

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Colorado River Authority of Utah
January 30, 2024 --2:00 p.m. MT

1. Call to Order – Gene Shawcroft, Chair

Mr. Shawcroft called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. stating there was a quorum and asked each attendee to briefly introduce themselves. A list of attendees is included in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of the Minutes of January 4, 2024, Colorado River Authority of Utah Meeting – Gene Shawcroft

There being no comments on the January 4, 2024 minutes, a motion was made by Mr. Larsen and seconded by Ms. Hasenyager to approve the minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

3. Public Comment Pursuant to the Public Comment Policy of the Authority (limit of 2 minutes per person) – Joel Ferry, Vice Chair

Bruce Adams, County Commissioner for San Juan County, discussed the economic effect Lake Powell has on San Juan County. Mr. Adams stated San Juan County has the largest area of the counties in Utah, and is the poorest county in Utah where many homes don't have water, sewer, or electricity. Mr. Adams thanked the Board for allowing him to express how tough the past few years have been.

4. Advisory Council Feedback on Colorado River Priorities for Utah generally

- William Merkley – CAC
- Adam Snow – SAC
- Chris Robinson – NAC

The three Advisory Councils each provided an annual report to the Board based on objectives and recommendations developed by each Council. The three reports are included as Attachment #2.

5. Report of the Chair – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Shawcroft first discussed the status of Post-2026 Guidelines negotiations. Mr. Shawcroft shared that the Lower Basin States have acknowledged they need to reduce water consumption by up to 1.5 million acre-feet (MAF) to account for evaporation, transmission, and other losses, referred to as the "Structural Deficit." Mr. Shawcroft explained that the Lower Basin States want to look at the river system as a whole and include seven reservoirs instead of two in Post-2026 operational guidelines, which the Upper Basin is extremely uncomfortable with. Mr. Shawcroft further explained that the Upper Basin does not want the actions of the Lower Basin to impact how operations occur in the Upper Basin, which is what has happened under the 2007 Interim Guidelines, where the Lower Basin States proceeded to use more and more water which caused both Lake Mead and Lake Powell to drop. Mr. Shawcroft stated there have been several meetings including a Basin States Meeting in Denver in January and individual Lower and Upper Basin meetings with Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Touton in January as well as a principals call the day before the Board meeting (January 29, 2024). Mr. Shawcroft explained that Reclamation is still hoping for a Seven-States Alternative within the next six weeks. Mr. Shawcroft discussed dialogue between the Tribes and the States, noting the Upper Basin continues to meet with representatives of the Upper Basin Tribes through a process started in August 2022. Mr Shawcroft shared that the day of the Board meeting (January 30, 2024) the

Upper Basin States briefed the Tribes about the status of the Basin States' Post 2026 discussions and discussed the Tribes' desire to formalize the dialogue and various approaches for doing so. Mr. Shawcroft stated a major priority for the Tribes is the potential for compensation for settled but undeveloped Tribal water rights, which he explained is a tricky conversation for the Upper Division States and each individual Upper Basin Tribe, but the parties continue to discuss potential paths forward considering various legal and policy constraints.

6. Report of the Executive Director – Amy Haas, Executive Director

Ms. Haas discussed the Utah Legislative Session stating the Authority has a flat budget request with no increase to ongoing funding nor a request for one-time funding. Ms. Haas shared that the Authority presented its budget to both the Executive Offices and Criminal Justice Appropriations and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittees. Ms. Haas stated the Authority is not supporting any substantive legislation, although the team is closely watching some water legislation move through the two chambers that may have implications for the Colorado River and the Authority's work. Mr. Ferry suggested tracking House Bill 335, which would make adjustments to how State entities award and manage grants.

Ms. Haas provided an update on several ongoing and potential water conservation programs in Utah and in the Colorado River System. Ms. Haas discussed the Inflation Reduction Act and explained the Upper Basin has been allocated \$500 M to support drought mitigation activities in the Reclamation States with priority given to the Colorado River Basin and other basins experiencing comparable levels of long-term drought. Ms. Haas explained that \$125 M was used to support System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) and that \$375 M in "Bucket 2" is intended for multi-year or longer-term temporary and voluntary water conservation efforts oriented toward infrastructure improvements or other durable water conservation measures that can benefit the Colorado River Basin System. Ms. Haas explained that this funding initially wouldn't be available until 2025 but there is a push on the part of Reclamation to accelerate the funding availability to as early as spring 2024 for projects that lend themselves to demand management-like provisional accounting. Ms. Haas stated that Authority staff will be having discussions about conservation activities, including SCPP 2024 and "Bucket 2" efforts next week when Utah hosts a workshop among the four Upper Division States and the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC).

