



**Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)**

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday October 11, 2023**

Windfall Farms Conference Room, 4710 Flying Paster Lane, Paso Robles

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 3:01PM by Dana Merrill

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill – present

Lee Nesbitt - present

Jerry Reaugh - present

Hilary Graves – absent

Herb Rowland - present

Others present:

Blaine Reely – SLO County Director of Groundwater Sustainability

Willy Cunha – Shandon-San Juan Water District

Brent Burchett, SLO Farm Bureau

Patricia Wilmore, PRWCA

Guests (by videoconference)

**ITEM 2: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING made by Herb Rowland, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, passed 4-0.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 4: PRESENTATION OF PROVOST & PRITCHARD PROJECT PROGRESS**

Dana Merrill reported that the project has progressed to the point where a demonstration project to show potential recharge capability could move forward. A suggested pilot project could be a five-year, 500 AF/year recharge test. The project is now going to transition to the purview of the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee. Funding could come from grants or low-interest loans and if a Basin-wide benefit could be shown, the possibility to fund by assessments could be considered. This could be considered a “shovel-ready” project. The next step, year two, would require approximately \$218,000 in funds to move forward. Year three would be where turnouts and dechlorination stations would be constructed. The project would need a commitment to use unallocated State water in years where it is available, with an unknown purchase cost per AF. Kathleen March asked for clarification as to why there is a need to pay for water when a particular individual might not be in need. Dana Merrill clarified that the DWR has found the Basin users to be pumping more than is being naturally recharged and we have to make up the deficit per SGMA. Also, that there is one plan for the entire Basin, with the participating GSAs all coordinating on implementation of that plan. Staff was directed to add a link to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Basin to the EPCWD website.

**ITEM 5: DISCUSSION OF SUPPORT FOR COUNTY PBCC WEBSITE**

At the prior EPCWD regular meeting, the possibility of a PBCC standalone website was raised. MOTION TO SUPPORT COUNTY PBCC WEBSITE made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Dana Merrill, passed 4-0.

#### **ITEM 6: DISCUSSION OF DRAFT AMENDMENT #2 TO MOA FOR PBCC**

The Draft Amendment to the MOA for PBCC allows for all PBCC member GSAs to be a contracting agency; in the past, Paso Robles City has been the lead contracting agency. Blaine Reely explained that the original MOA was written solely to allow the GSAs to collaborate on preparing the GSP and now needs to be updated. Additionally, another amendment or potential change in the governance structure likely will be necessary in order to move to the implementation phase of the GSP.

#### **ITEM 7: UPDATE ITEMS**

**a. Real-time Groundwater Levels Monitoring project**

Jerry Reaugh reported that he saw a “bubbler” groundwater level monitor in action. These devices are relatively inexpensive and should be considered for real-time monitoring of wells throughout the Basin.

**b. SLO County Board of Supervisors meeting September 26, 2023**

No report presented.

**c. Groundwater Levels Network Monitoring program**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the existing network of approximately 30 wells continues to be manually monitored, with the next reading due in November. This will bring the network to three full years of monitoring data.

**d. WRAC meeting October 4, 2023 (cancelled)**

**e. State Water Subcontractors Committee – Next meeting November, 2023**

See report from Dana Merrill on associated item # 4 on this agenda.

**f. PBCC Technical Advisory Committee meetings (MILR, Groundwater Measurement, Blended Water)**

Jerry Reaugh reported on the Groundwater Measurement TAC. The TAC staff had been asked to research 100 wells to be potentially added to the network; the results will be presented at the next TAC meeting. Jerry has suggested that an additional 40 wells be identified for real-time monitoring. There are approximately 12 wells with existing real-time equipment that might be available once the privacy protections have been ironed out. The State is planning to come to the Basin and view and video some selected monitored wells.

Jerry Reaugh reported that the PBCC is considering an engineering study for the project. Blaine Reely added that the RFP is out now with respondents being reviewed. The selected firm will be confirmed by the Board of Supervisors on October 31. The study should take approximately 6 months once awarded; the scope of work was presented at the July PBCC meeting and it is comprehensive.

Regarding the MILR program, Dana Merrill asked Blaine Reely for a status update. Blaine reported that a rate study will be presented at the PBCC meeting on October 25. The funding for the MILR TAC would be part of the overall MILR program, and that a groundwater extraction fee is one possible way to fund the MILR program, TAC, monitoring network, updates to GSP, 5-year evaluation of GSP, website, etc. The TAC’s next step is to consider what elements should be included in the program.

3:45PM Herb Rowland leaves the meeting.

#### **ITEM 8: TREASURER’S REPORT**

Jerry Reaugh prefaced the discussion of the Report by noting that the 2024 financial obligations of the District will likely increase due to its GSA status and participation in the PBCC. As an example, he cited the Annual Water Report which costs approximately \$100,000 to produce, of which 23% or \$23,000 would be EPCWD's obligation.

**a. Monthly Financial Status Report**

No questions arose from the report presented by Jerry Reaugh.

**ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS**

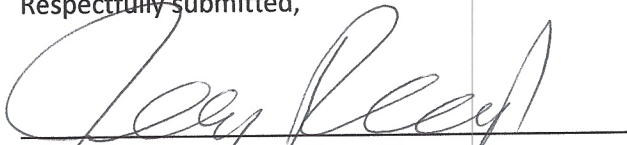
No new business items were requested.

**ITEM 10: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 8, 2023**

**ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, motion passed 3-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 3:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:



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Dana Merrill, President

12/4/23  
Date