

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VISION 2020 COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Tom Sloan at 9:00 am on Wednesday, February 18, 2015, 218-N of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Scott Abbott, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Iraida Orr, Legislative Research Department
Natalie Teemer-Washington, Legislative Research Department
Mary Koles, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant
Renae Jefferies, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Earl Lewis, Assistant Director, Kansas Water Office
Dennis Schwartz, Kansas Water Authority
Greg Foley, Executive Director, Division of Conservation
Sunee Mickle, Director, Governmental Relations, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Presentation on: State Water Plan Fund

Earl Lewis, Assistant Director, Kansas Water Office (KWO), provided both background information and an update on the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF). He included a table showing the actual expenditures from the SWPF, 2006-2014, and the appropriated amount for 2015. For the last decade, securing, protecting, and restoring storage threatened by sediment has been a priority of the KWO and the Water Authority. Lewis stated that insuring an adequate water supply for future generations will take a "significant investment" - much more than what is currently available in the SWPF. Groundwater depletion and management, especially in the Ogallala Aquifer, is the other major water supply issue for Kansas.

He focused on the revenue coming into the SWPF over the previous decade, noting that the majority of the revenue comes from fees. The incoming funds have remained flat over the decade. Why? The majority of the fees remain the same as when they were established in 1989, over 26 years ago. Additionally, funds from demand transfer sources have been transferred from the State General Fund and the Economic Development Initiatives Fund during the same period, a total of \$38.6 million.

Lewis briefly discussed the development of the Water Vision: additional funding is needed and the funding mechanism must be balanced and fair. Lewis provided a release dated February 16, 2015, titled Kansas Water Regional Goal leadership Teams. It provides up-to-the-minute information about the ongoing process. ([Attachment 1](#))

Presentation on: State Water Plan Fund

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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Dennis Schwartz, Kansas Water Authority, described his decades long involvement with water matters and provided background information about the Kansas Water Authority. Over the last decade, the Water Authority recognized the need for water project funding. Various options for funding have been proposed without success. Demand transfers were eliminated in FY 2009 and a proposal to increase fees by 50%, also in 2009, met with much opposition. Since then, the Water Authority has recommended using 10% of the Expanded Lottery Act Revenue Fund for water projects; neither the Legislature nor the Governors have been interested. He noted that the call for a balanced and fair approach to raising addition revenue for water projects depends on an individual's perspective.

Schwartz said the Water Authority recommended projects for funding in its annual report; the focus is on reservoir issues and the Ogallala Aquifer. The recommendations are included in his testimony. He commented that preventing sediment is more economical than dredging. ([Attachment 2](#)) Following his testimony, questions were asked by Chairman Sloan and Representatives Campbell, Bollier, O'Brien, and Francis.

Presentation on: State Water Plan Fund

Greg Foley, Executive Director, Division of Conservation (DOC), Kansas Department of Agriculture, presented a briefing on Conservation Commission programs, State Water Plan funding and continual natural resource protection endeavors. He reviewed State aid to the 105 Conservation Districts. He commented on Watershed Dam Construction, Water Supply Restoration and Multipurpose Small Lakes Programs. Other programs mentioned include Water Conservation, Riparian and Wetland, Water Quality Buffer Initiative and more. A colorful graphic quickly and easily reveal how funds are disbursed.

He mentioned six additional conservation priorities and targeted areas, the last calls for looking at new technologies that could reduce irrigation water usage. He noted the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides Conservation Innovation Grants, an opportunity to test new irrigation technologies. ([Attachment 3](#)) Representatives Campbell and Ousley asked questions.

Presentation on: Tele-health

Sunee Mickle, Director, Governmental Relations, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, reported about telehealth services offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS). For 2015, BCBSKS contracted with 99% of all medical doctors and with all of Kansas' acute care facilities and with around 96% of all provider types in its service area. Many of BCBSKS' members and employees live in rural communities where it is difficult for health care providers and hospitals to deliver a variety of quality health care services. Mickle said this is one reason BCBSKS began covering telehealth, however, they do not cover telemedicine services for basic primary care services.

Specialty providers can, she observed, bill BCBSKS for consultations, office and other outpatient visits, individual psychotherapy, pharmacologic management, psychiatric diagnostic examinations and end state renal disease related services. Other telemedicine services may be billed when they are

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medically necessary and a covered benefit. BCBSKS began reimbursing for telemedicine facility fees, originating site fee, in 2008. Rural health care facilities as well as patients benefit from this decision. Telehealth services help local providers maintain their patients' medical homes. Despite these efforts, the demand for telemedicine services is low. See the map attached to Mickle's testimony indicating the originating sites for telemedicine in 2014. BCBSKS is evaluating the telemedicine services it currently provides and monitoring market trends for new services. ([Attachment 4](#)) Chairman Sloan and Representative Bollier asked several questions following Mickle's presentation.

Chairman Sloan thanked the conferees for their presentations.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 23, 2015.