Ms. Haas discussed the Drought Resiliency Request for Proposals that was issued fall 2023 through a competitive procurement process to provide management and technical consulting for the Authority's Agricultural Resilience and Demand Management Pilot Program as it is developed and implemented. Ms. Haas explained that pilot projects will include temporary, voluntary, and compensated reductions in consumptive water use and will be specifically aimed at establishing defensible measurement of conserved consumptive use, shepherding of conserved water to target locations, evaluating market drivers, and testing adequacy of existing water right statutes for purposes of developing scalable drought mitigation programs in coordination with the many conservation programs that already exist. Ms. Haas stated that four technical consulting firms responded, and the Authority is currently negotiating the contract with a selected finalist. The goal is to have projects beginning by the 2025 irrigation season.

Ms. Haas discussed SCPP 2024 stating there were 124 applications submitted Upper Basin wide. Ms. Haas explained the applications are currently being reviewed and the timeline to execute agreements and begin projects is March 2024. Ms. Haas stated SCPP is a UCRC-led program and

the Authority/State of Utah will not be contracting with any of the participants.

7. Hydrology and System Status Report - Lily Bosworth, Staff Engineer, and Betsy Morgan, Staff Engineer

Ms. Bosworth provided a hydrology update focused on the Upper Colorado River Basin, and data from the ground up. Ms. Bosworth explained streamflow is much below normal in the southern part of the Upper Basin. Ms. Bosworth stated there was normal to below-normal snowpack basin-wide and below-normal snow-water equivalent in total across the Upper Basin. Ms. Bosworth discussed the precipitation and temperature outlooks stating there are equal chances for above or below normal precipitation and temperatures in February. Ms. Bosworth stated drought conditions persist in the Colorado River Basin, particularly in the Lower Basin and in the headwaters.

Ms. Morgan discussed Upper Basin storage stating Lake Powell was 35% full and Flaming Gorge was 85% full and provided the change in storage since the last Board meeting in early January. Ms. Morgan noted system storage for Lake Powell and Lake Mead are 10% higher than one year ago. Ms. Morgan explained Lake Powell Unregulated Inflow forecasts have decreased, and all major reservoirs are experiencing declines. Ms. Morgan discussed the water supply forecast and explained we don't know what the future weather will be, which is about 60% of the snowpack accumulation. Ms. Morgan discussed Lake Powell projected elevations which are still showing a minimum probable forecast below 3525 feet, but the forecast slightly higher than December 2023. Ms. Morgan also discussed Lake Mead projected elevations where the major difference between the minimum and most scenarios are potential side inflows as the delivery assumptions are the same (7.48 MAF).

8. Remarks from the Board

Mr. Humphrey discussed that he has been meeting with Ms. Morgan and providing input on stream gauges and other measurement infrastructure, discussing what works and what doesn't, and providing insight from Emery County.

Mr. Larsen asked if Lake Powell and Lake Mead were under balancing operations due to the volume of water going into and out of each reservoir. Ms. Haas explained that daily Lake Powell releases depend on the current Long-term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) and offered to share charts to help explain daily vs monthly and annual releases.

Ms. Hasenyager stated the Division of Water Resources submitted building blocks to the Governor's Office requesting additional funding for Growing Water Smart. Ms. Hasenyager noted three workshops have already been held and asked the Board if there was any interest in holding a workshop in the Colorado River Basin in Utah.

9. Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Closed Session as needed to discuss interstate claims to the use of water from the Colorado River system and to protect classified records, legal strategy, or the ability of the state to carry out negotiations (UCA 52-4-205(2)(f)).

Mr. Shawcroft raised the closed session, and a motion was made by Mr. Ferry to move to close the meeting pursuant to Utah Code 52-4-205(2)(f) to discuss interstate claims to the use of water from the Colorado River system and to protect classified records, legal strategy, or the ability of

the State to carry out negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larsen. Ms. Coleman took a role call vote of each Board member and recorded their individual votes. The Board unanimously agreed to move to close the meeting at 3:25pm.

