

## Regional

# Commentary: Pulling the curtain back on NID's 'compromise' resolution re Centennial

By YubaNet - October 11, 2018, 05:32:34 PM

NEVADA CITY, Calif. October 11, 2018 – NID's Special Meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 9, was supposed to be an opportunity for public discussion and a vote by NID's Board of Directors on a resolution brought forth by the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) to halt spending on the Centennial Dam project until the district completes their Raw Water Master Plan (RWMP). [Resolution 2018-26](#) passed by NID directors limits the Capital Plan expenditures to \$2 million and refocus NID's priority on the RWMP.



*NID's Board and staff on stage during the meeting.  
Photo YubaNet*

Billed as "a compromise" by Director Scott Miller who proposed this seemingly ad-hoc resolution, the 3-2 vote effectively ended the meeting which had long descended into confusion and chaos.

## **Time management is an art form**

The Grass Valley Veterans Hall was chosen by NID to hold the meeting, given the limited seating capacity in the regular NID Board chamber. Some 500 members of the public filed in, eager for the meeting to begin. NID's legal counsel informed the audience that no limits would be imposed on members of the public desiring to address the board, an unusual move given that a 3-minute time limit is a generally accepted rule. As a long-time observer of public meetings, this journalist knew fewer people would be able to speak – it is human nature to expand on an argument with personal anecdotes and 'testify' if given the time.

SYRCL's Executive Director Melinda Booth made a 30-minute presentation listing the arguments for putting spending on hold.

Not ascribing any planning by NID to run out the clock with their 49-slide rebuttal is difficult, but the benefit of the doubt should be given – even if over an hour of detailed explanations followed, including but not limited to:

- Why a trailer on a property acquired by NID was torn down (complete with pictures showing damage inside and out – from various angles)
- Detailed (all 8 sections) of the Agricultural Water Management Plan
- Detailed (all 8 sections) of the Urban Water Management Plan
- Background on the Delta Plan update (all 3 phases)
- A mention of the "WaterFix" Twin Tunnels and NID's stance on it
- Water rights (from 1927 to the present)
- An exhaustive (and exhausting) fiscal presentation of the audit of NID's finances relating to Centennial expenditures

At that point, Counsel Andrew McClure informed the remaining audience the meeting had to be over by 8:30 pm and public comment would be taken at this time – depriving the public of three more riveting points:

- The "No Public Benefit" ruling by the CWC and NID's explanation as to why (they could have but decided not to appeal)
- The unknown cost of the project (More accurate costs including construction and environmental mitigations will be available after CEQA / NEPA are complete/Financial analysis will be delayed until after DEIR is released)
- And finally the justification for selling water outside of the district (NID regards contracts with Grass Valley and Nevada City as 'surplus water sales' and has a history of selling surplus contract waters to South Sutter Water District)

Fortunately, the full presentation is available for your reading pleasure as a pdf file.

### **Peace and love, let's get something done**

Director Miller interrupted public comment "in the spirit of compromise" and proposed a resolution to cap the aggregate spending for the Centennial project in the Capital Plan to \$2 million. The capital plan is the planning document where each division outlines their funding needs for the coming five years. The plan is reviewed by various internal committees and eventually serves as the basis for the yearly budget. Miller made a formal motion and Director Nancy Weber seconded.





## Inquiring minds want to know

Did Scott Miller propose the recommendation of the Engineering Committee as a 'compromise' between SYRCL's request and NID's planned need?

Was Nick Wilcox aware that \$2 million is precisely the amount proposed by staff and voting for Miller's resolution is not a compromise?

The Engineering Committee, like all other standing committees, has two board directors assigned: Scott Miller and Nick Wilcox, both present at the Aug. 21 meeting, according to the [minutes of the meeting](#).

**October 11, 2018 at 6:00 PM Update:** The video of the special meeting is now available on NCTV's YouTube channel. Watch the final 20 minutes below:

