

MT NEBO WATER AGENCY  
BOARD MEETING  
Salem City Offices, 30 West 100 South, Salem UT 84653  
Monday, May 12, 2025

CONDUCTING

Richard Nielson, Chair

BOARD MEMBERS

Bart Leeflang, Central Utah Water Conservancy Dis.  
Neil Brown, Genola City  
Braden Sheppard, Goshen Valley Local District  
ABSENT-Brett Christensen, Payson City  
Paul Taylor, Salem City  
ABSENT-Lynn Mecham, Santaquin City  
Kevin Oyler, Spanish Fork City  
Boyd Warren, Strawberry High Line Canal Co  
Sterling Brown, Strawberry Water Users Assoc.  
Richard Nielson, Utah County

ALTERNATE BOARD MEMBERS

Gerard Yates, Central Utah Water Conservancy Dis.  
ABSENT-Curtis Thomas – Genola City  
ABSENT-Paul Munns – Goshen Valley Local District  
David Tuckett, Payson City  
Bradey Wilde, Salem City  
Art Adcock - Santaquin City  
Cory Pierce – Spanish Fork City  
Marty Larson, Strawberry High Line Canal Co.  
ABSENT-Lynn Swensen, Strawberry Water Users Assoc.  
Glen Tanner, Utah County

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Roger Pearson, Central Utah Water Conservancy Dis. (online)  
ABSENT-Chris Steele, Genola City  
ABSENT-Melanie McVicker, Goshen Valley Local Dis.  
Travis Jockumsen, Payson City  
Bradey Wilde, Salem City  
ABSENT-Norm Beagley, Santaquin City  
Cory Pierce, Spanish Fork City  
Marty Larson, Strawberry Highline Canal Co  
Sterling Brown, Strawberry Water Users Assoc.  
Richard Nielson, Utah County

STAFF

Kim E. Holindrake, Payson City Recorder

OTHERS

Steve Clyde, Clyde Snow (online)  
Steve Jones, Hansen Allen & Luce  
Jon Lundell, Santaquin City  
Gary Brimley, Central Utah Water Conservancy Dis.  
Bruce Ward, Central Utah Water conservancy Dis.

Chris Thompson, Hansen Allen & Luce  
Kathryn Floor, Hansen Allen & Luce  
Easton Hopkins, Hansen Allen & Luce  
Chris Thompson, Hansen Allen & Luce  
Joshua Hortin, Hansen Allen & Luce

1. Call to Order

Chair Richard Nielson called this meeting of the Mt Nebo Water Agency Board to order at 7:31 a.m. The meeting was properly noticed.

2. Public Comment Period

No public comments.

3. Approval of Minutes – February 10, 2025, Meeting

**MOTION: Kevin Oyler – To approve the meeting minutes of February 10, 2025.** Motion seconded by Bart Leeftang. Those voting yes: Bart Leeftang, Neil Brown, Braden Sheppard, Dave Tuckett, Paul Taylor, Art Adcock, Kevin Oyler, Boyd Warren, Sterling Brown, Richard Nielson. The motion carried.

4. Technical Committee Report and/or Action

a. Update on Groundwater Database & Plan Management Program (Project #7) (7:35

Travis Jockumsen reviewed the Technical Committee proposal to set up a meeting with local, state, and federal elected/staff officials for the purpose of educating them on the south Utah County water demands and infrastructure. This meeting will initiate and forge meaningful, ongoing relationships, so they will understand what this Agency does and if this Agency every requests funds.

Braden Sheppard suggested adding representatives from the House Leadership, which he can invite someone.

Travis Jockumsen noted additional people can be invited and the location may be moved because the Spanish Fork room isn't that large.

Update on Project #7:

Chris Thompson noted this project has been in the work for 10+ years and conceived by a groundwater study by SUMWA. The proposal is to calculate what a long-term safe yield is, not just year to year, but a 10-year period calibration of the underground aquifer. When so much water is taken out of the aquifer, what do the wells do? A 10-year safe yield needs to be known and adjusted year to year. The Groundwater is safer in the aquifer and if regulated responsibly.

Steve Jones reviewed the Mt. Nebo Water Agency project area and noted there is now a plan for every city/entity. In reality, there are no boundaries so Goshen Valley is pumping quite a bit of water that is pulling from other boundaries. Two graphs were presented for each city/entity showing historic groundwater levels (1949 forward) and future predictions for each city/entity represented in the

project areas. The data is based on the USGS model, which is a good representation of the past. The bands represent levels as green being good/full, blue being good/middle, and yellow being lower third. Below yellow is a danger level. It's okay to go into the yellow but not stay too long or go lower. The blue bars coming down from the top is usage (actual data), and the green bars coming up from the bottom is the recharge in acre feet. The 2024 line moving forward are predictions to the future including growth usage.

Discussion that emphasis was placed on the importance of using groundwater as a reservoir to help during droughts, rather than depleting it. The model focused on well water and groundwater; springs are outside of the modeled area. The Spanish Fork graphs and historic data shows the ULS water being used in 2018 and 2019, which decreased well use significantly. The amount of recharge from the Spanish Fork River to the groundwater depends on the head of the groundwater. As the water level elevation decreases, more water more water from the Spanish Fork River is modeled to the groundwater. The 2024 actual compared to the 2025 proposed showed a significant decrease in the use on springs for drinking water. The 2024 actual was higher because one spring works very well and overflowed. The focus is on using the springs and not pumping from the groundwater.

Discussion regarding the need for wells to manage groundwater levels and the potential for future fine-tuning of numbers. The state engineer's office allows for new wells in certain areas, continues to approve groundwater change applications (surface to groundwater), and has stepped into the Goshen Valley area regarding groundwater management. It's important to manage groundwater levels voluntarily and not have the state engineer step in. The goal is for each city/entity to take these graphs and start thinking about how to improve its groundwater levels. Each city/entity has a paper portfolio of groundwater rights, and then a portfolio of wells for the capacity that can be pumped, which don't always match up. It isn't bad to have more water right than the safe yield because this creates the reservoir as long as everyone is working together. It can't be every city/entity for itself, which is when the state engineer steps in.

Discussion regarding Goshen Valley, which is broken into north and south. Goshen Valley is pumping down (yellow line), which is more than its physical availability according to area. Other cities/entities are being affected by this. Goshen Valley understands this now, are making plans to do better, and are hoping for more surface water this year in order to cut back on groundwater withdraws. Discussion that recharge and weather have effects on the graphs as well as reported data. Goshen Valley's reported data is only 100 acre feet of withdrawals whereas the USGS reported 15,000 acre feet of withdrawals. This means wells aren't being reported. Discussions have been held with the agricultural community in Goshen Valley, which stated pumping could be reduced by 500 acre feet.

A technical report explaining assumptions and how models are developed is available.

Discussion regarding the Benjamin area that goes down even before the discharge decreases. It has to do with three very large wells that correlate to Benjamin. Fine tuning of the agricultural data is needed for accuracy. Converting land to homes or flood irrigation to sprinklers is too refined to show in the model. The biggest effect is the change in the use of a well.

The bottom line is a lot of work has been done. These dashboards include all the assumptions in the background and gets better over time as cities/entities make changes. 2024 groundwater levels of operation graph.

Review of the 2024 groundwater levels of operation graph. Genola is being affected by Goshen Valley. All aquifers are modeled as one with defining layers, more horizontal movement than vertical movement. This is the first step. Now cities/entities need to give input, present to councils, and make action plans.

Safe Yield Groundwater Withdrawal Threshold

Subarea	Last Year of Healthy Aquifer Level
Spanish Fork	2047
Benjamin	2040
Elk Ridge	2065
Genola	2051
Goshen	2045
Goshen Valley/Elberta	2045
Mapleton	2042
Payson	2041
Salem	2049
Santaquin	2055
Springville	2050
Wetlands	2044
Woodland Hills	2065

Discussion that there isn't much a city/entity can do in a drought year. Outside of housing, cities/entities may find more tools in the toolbox coming to assist in conservation. Working with and developing relationships with the agricultural community is going to be crucial. It's good to move slowly, and it's moving in a good direction.

Discussion regarding the Highline Canal that is susceptible to evaporation but also seeps into the groundwater. This is essentially a recharge and included in the model. There is only so much that can be done over time, and other solutions are needed.

a. Other

No other business addressed.

5. Discussion regarding an addition to the Groundwater Database and Plan Management Program (8:22 a.m.)

Travis Jockumsen explained that this is an addition to Project #7 to continue the groundwater modeling to add data and equating population growth. Central Utah Water Conservancy District also

has a vested interest as to when the water treatment plant is built. The scope of work includes the following at a cost of \$40,500, which is split between all the entities. It could be split like before with a project and a maintenance portion. He recommended keeping the study going. If agricultural entities contributed data, the model would be more accurate. Cities and entities need to add this to their budget.

Discussion regarding basing the cost on population, which has been done in the past. Population becomes complicated; the Technical Committee felt this was the best way. It could also be done by class of city. Elk Ridge, Woodland Hills, and Mapleton are not included or members of the Agency.

6. Finance Report (8:29 a.m.)

Sterling Brown presented the finance memo. Since the last meeting three invoices were paid to Hansen, Allen & Luce (\$4,435.25, \$7,382.80, \$11,592.00). Revenues included three interest payments of \$12.46. Account balances include the reserve account - \$5,000, administrative account - \$28,889.03, and Project #7 account - \$5,029.60 for a total of \$38,918.63.

7. Resolution – Review and Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Tentative Budget and set public hearing (8:32 a.m.)

Sterling Brown reviewed the proposed tentative budget.

**MT. NEBO WATER AGENCY  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 TENTATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET**

Expenses

Clerk	\$700.00
Professional Services	\$1,000.00
Treasurer's Bond	\$100.00
Mailbox	\$360.00
Meals and Entertainment	\$200.00
Quick Books	\$300.00
Publication Expenses for Public Hearings	\$100.00
State Entity Registration	\$50.00
Total	\$2,810.00

Note: The Administrative Budget will be deducted from the fund balance. No member assessments will be levied.