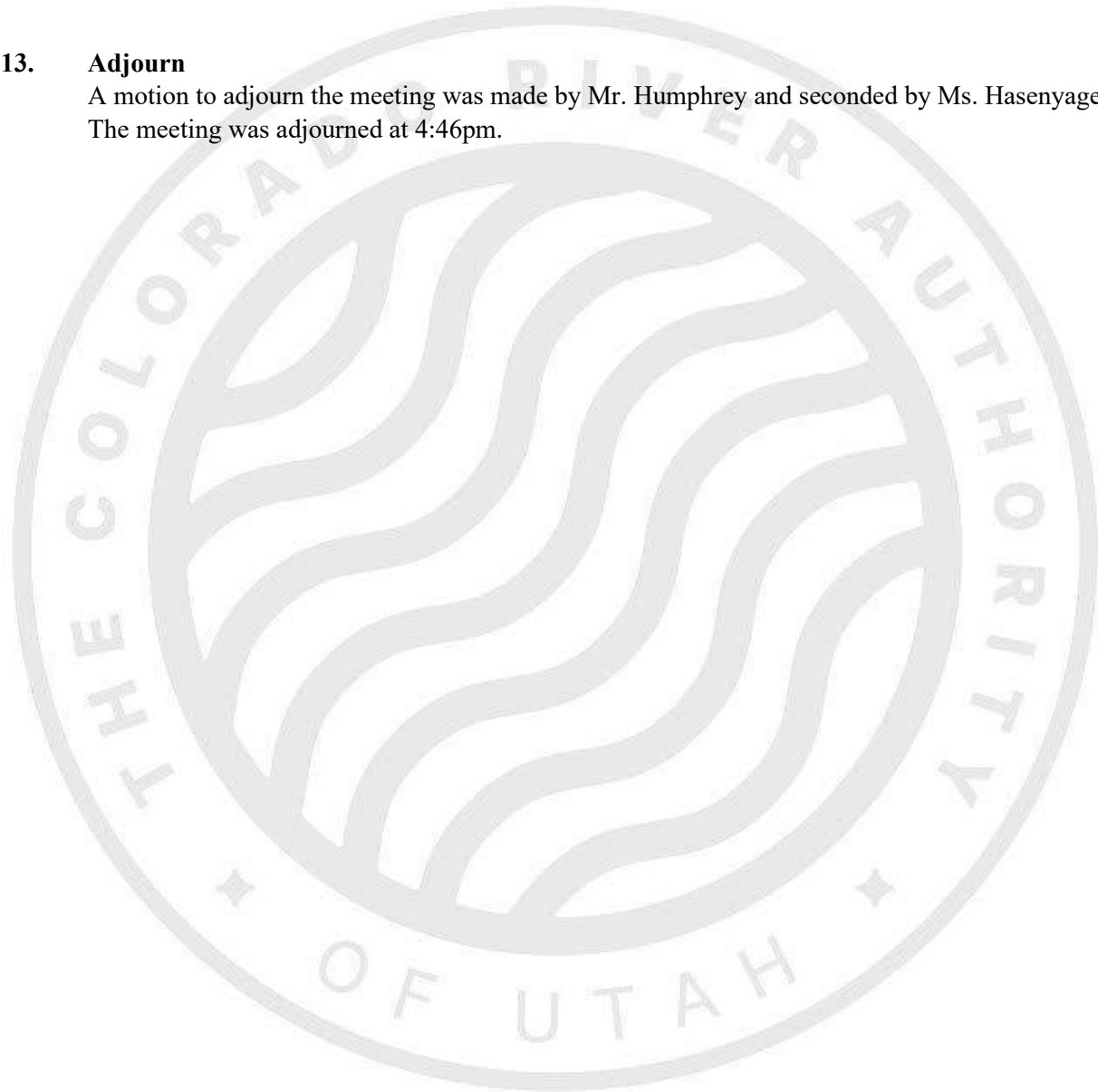
11. Open Session

The open session meeting was called to order at 4:45pm.

**12. Next Meeting: February 27, 2024 World Trade Center 1st Floor Conference Room,
60 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84111**

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Humphrey and seconded by Ms. Hasenyager. The meeting was adjourned at 4:46pm.



Attachment #1 – January 30, 2024 Attendee List

**January 30, 2024
Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting**

Board Member Attendees:

Gene Shawcroft, Chair
Joel Ferry, Vice-Chair
Dan Larsen
Jay Mark Humphrey
Candice Hasenyager
Zach Renstrom (virtual)

Attendees:

Amy Haas, CRAU
Betsy Coleman, CRAU
Betsy Morgan, CRAU
Cody Stewart, CRAU
Lily Bosworth, CRAU
Holly McCall, CRAU
Cadi Sande, CRAU
Wendy Crowther, Utah Assistant Attorney General
Scott McGettigan, Division of Water Resources
William Merkley, Central Advisory Council
Chris Robinson, Northern Advisory Council
Adam Snow, Southern Advisory Council
Shanandoah Anderson, Southern Advisory Council
Dex Winterton, Central Advisory Council
Jordan Nielson, Trout Unlimited
Bruce Adams, San Juan County
Bill Winfield, Grand County
Anthony Mancuso

Virtual Attendees:

Bill Butcher
Clyde Watkins
Cody Allred
Elaine York
Rachel M.
Stacy Young
Stan Wood
Stockton Denos
Sue Bellagamba, The Nature Conservancy
Ted Sonnenburg, DWRi
Teresa Wilhelmsen