

STATE WASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

MINUTES - Board of Directors meeting held at Ephrata, Wash. on Saturday, September 16, 1950.

Present - Clifford Kail, President, Paul Booker, G. L. Sterling, N. D. Thorp, J. A. Weber and Claude Zediker, Directors, and Fred Cunningham and Ted Newstrum, Secy.

The minutes of the Board meeting held at Spokane on Wednesday, June 28, 1950 were read and approved as read.

Mr. Kail announced that Mr. Charles Powell and Mr. Harry Olson had agreed to serve as members of the Legislative Committee, with Mr. Fred Cunningham as Chairman.

Mr. Zediker reported for the Committee on Conservation & Development. This committee had been set up to act in an advisory capacity to the State Department of Conservation & Development in matters pertaining to loans to irrigation districts and to irrigation development in the state. Mr. Zediker reported that Mr. Rogers had advised him no loans of any importance were being made at the present time and consequently that was not a matter of immediate concern. Mr. Rogers expressed himself as willing to cooperate with the Association in any matters in which it was felt his Department could be of assistance.

Mr. Kail spoke of an irrigation district in the state which has asked for Association assistance in approaching the Bureau of Reclamation for them to undertake the rehabilitation of that district. Mr. Kail recommended to the district that it make the initial request to the Bureau for an investigation, and that subsequently the Association would do anything it could to help out.

There was discussion regarding contributions by member districts for the expense to be incurred by the Washington State Reclamation Assn. in connection with the National Reclamation Assn. convention in Spokane and the dues of that Association to the N.R.A. As it had been agreed previously that it was legitimate for this Association to accept such contributions from member districts, to be passed on to the Washington State Reclamation Assn., it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that this Association become a member of the Washington State Reclamation Assn. and that the Treasurer of the Association be authorized to contribute to the Washington State Reclamation Assn., from funds received for that purpose, an amount of not less than \$250.00 and not more than \$750.00.

Following the above, there was discussion as to the advisability of state support of the Washington State Reclamation Assn. in the payment due from that Association as a member of the N.R.A. As any type of reclamation is state development and everyone in the state benefits by it, it was thought that the expense of such promotion should be paid out of taxes. It was mentioned that this is done in California and Idaho, and perhaps in other states. Mr. Cunningham was consulted in this matter and he recommended that a study be made as to how it is handled in each of the 17 Western states, of our own state organizations that spend tax money in advertising, to increase tourist travel, etc., and the matter then be gone over in relation to constitutional requirements. However, Mr. Cunningham recommended that while this Association could support such a step, it should be initiated by some other organization such as the N.R.A. or the Washington State Reclamation Assn.

Mr. Kail asked the Board if it was their desire to have the Association back the matter of getting the classification of irrigation districts through the next State Legislative session. The object of the classification of districts was to enable those districts who desired and who could quality the opportunity of handling all of their own accounts, draw their own warrants independently of the County Auditor's office and, in general, operate on the same basis as a first class school district.

Certain irrigation districts have encountered difficulties in their relationship with County Auditors' offices and it was thought that the classification of irrigation districts would eliminate this difficulty. After considerable discussion it was felt by the Board and Mr. Cunningham that those difficulties might be overcome by a few changes in the Irrigation Code and by the assistance of the judiciary in the counties involved. It has been established that under law the County Auditor is but an issuing and auditing agent and cannot refuse to issue irrigation district warrants if the computations of vouchers are correct and the disbursement covered has been approved by the district Board of Directors.

It was the opinion of the Board that if the difficulties which instigated the idea of classification of irrigation districts could be overcome by other means the problem would be taken care of, and Mr. Cunningham, as Chairman of the Legislative Committee, was requested to study the matter and make recommendations as to what action is necessary.

It was brought out that the classification of districts would not eliminate the audit by the State Examiner but would actually improve such audit. It was agreed that the appointment of Mr. Earle Buzzell as State Examiner for irrigation districts, as suggested by the Association to the State Dept. of Municipal Corporations, was an excellent thing for the districts, but the Board was reminded by Mr. Cunningham that there is nothing in the law to require the State Auditor to continue Mr. Buzzell in this capacity.

It was suggested by Mr. Weber that the program for the annual meeting of the Association be simplified to eliminate much of the set program and have discussion groups, confined to irrigation district directors, officials and landowners. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the annual meeting of the Association be in the form of roundtable discussions and that the President appoint a committee to work out such a program outlining the topics for discussion. It was decided to hold the meeting in Spokane on November 14th with the President authorized to change this date if there should be any conflict serious enough to justify it. Mr. Cunningham was asked to make arrangements for a meeting place. It was suggested, considering the N.R.A. convention, that it might be possible to have officials and directors of irrigation districts from other states meet with our group.

Mr. Kail appointed the following Program Committee: G. L. Sterling, Chairman, N. D. Thorp, J. A. Weber and Claude Zediker.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he would not call a meeting of the Legislative Committee until after the annual meeting of the Association. A report will be presented at the annual meeting outlining matters which have been suggested be taken up at the legislative session. After discussion of these matters at the meeting a program will be prepared by the committee.

Mr. Thorp mentioned the difference in interest rates on delinquent irrigation district assessments and the interest on real property taxes. He thought this might be a matter for consideration so the two interest rates could be brought into line.

Mr. Booker brought up the matter of new settlers on the Columbia Basin project and thought this might be a matter for discussion at the annual meeting. Mr. Sterling mentioned the tour to be made of the Kittitas Reclamation District by landowners and County Agents from South Dakota on November 12th, and invited anyone interested to attend this tour.

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Association should watch for the report of the interim committee of the State Legislature on County Government. He stated there is talk that they will recommend consolidating units of any kind that have the power to levy taxes under county supervision with the idea of eliminating waste and reducing cost.

Mr. Cunningham also called attention to the ruling of the Bureau of Internal Revenue applying federal documentary stamp tax to state and local transactions. This ruling holds that conveyances of real property are not exempt from federal stamp tax on the ground that one or both parties to the transactions is a governmental agency. This ruling was issued by the Bureau on May 1, 1950. An effort was made by organizations representing state and local government officials to obtain Congressional action to overcome this ruling, but it is not as yet known by this Association whether the effort was successful.

Mr. Thorp mentioned the problem his district and other districts are encountering in connection with the segregation of tracts of irrigated land into building lots.

It was suggested that a Membership Committee be appointed to work toward increasing the membership of the Association. No action was taken in this matter.

After some general discussion, the meeting adjourned.

T. Newstrum, Secretary