

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

**Special Meeting Minutes**

**April 29, 2020**

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

**ATTENDANCE**

Directors Present: Lee Nesbitt  
Jerry Reaugh  
Hilary Graves  
Dana Merrill (by phone)  
Herb Rowland (by phone)

Others attending: Alan Doud, District Counsel (by phone)  
Paul Sorensen, GSI, Inc. (by phone)  
Randy Diffenbaugh (by phone)  
Guests (by phone)

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:02PM.

**ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Willy Cunha commended the Board for taking time and making the effort to comment on the GSP.

**ITEM 3: REPORT FROM THE GSP AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SUBMITTED COMMENTS. CONSIDER COMMENTS AND ADOPTION OF FINAL COMMENTS TO BE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

Dana Merrill opened the discussion with the consideration that since outreach to the District during the GSP process by the County as our GSA was lacking, effectively the County has refrained from including the District in the GSP process. The District was not able to make anything but limited comments to the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee during its public comments portion of the agenda, and written submission of comments were not acknowledged or responded to. Therefore, commenting now on the submitted GSP may be the District's only opportunity.

Jerry Reaugh, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, reports one comment at large received to date. He asks the question, "If the GSP is an acknowledged weak document, how can the District improve it?" The GSP does not require anyone to do anything and may run the risk of rejection by DWR. How is the basin going to reach sustainability? Projects such as stormwater recapture and the joint study on that project by EPCWD and Shandon-San Juan Water District need to be defined and pursued.

There are no projects defined and no funding for either projects or implementation in the GSP, nor for governance, and our comments should address how to resolve these issues.

Hilary Graves agreed with the draft comments that it is not responsible to have a Plan with no costs outlined, but respectfully submitted that while management needs to be basin-wide, the basin does not need to be equally managed basin-wide. How do we get more input from our members? Is the District doing enough to engage its members? The District should also be aware of the importance of a good working relationship with our partners in the Basin and comments on the GSP should reflect a positive, work-together approach rather than a negative and critical approach.

Jerry Reaugh responded that opinions vary on whether SGMA requires a basin-wide/one management approach or whether management areas would be an acceptable approach. Lee Nesbitt stressed the need to find commonality with our partners such as SSJWD to work on the issues in the GSP and get them repaired.

Herb Rowland returned to the issue of member engagement. He further pointed out that the current draft comment version moves towards a more fact-based approach.

The District's counsel has made some suggestions to the Ad Hoc Committee on the comments and those suggestions are in process.

Matt Turrentine (guest) asked for clarification on the goal of the comments and the desired outcome. The GSP is acknowledged as weak and inadequate, but it is intended to be the basis for future evolutions and versions to be incrementally developed. He suggested, as an example, EPCWD and SSJWD working together to develop a more robust monitoring program.

Dana Merrill reiterated that the District does not want the GSP rejected by DWR; rather that comments be clear that we see deficiencies that weren't included in the Plan and need to be started on.

Hilary Graves and Lee Nesbitt concurred that we need to hear more input from the District members, with which Jerry Reaugh agreed, stating wide distribution of the comments prior to finalization needs to happen. Staff was directed to prepare and send an email to District members with the most recent draft comment letter and request return comments no later than May 4, 9:00AM.

Randy Diffenbaugh (guest) indicated that having a comment letter on record is important but that the current version may include District policy positions that haven't been discussed with the membership, in particular the Basin-wide approach language. Dana Merrill added that if there isn't enough technical data, decisions can't be moved forward. Randy Diffenbaugh expressed the need for fact-finding to determine whether the Basin should be managed equally Basin-wide or by specific areas, or something in between. There was further discussion on this concept between guests and directors.

Patricia Wilmore (guest) gave input that the level of specificity of the draft comment document may be too specific and repetitive. Can it be presented in a more constructive way in terms of improving the GSP? Randy Record (guest) asked who is it that the District might be concerned about "poking". Jerry Reaugh responded that specificity may suit the audience (DWR), and that the District goal is to let DWR know that there is a significant group that has not been considered, and with constructive ideas to improve the document. Hilary Graves would like to move forward and work towards a partnership with the participants.

Randy Record would like to see the District move towards applying for and obtaining some of the State grant monies available for basin sustainability, along with stronger consideration of State Water Project supplies as an alternative source of new water for the Basin. Dana Merrill said that this is the time when the State Water Project contracts are in process of modification and so may be a good time to address this issue. The District should speak up and create a placeholder for State Water Project supplies.

#### **ITEM 4: NEW BUSINESS**

The Board has called a special for Wednesday, May 6, 3:00PM to further consider draft comments on the GSP to be submitted to DWR.

**ITEM 5: ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Herb Rowland, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, passed 5-0 on roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – aye

Jerry Reaugh – aye

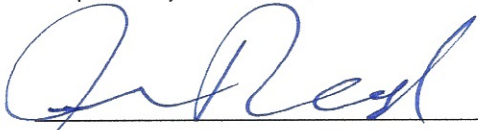
Lee Nesbitt – aye

Herb Rowland – aye

Hilary Graves - aye

Meeting adjourned at 4:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:



Dana Merrill, President

6/2/20

Date