

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

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**November 10, 2021**

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

**ATTENDANCE**

Directors Present:

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

Others present:

Brett Stroud  
Guests (by phone and videoconference)

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ITEM 2: CONSIDER RESOLUTION 2021-004 TO RENEW AB361 AUTHORIZING REMOTE TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS**

MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2021-004 TO RENEW AB361 AUTHORIZING REMOTE TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS made by Hilary Graves, 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 3: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021 MEETING**

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2021 made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 4-0, 1 abstention

**ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 5: CONSIDER SUBMITTING DISTRICT COMMENTS TO SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY IN RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT OF PASO BASIN LAND USE PLANTING ORDINANCE**

Dana Merrill opened the discussion by referencing the proposed 25AFY exemption level and how, without any plan to supplement the Basin, this could lead to further overdraft due to the way the exemption is framed. The primary question of this item is whether the District should prepare and submit comments, to which Hilary Graves and Jerry Reaugh expressed that the District should in order to best represent its constituents. Hilary Graves also pointed out that the increased demand of a 25AFY exemption level could lead to the “undesirable results” that SGMA is using as one measure of sustainability success or failure. SGMA is the vehicle to manage groundwater. Jerry Reaugh then led a point-by-point discussion of some proposed comments. Lee Nesbitt asked about whether there was any CEQA review of the ordinance, and if so, how could the increase from 5AFY to 25AFY pass CEQA review. Hilary Graves asked about whether the County’s land use authority is stronger than SGMA or vice versa. Hilary Graves proposed an ad hoc committee to write draft comments to be brought to the Board for discussion and potential approval in a special meeting; Jerry Reaugh and Hilary Graves will write the draft comments.

MOTION TO HAVE AD HOC COMMITTEE DRAFT COMMENTS TO BE REVIEWED, DISCUSSED AND POSSIBLY APPROVED AT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2021 made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 5-0.

Brett Stroud offered to review the comments if the Board so wishes.

**ITEM 6: DISCUSSION OF INSTALLATION OF CIMIS WEATHER STATION AND POSSIBLE FUNDING**

The approximate cost of the equipment for the station proposed on Lohr property within the District boundaries and overseen by Mark Battany is \$9,000.00. Herb Rowland asked about whether the installation had to be on well-watered grass or if there is some alternative? Dana Merrill noted that the CIMIS data is integrated with the State. Hilary Graves asked if there are available funds in the budget for this project; Jerry Reaugh confirmed that there are sufficient funds set aside for possible projects such as this.

MOTION TO APPROVE APPROXIMATELY \$9,000.00 IN FUNDING FOR THE CIMIS INSTALLATION made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Hilary Graves, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 5-0

**ITEM 7: UPDATE ON PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 27, 2021**

Jerry Reaugh that the agenda for the meeting contained no item regarding managing the Basin, and that

the County has recently hired a Department head level person to oversee the County's groundwater basins in regard to SGMA, Blaine Heely. It was suggested to invite Mr. Heely to a future meeting, possibly December.

**ITEM 8: UPDATE ON STATE WATER SUBCONTRACTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOVEMBER 5, 2021**

Jerry Reaugh noted that the full allocation for the County is 22,000 AF, and that currently we have 11,994 AF retained in carryover for 2021. The County may receive perhaps 5% of its allocation for this water year. There is 4,000AF capacity in the Coastal Branch of the State Water Project pipeline in SLO County. Courtney Howard of the County is on record as saying there remains capacity available in the pipeline. Hilary Graves noted that if the County received 5% of 12,000AF, or 600AF, that could be sold to other vendors if the County cannot use it, and then use the funds to enhance County groundwater basins in distress. Hilary Graves also asked if any of the other Board members would be able to take her place as one of the representatives to this committee.

**ITEM 9: UPDATE ON STATE WATER CONSULTING PROJECT**

Dana Merrill is working with our consultant to determine how the District can fit into the picture regarding State Water. The consultant reports that conversation with the pipeline manager revealed a joint study in process evaluating the pipeline and the value of the allocated water, along with pipeline capacity and potential uses for the water. Since Edna Valley GSA is also looking at alternatives such as purchasing water, could another study for EPCWD be done at the same time for the same question, with a positive response from the manager. After January 2022, a study is possible, with a focus on delivery of water to the Paso Robles Basin.

**ITEM 10: UPDATE FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING NETWORK PROJECT**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the third and final sampling for 2021 has been completed, with 29 wells read. He will be meeting with GSI to get an update on how the data collected so far is shaping up.

Non-item Topics: Jerry Reaugh asked to move back to the topic of the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee meeting, reporting that Todd Engineering is preparing a report to respond to the GSP deficiencies noted by the State Water Resources Control Board. For example, minimum thresholds may be unreasonable if they are lower than sample domestic wells.

Hilary Graves reported that she spoke with Tribune reporters regarding water conservation practices in vineyards and that they are looking for others to speak with about similar practices.

Dana Merrill asked about the Blended Water project and Jerry Reaugh responded that efforts are ongoing.

**ITEM 11: TREASURER'S REPORT**

- a. Jerry Reaugh presented the Treasurer's Report summary for October 31, 2021.
- b. Discussion and possible action regarding collection of assessments: staff received direction to send out statements to past due accounts with late fees added to outstanding balances. Dana Merrill suggested that the District consider a policy that late fees may be forgiven under certain

circumstances. Jerry Reaugh and the District Administrator are to work together on policy language.

**ITEM 12: CLOSED SESSION**

Closed session was tabled to a later date.

**ITEM 13: NEW BUSINESS – REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON NEXT AGENDA**

Jerry Reaugh asked that Stacie Jacobs of Solterra Strategies be commended for recent events utilizing vineyard tours, and bringing SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg and supervisorial candidate Jimmy Paulding, as well as State Senator Laird who expressed an interest to know whether SGMA was working as he had a hand in producing the legislation.

**ITEM 14: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 8, 2021**

**ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT**

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

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


Motion passed 5-0.

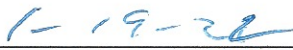
Meeting adjourned at 4:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Merrill, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date