**MT. NEBO WATER AGENCY  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 TENTATIVE PROJECTS BUDGET**

**PROJECT #7 - Groundwater Database and Plan Management Program**

Contract Amount: \$32,000.00

Revenues:

Member Participant Assessments	<u>\$32,000.00</u>
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Total Revenues	<u>\$32,000.00</u>
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Expenses:

Professional services - Hansen Allen & Luce	<u>\$26,970.40</u>
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Total Expenses	<u>\$26,970.40</u>
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Current Fund Balance:	<u>\$5,029.60</u>
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Discussion to include the Project #7 addition of \$40,500 as previously presented. The reserve account remains at \$5,000.

**MOTION: Sterling Brown – To adopt Resolution No. 05-12-2025 as a tentative budget and set the public hearing for June 9, 2025 for final adoption.** Motion seconded by Dave Tuckett. Those voting yes: Bart Leeftang, Neil Brown, Braden Sheppard, Dave Tuckett, Paul Taylor, Art Adcock, Kevin Oyler, Boyd Warren, Sterling Brown, Richard Nielson. The motion carried.

8. Legislative Updates/Changes (8:38 a.m.)

Steve Clyde noted he provided a handout on legislative and case-law updates from Lauren Hawkes, Parr Brown Gee & Loveless. The legislature this year slowed down on water bills in order to see the impact on bills passed over the last few years including water levels for the Great Salt Lake. This year focused more on the water supply side.

- HB274 (5<sup>th</sup> Sub.) (page 3 handout) – Addressed water rates for secondary water providers and mandates moving to a tiered water system by 2030 if not metered and 2025 if currently metered. Clarified a reasonable basis for fees doesn't have to be totally based on the cost of service but allows putting in a conservation rate. Developers fought this because they don't like paying for more than the actual cost to deliver the service.
- SB80 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sub.) (page 7 handout) – Gives the Division of Water Quality (DWQ) the ability to levy annual fees for the regulation of public water systems for drinking water, which is imposed by federal law. It outlines parameters but doesn't dictate how the fee is established or who pays for it. It will have fiscal impacts in cities and municipal water suppliers.
- Many other bills change funding and give a water agent more authority to negotiate potential water purchases and leases for the Great Salt Lake. So far the Great Salt Lake Trust has been relatively successful but not finding great big blocks of water. Until agricultural water users step forward to take the risk, not much will happen on the Great Salt Lake. He encouraged the Board to read through the handout.

9. Division of Water Rights Adjudication on south Utah County

Gary Brimley noted he worked for the Division of Water Rights (DWR) for 15 years and now works for Central Utah Water Conservancy District. He explained that a general adjudication is an opportunity for the state to bring all water rights on the record and resolve definitions of water rights, which is a process ordered by the courts upon a petition by the state engineer and water users. The current ongoing case came in the 1930's and evolved in the 1940's to become broader. It included Salt Lake City and water users on the Jordan River. The court mandated it become broader so additional parties were joined. In the 1970's it was mandated to become even broader, which became the Utah Lake and Jordan River General Adjudication. The General Adjudication investigates all water right claims, rights of record, applications, certificates, and diligence claims. The landscape of water rights is varied with many types of water rights such as decreed rights and applications to appropriate. To bring all these rights into one definition, the Adjudication publishes them into a recommendation to the court as a proposed determination, which defines them with uniform attributes and characteristics.

Actual water rights include decreed rights (been before a judge), certificated applications (1903 onward), and diligence claims (prior 1903). Shares, share statements, and contracts are not water rights, but shared interest in the underlying water rights of the company. The adjudication process includes summons, notice to file claims, list of unclaimed rights (LUR), final summons, LUR decree, claims investigation (field work), state engineer recommendation (SER), proposed determination, and decree.

South Utah County Adjudications map shown and reviewed. An anticipated timeline is approximately two to three years.

Sheet shown of a summary of water right protests, which is what cities/entities need to keep track of on their water rights.

A to-do list includes inventory water rights, file claims, cooperate with state staff, monitor SERs, and review the LUR (2026) and PD (2027-2028).

10. Other Business (9:10 a.m.)

a. Review Board Officers and Contact List

Sterling Brown wanted to ensure the Technical Committee was listed correctly.

b. Information/Discussion Items for Future Meetings

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Final Budget

Addition to Groundwater Database and Plan Management Program - Project #7

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Commissioner Brian Steed, Great Salt Lake Commissioners Office

Nebo Regional Update, Roger Pearson, November

c. Other

Dave Tuckett stated that at the end of this year Kim Holindrake is retiring. Spanish Fork handled the administrative tasks previously and then Payson took over. He suggested Salem City taking over and asked Brady Wilde to talk to Matt Marziale. Something needs to be in place so Kim and do training and have a good transition.

11. Next Meeting – June 9, 2025

12. Adjourn

**MOTION: Braden Sheppard – To adjourn.** Motion seconded by Kevin Oyler. Those voting yes: Bart Leeftang, Neil Brown, Braden Sheppard, Dave Tuckett, Paul Taylor, Art Adcock, Kevin Oyler, Boyd Warren, Sterling Brown, Richard Nielson. The motion carried.

This meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.