

Carlsbad Brine Well Remediation Authority Minutes

Special Meeting

July 29, 2020

9:00 am

Held via WebEx

Members present:

Sarah Cottrell Propst, Chair

Dennis McQuillan

Robert Boatman

Andy Morley

Cholla Khoury

Susan Crockett

John Heaton

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

New Mexico Environment Department

Carlsbad Irrigation District

Office of the State Engineer

Attorney General's Office

Eddy County Commission

City of Carlsbad

Item 1: Call to Order; Roll Call

Chair Cottrell Propst called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Roll call was taken; a quorum was present.

Item 2: Approval of Agenda

Cholla Khoury moved adoption of the agenda, seconded by Dennis McQuillan. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Item 3: Minutes of January 15, 2020 meeting

Dennis McQuillan moved adoption of the minutes, seconded by Susan Crockett. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Item 4: Update on work in the field

Jim Griswold presented recent findings of sonar results which indicate more material and time will be needed to fill the void. Also outlined the expert review panelists, their findings, and proposed next steps for the project. The independent review panel consists of Don Purvis, retired mine manager for Mosaic Potash in Carlsbad; Dr. Ned Elkins, retired manager of the Carlsbad Operations Office at Los Alamos National Labs; Courtney Herrick, Geomechanics Department at Sandia National Labs; Bradford Billings, Environmental Scientist at the OCD; and Bill Brancard, EMNRD General Counsel.

Following the presentation, Secretary Cottrell Propst noted that all options will be on the table for future funding and the state is looking into options for federal funding and grants. Loans are not as good of an option at this time given the state of the budget.

Jim Griswold clarified that the southern portion of the site does not have an issue with sand getting into the rubble, as grout was employed and no sand injection occurred in the southern portion.

John Heaton inquired about the sources of revenue, given current budget constraints on the city, county, and state level. He suggested going back to an original list with sources of money that were not previously pursued.

Dennis McQuillan asked if EMNRD will look into additional sources while the budget is being narrowed.

Secretary Cottrell Propst explained that EMNRD will look at options but not until there is a more refined budget. There is discussion in Congress about additional funding for reclamation work. If that funding materializes it could be a potential source for all or part of the funding need. Secretary Cottrell Propst plans on having additional meetings with budget people around the state to put together money to continue to move forward.

Jim Griswold added that refining the budget will mean analyzing if the rubble will continue to absorb sand at the same rate and determining the total amount of sand needed moving forward.

Caitlyn Wan from the Legislative Finance Council inquired if this analysis will be done by the contractor or the expert review panel.

Jim Griswold explained that the analysis is a combination of EMNRD staff, the contractors, and the review panel.

Secretary Cottrell Propst added that as the sonar report and budget comes in another authority meeting will be held, adding this is a project that's been hard to predict and if anyone has any suggestions for budget discussions please let me know.

Item 5: Other business

Secretary Cottrell Propst noted that there was no other business.

Item 6: Public Comment

No public comments.

Item 7: Adjourn

John Heaton moved to adjourn, seconded by Susan Crockett. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Adjourned at 9:43 am.