



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

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday May 10, 2023**

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

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

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

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill – present  
Lee Nesbitt - present  
Jerry Reaugh - present  
Hilary Graves – absent (joins at 3:03PM)  
Herb Rowland - present

Others present:

Alan Doud  
Randy Diffenbaugh  
Guests (videoconference)

**ITEM 2: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2023 MEETING**

Motion to approve the minutes for April 12, 2023 meeting made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 4-0.

Hilary Graves joins meeting at 3:03PM

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 4: CONSIDER RESOLUTION 23-002 APPROVING FORMATION OF THE ESTRELLA-EL POMAR-CRESTON GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY, APPROVING A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT REGARDING PREPARATION OF A GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR THE PASO ROBLES GROUNDWATER BASIN AND RELATED MATTERS, AND APPOINTING A MEMBER AND ALTERNATE MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE DISTRICT ON THE PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE.**

Alan Doud clarified that a hearing required and was noticed for this item, and so the President should take Board input and then public comment. The hearing was then opened by Dana Merrill (internet lost at this point). Hilary Graves reiterated that this resolution confirms what the District has been working towards since inception. Jerry Reaugh confirmed and added that participating in the GSP process is vital. No further Board or public comment was presented; Dana Merrill closed the hearing and asked for a motion to approve. MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-002 APPROVING FORMATION OF THE ESTRELLA-EL

POMAR-CRESTON GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY, APPROVING A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT REGARDING PREPARATION OF A GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR THE PASO ROBLES GROUNDWATER BASIN AND RELATED MATTERS, AND APPOINTING A MEMBER AND ALTERNATE MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE DISTRICT ON THE PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Herb Rowland, roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – yes

Hilary Graves – yes

Jerry Reaugh – yes

Herb Rowland – yes

Lee Nesbitt – yes

Motion passed 5-0

Regarding the appointment to the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee, Dana Merrill was approved as the District representative with Hilary Graves as alternate.

**ITEM 5: LONI LYTTLE OF ADVANCED VITICULTURE CONSULTING, INC. ON THE UPCOMING STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SWEEP) BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

Loni Lyttle updated the Board on the SWEEP block grant program and indicated that she believes that EPCWD is competitive as a GSA for funds. The program, funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, offer \$2million to \$5million block grants to fund appropriate qualifying project. The grants require working with a technical advisor such as the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, and the District would be responsible for screening appropriate grant requests up to \$200,000 which would then be reviewed for final approval by CDFA, with three years to distribute the funds. The grants could be limited to District members, or open to the public at the District's discretion; they could be first come, first served or competitive. There are funds in the block grant allocated to administration as well as outreach and technical assistance. Each grant recipient would have to apply individually by APN. Project implementation is handled by the technical advisor. At the project level, the grant recipient would expend the funds and then get reimbursed by CDFA. Jerry Reaugh asked if Loni Lyttle could create a turn-key program (grant proposal, admin set up, etc) and she replied that she could. Dana Merrill asked if Loni is available to be hired for the administration of the program. There is a component of the program which requires that the block grant funds be directed towards underserved (farmers of color, smaller farms) recipients and the difficulty in finding such in the District's general area was discussed. Jerry Reaugh requested a plan from Loni Lyttle to get the District to June 19, the closing date for block grant requests. An ad hoc committee of Jerry Reaugh and Hilary Graves will work with Loni Lyttle to develop a proposed program for review at the June 14 meeting.

**ITEM 6: UPDATE ITEMS**

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

Jerry Reaugh reported that two wells are part of the project, and neither have pumps currently installed, making them idea for real-time monitoring. One is in the El Pomar area and one near the airport. There may be funds coming from the distribution of the PRIOR agreement funds that could be used for more equipment for more wells as part of this project.

**b. SLO County Board of Supervisors meetings April 18 and May 2, 2023**

No update provided

**c. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee meeting April 26, 2023**

Dana Merrill - the District's application for GSA status was discussed. The City of Paso Robles and Shandon-San Juan GSA have both submitted letters in support of the District's application.

**d. Groundwater Levels Monitoring program**

Jerry Reaugh presented data on readings year 2022 compared to 2023.

**e. State Water Consulting project Subcontractors meeting May 5 2023**

State water allocations have been increased again from 75% to 100%. Allocations now average 55% from 2020 to date. With 4,800AF utilized of the total allocated to SLO County, because a spill was declared this year, all accumulated stored water (between 8,000AF and 18,000AF) is lost and no longer available in storage. It could have been sold with the proceeds used to benefit SLO County water basins.

**f. WRAC meeting May 3, 2023**

Lee Nesbitt reported that the Committee bylaws, water conservation programs, reservoirs (all at 100%), snowpack in the Sierra, desalination at Diablo Canyon and raising the dam height at Santa Margarita were all topics of discussion.

**g. GSA ad hoc committee and equity statement**

Jerry Reaugh reported that District counsel Alan Doud has been coordinating with the County for a potential June 6 Board of Supervisors agenda item for GSA consideration. An updated District map is in process for the GSA application. The application to DWR for GSA status is relatively straightforward, and the only thing open prior to submission is Board of Supervisors approval. The DWR is aware of the District's intention to file for GSA status and has expressed support. The County has one stipulation regarding the application and that is that it not materially change what is in place currently.

Hilary Graves gave an update on the Equity Statement in process. There had been consideration of language utilized by Shandon-San Juan Water District. Blaine Reely sent over a copy of the language that the PBCC found consensus on; Hilary Grave proposed using this for the District. A special meeting was called to consider the Statement for Board approval on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 2:00PM.

**ITEM 7: TREASURER'S REPORT**

**a. Monthly Financial Status Report**

Jerry Reaugh presented and there were no questions.

**b. Preliminary Budget presentation**

The preliminary budget shows that the District is operating within the budget from 2022-2023 and has reserves on hand. The assessment levels are expected to remain at current. Jerry Reaugh will bring a finalized budget to the Board for approval at the next meeting, June 14, 2023.

**ITEM 8: NEW BUSINESS**

Dana Merrill brought up that it may be time to widen the scope of the number of people working on EPCWD items; the District currently has five volunteer unpaid Board members and one independent contractor providing administrative services. He would like to see new Board members step forward to participate. Jerry Reaugh and Herb Rowland are seats that will face an election this year. Hilary

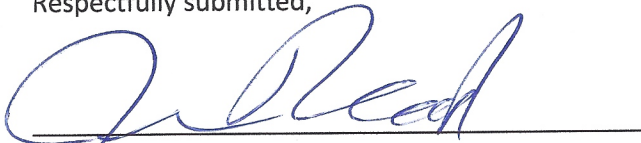
Graves suggested each Board member bringing a potential "recruit" to the next regular meeting. Perhaps Loni Lyttle would be willing to serve on a Technical Advisory Committee? Lee Nesbitt shared some thoughts about Tulare Lake which has reappeared after being dry for many years. There is a need to distribute the water there and perhaps there is an opportunity to take the water and bring it to the Basin for recharge.

**ITEM 9: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JUNE 14, 2023**

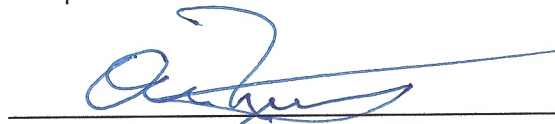
**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt.  
Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:12PM

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

  
Dana Merrill, President

6-14-23  
Date