

State Association of Washington Irrigation Districts.

Minutes - Board of Directors meeting held at the Courthouse in Spokane, Washington, on Wednesday, June 28, 1950:

Present - Clifford Kail, President, J. A. Weber and H. E. Alexander, Vice-Presidents, Ray Bailey, Fred Beisner, Paul Booker, Homer Manley, G. L. Sterling and N. D. Thorp, Directors, and Fred Cunningham, David Brooks and Ted Newstrum.

The Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held at Moses Lake on Friday, June 16, 1950, were read and approved as read.

Mr. Kail opened the meeting by stating he thought Mr. Sterling and Mr. Thorp did a very good job in representing the Association at the Area Conference of the President's Temporary Water Resources Policy Commission held in Spokane on June 16 and 17, 1950. The statement presented to the Commission expressing the views of this Association regarding the development and utilization of our water resources, as decided upon and directed at the Board of Directors meeting held at Moses Lake, was read and approved by the Directors.

Mr. Cunningham was asked regarding the danger to State and individual water rights from Federal agencies. He stated that naturally when the Federal Government undertakes a project it tries to carry it out; that when difficulties are encountered they have to accomplish whatever they are trying to do, with the result that they are apt to step on State and individual rights. States and local organizations are often not very active and leave such matters to the Government, with the result that when the State and local rights are not called to the attention of the Federal agencies they may overlook some of them, which is not generally intentional on their part. States and local organizations might take a little more interest and try to see that Federal authorities have full information as to State and local rights.

It is up to us to make sure that the Western viewpoint is presented if there are attempts to modify our water laws. We are agreed in the West that our water laws have done very well. They seem well adapted to our necessities and do meet our needs, and we do not want them interfered with. So far as our water rights are concerned we have quite a history of local and individual water rights that have been adapted to our needs and we feel we should stand back of them.

Asked if he thought that under C.V.A., if adopted, we would lose control of our local water rights, Mr. Cunningham stated that we might lose control - that the difference is not so much in the kind of authority as the attitude of whatever agency is in charge. If they have no sympathy with our local rights they are going to step over them. The corporate plan is more dangerous because they have more discretionary powers than a department. Whether we have a corporate plan or agency, or whether we have an executive department of government, there is always danger that they may overstep and disregard our local rights.

Mr. Cunningham also commented upon the resolution passed by the County Commissioners at their convention recommending a law authorizing them to pass on the budgets of all districts, with the idea of having such budgets before them when making their levy. The language of the resolution is broad enough to include irrigation districts, as it would include all kinds of taxing districts. He doubted whether the County Commissioners would have the right to control the operations of any district - it would be their function to decide how much debt the districts could incur and how much their operations were going to cost. There was discussion regarding the attitude of County officials toward charging for the work they perform for irrigation districts, which brought up the question of the classification of irrigation districts on which the Accounting Committee of the Association has done considerable work.

\* The matter of the general election law insofar as it affects irrigation districts was also discussed by Mr. Cunningham, who stated that, so far, irrigation districts have been able to get by under a ruling by the Attorney General, but it is hoped to get a decision that the general election law, as revised by the last regular session of the State Legislature, would not apply to irrigation districts. Mr. Cunningham stated he thought the matter should be clarified at the next regular session of the Legislature.

\* The matter of the special session of the State Legislature, which is to begin on July 17th, and the possibility of money in the Reclamation Revolving Fund being used for purposes other than those intended by the establishment of the fund, was discussed. Mr. Cunningham advised that the Association watch the fund and try to prevent any raid upon it. He was asked by Mr. Kail to act for the Association in this matter, with the stipulation that any expenses incurred by him would be refunded to him by the Association.

\* Mr. Kail brought up the matter of the delay in receiving payment for water assessments on State lands, particularly when the district furnishing water requires such payment in advance of water delivery. He mentioned the fund of \$50,000. set up for the purpose of paying assessments by drainage districts, flood control districts, etc., but which does not cover assessments for irrigation districts. After some general discussion of the subject, it was decided to find out what sort of legislation would be required to cover this situation and have Mr. Cunningham draw up a resolution for the Association stating what the attitude of the Association would be. It was moved, seconded, and approved that this be done.

\* Mr. Alexander brought up the matter of a reserve fund carried by the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District of \$86,000. which they are required to hold as an emergency reserve fund, and which they have no authority to invest. This district would like legislation enabling them to invest such money in Government bonds, which is not now authorized by law. A motion was made, seconded, and approved, that this matter be referred to the Legislative Committee of the Association, and that the Board of Directors, representing the Association, support a bill which will give authority for the investment of surplus or reserve funds held by irrigation districts.

\* There was then considerable discussion regarding the classification of irrigation districts, similar to that of school districts, so that irrigation districts could be relieved from some of the difficulties encountered in dealing with County officials. The basis for such classification was again discussed. It had been recommended by the Accounting Committee of the Association that the matter be left to the State Department of Municipal Corporations to certify that the practices of a district were such that it could qualify as a Class 1 district and handle its own affairs, but there had been objections to this at the last annual meeting when it was proposed. It was also brought out that there is a tendency toward a policy of charging irrigation districts by County offices for the work done in such offices for districts. After discussion about the advantages to both districts and County offices of such classification, it was decided that the matter be referred to Mr. Cunningham, who agreed to make a recommendation covering what is needed.

There was discussion regarding the exemption by irrigation districts from sales tax on spray materials and exemption from Federal excise tax. The Board was referred to the release put out by the Association on April 27, 1949 on the subject of exemption from Federal excise taxes.

Mr. Kail then read the resignation, effective July 1, 1950, of John Rummell as Secretary-Treasurer of the Association. The action taken by the Board of Directors at the meeting at Moses Lake on June 16, 1950 was discussed, and it was moved, seconded, and approved that Ted Newstrum be appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Association effective as of July 1, 1950.

\* The matter of holding the annual meeting of the Association as a joint meeting with the Washington State Reclamation Association in Spokane just prior to the National Reclamation Association meeting, which begins on November 15th, was brought up. After some discussion, it was moved, seconded, and approved that this time and place be tentatively set for the annual meeting of the Association, and that Mr. Bailie should be contacted to ascertain the plans of the Washington State Reclamation Association.

There was discussion regarding the participation of the Association in the display which it is planned to put on at the National Reclamation Association meeting. It was thought that the idea of a relief map, which had been proposed, would prove too expensive and it was decided that some definite idea of the proposed display and its cost should be obtained from the Washington State Reclamation Association and the matter discussed further at the next meeting of the Board.

The matter of the Association paying the expenses of the Directors to meetings was brought up. In some instances at least such expenses are paid by the Districts with the idea that our Directors are directly engaged in furthering the interests of their own districts as well as of all irrigation districts. It was suggested that the matter of the Association paying such expenses might be discussed at the annual meeting.

It was suggested that there be another meeting of the Board of Directors at some date in August, which was approved.

Upon motion, the meeting adjourned.