



Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)

Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 30, 2023

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

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:06AM by Hilary Graves.

ITEM 2: ROLL CALL

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill (by videoconference)
Lee Nesbitt (present)
Jerry Reaugh (present)
Hilary Graves (by videoconference)
Herb Rowland (by videoconference)

Others present:

Brett Stroud
Nate Page, GSI Water Solutions Inc.
Supervisor Bruce Gibson
Amanda Peisch-Derby, Department of Water Resources
Members of Shandon-San Juan Water District board and membership
Guests (by phone and videoconference)

ITEM 3: CONSIDER MOTION TO INVOKE AB361 TO CONTINUE HOLDING TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)) FOR THE REASONS STATED IN RESOLUTION 2022-003.

MOTION TO INVOKE AB361 TO CONTINUE HOLDING TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)) FOR THE REASONS STATED IN RESOLUTION 2022-003 made by Lee Nesbitt, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – yes
Hilary Graves – yes
Jerry Reaugh – yes
Lee Nesbitt – yes
Herb Rowland - yes

Motion passed 5-0.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

ITEM 5: MOVE TO SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH SHANDON-SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT FOR AN OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE PASO GROUNDWATER BASIN AND THE GSP. TOPICS MAY INCLUDE ITEMS LISTED BELOW BUT NOT LIMITED TO THESE:

- a. SGMA Update – Amanda Peisch-Derby, Department of Water Resources

The DWR will be releasing all incomplete determination of submitted GSPs by end of March. She reminded that the Fall 2022 Annual Report is now due. While the snowpack is currently about 200%T of average, the State is facing a fourth year of drought. Reservoirs are at 98% of average across the State. Some GSAs and counties have included domestic wells in requests to the State and with the current backlog, there is no need to submit these requests.

- b. Update on the GSP and Grant Funds Received for Implementation – Blaine Reely, Director of Sustainable Groundwater Management for the County.

GSP is currently still in review at DWR. Paso Robles City's Purple Pipe project, funded by a State grant, is currently out for bid. San Miguel's new waste water treatment plant is in the design phase. There are a number of studies in process at the State to consider State Water benefit use in the Basin, as well as looking at Santa Margarita Lake, and a risk assessment of domestic wells negatively impacted by the drought. The Paso Basin Cooperative Committee meets next on March 16. It is under consideration to roll management actions for the Basin into one program. Blaine is currently working on a draft of this comprehensive program with all elements to potentially present at the next PBCC meeting.

- c. Update on GSP Annual Report – Nate Page, GSI Water Solutions Inc.

The Annual report for the County was completed and showed a dry year. The old method for estimation of ag use was the model developed by the County; currently, data from that model is being compared to Land IQ data, and the results show approximately 91,300AF of groundwater and surface water. Regarding computation of the annual changes in groundwater storage, data gaps are being filled by EPCWD and SSJWD wells that are being monitored, so now there are approximately 60 wells being tracked, and show a significant drop in storage of 117,000. Steve Sinton asked why that number differs from the previously reported number. Nate Page responded that it may be due to limitation in the data. Bruce Gibson asked if the methodology was in the Annual Report, and the response was "yes." The new method is being calibrated with the older model method. There was further general discussion regarding undesirable results consequences, long term versus short term variability, parity in extraction across ag, and water recharge.

- d. Discussion of GSP Implementation

The general discussion touched on various topics including considering applying a value to water to incentivize responsible use, with resulting fees being used for projects to enhance the Basin; could a resulting water market be managed by the GSP and potentially be closed to any use outside the Basin; consider creating management zones and define local versus Basin-wide issues; consider an equity statement considering all users in the Basin as the foundation for a water market; consider equity within ag, perhaps with a tiered rate for usage; create a revenue stream to help with dry wells.

Bruce Gibson, now chair of the PBCC, with Blaine Reely as the alternate for the County GSA seat, indicated that an equity statement from each GSA could be brought forward for consideration at the next PBCC meeting, March 16. He pointed out that SGMA is fundamentally about equity and needs to be articulated at the local level. Steve Sinton asked for development of consensus on the actual AF needed to address the overdraft.

Herb Rowland leaves the meeting at 11:15AM

Jerry Lohr brought up that the Blended Water Project could input 5000AF for recharge. Steve Sinton mentioned the Nacimiento water rights application and the County's current oppositional stance – could the County consider withdrawing their opposition? Bruce Gibson responded that an equity statement would be helpful in this regard. Willy Cunha suggested that EPCWD becoming a GSA could further implementation goals and Bruce Gibson responded that there may be a path for that. Jerry Reaugh requested an ad hoc committee of the EPCWD be formed to develop reaffirming the EPCWD's request to become a GSA. Further topics included setting up an outreach meeting to look start a conversation about domestic wells. Again, an equity statement would be helpful here.

ITEM 6: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING GSA FORMATION

The above-mentioned ad hoc committee will develop a letter to the County reaffirming the District's desire to become a GSA.

At this time, SSJWD moved to approve their consent agenda and Steve Sinton brought up the funds in the PRIOR account, proposing a 50/50 split between SSJWD and EPCWD. General consensus was approval but no official action was taken by the EPCWD board.

ITEM 7: NEW BUSINESS

Hilary Graves earlier requested that an agenda item be added next meeting to consider crafting an equity statement including options for reducing the overdraft by equitable means.

ITEM 8: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – FEBRUARY 8, 2023

ITEM 19: ADJOURNMENT


MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, roll call vote:

- Dana Merrill – absent
- Hilary Graves – yes
- Herb Rowland –absent
- Lee Nesbitt – yes
- Jerry Reaugh – yes

Motion passed 3-0.

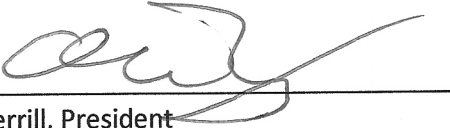
Meeting adjourned at 11:46AM

Respectfully submitted,

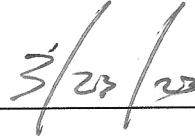


Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:



Dana Merrill, President



Date