

Carlsbad Brine Well Remediation Authority Minutes

Regular Meeting

October 25, 2019

City of Carlsbad Municipal Annex

114 South Halagueno Street

Carlsbad, New Mexico

Members present:

Sarah Cottrell Propst, Chair

John Heaton

Dennis McQuillan

Cholla Khoury

Susan Crockett

Andy Morley

Tim Parker (via phone)

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

City of Carlsbad

New Mexico Environment Department

Attorney General's Office

Eddy County Commission

Office of the State Engineer

New Mexico Department of Transportation

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

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

Item 3: Minutes of September 20, 2019 Special Meeting

John Heaton moved adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cholla Khoury. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Item 4: Status Report

Commissioner Crockett stated that she has only heard positive feedback on new traffic pattern around the site.

Jim Griswold presented an update on the work going on at the site. Monitoring systems have been built around onsite and offsite so there is 24/7 monitoring minute by minute. Drilling began on September 30th. Mr. Griswold offered a special thanks to the OSE for helping with the project. The first two grouting wells are complete, and progress continues on the 3rd and 4th holes.

Dennis McQuillan emphasized that the monitoring system is tied into the emergency management system.

Chair Cottrell Propst asked about the new drilling subcontractor and Mr. Griswold responded that he's been very impressed with their work so far.

Chair Cottrell Propst informed the Authority and public present that Mr. Griswold's role is now 100% dedicated to the Brine Well project so he's in Carlsbad roughly every two weeks and always available to the crews on the ground.

Item 5: Budget Discussion

Chair Cottrell Propst led a discussion on the budget highlighting that the Authority held a special meeting on September 20, 2019 to move forward with the access agreements. She reminded everyone that the initial funding from the legislature was not based on a final contract amount and did not have funding for surface access, GRT, or EMNRD overhead. EMNRD is working with the Legislature and local officials to get the additional funds.

John Heaton added that both the city and county have each committed to funding 9% of the project amount.

Chair Cottrell Propst also thanked the city and county for their help with the access agreements.

Item 6: Discussion of Report to Legislative Committee

Chair Cottrell Propst explained that EMNRD is submitting a report to the Legislative Finance Committee before November 15th to meet our statutory requirement and Jim Griswold will also present to the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Interim Committee before that deadline as well.

Item 7: Public Comment

Representative Catherine Brown spoke highlighting that the Brine Well is in the district she represents and that she shares a boundary with Representative Townsend and that both are worried about budget overruns. She wants the project done safely and eagerly anticipates the conclusion of the project and thanked the Authority for their efforts.

John Heaton responded saying that referring to the additional costs as overruns is incorrect, it was really the contingency amounts that came into play. He said recognizing the contingency part is important and that when we were approaching the legislature several years ago, we didn't have the full picture. He asked Mr. Griswold to provide an overview of safety measures at the site.

Dan Kwiecinski, Project Manager at Wood and Chief Jake Lopez gave an overview explaining that Wood representatives met with the local sheriff's department before drilling started and that they are in close communication.

Chief Lopez added that their team evaluated the alert system and are clear on who is responsible for alerting whom in the event of an emergency.

Commissioner Crockett expressed interest in getting more information out about the project and Chair Cottrell Propst highlighted that EMNRD is in communication with Wood to promote more regular news and website updates.

Item 8: Next Meeting

John Heaton expressed interest in having a meeting prior to the legislative session to coordinate strategies and make sure there is a common message.

Chair Cottrell Propst said that EMNRD staff will work on crafting a message and that the numbers and budget are now well-known and will likely not change. This subject can be a follow up call.

EMNRD will follow up with the Authority about scheduling a meeting for April, and notifying members well in advance.

Item 9: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Approved by the Authority on:

Chair

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