list of cost distribution account numbers, which could be expanded upon, be prepared by Mr. Earle Buzzell, which list would have the approval of the Accounting Committee of the State Association of Washington Irrigation Districts, and with such approval the request that all forms be submitted to the State Department of Municipal Corporations by Mr. Buzzell for final approval.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Thorp and unanimously carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.