

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

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**January 12, 2022**

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  
Blaine Reely  
Guests (by phone and videoconference)

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM by Hilary Graves.

**ITEM 2: CONSIDER MOTION TO INVOKE AB361 TO CONTINUE HOLDING TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)) FOR THE REASONS STATED IN RESOLUTION 2021-003**

MOTION TO INVOKE 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 NOVEMBER 10, NOVEMBER 19 AND NOVEMBER 22, 2021 MEETINGS**

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, NOVEMBER 19 AND NOVEMBER 22, 2021 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 - abstain

Motion passed 4-0, 1 abstention

**ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 5: PRESENTATION BY BLAINE REELY, SLO COUNTY DIRECTOR OF GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY**

Dana Merrill introduced the newly installed SLO County Director of Groundwater Sustainability, Blaine Reely. Mr. Reely's presentation included a brief history of his experience in the field of civil engineering/hydrologist, and described his direction to take the lead for the six managed basins in the County. For the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, a top priority is addressing the letter of deficiency from the State Department of Water Resources on the GSP, which is close to resolution. Next is to move to the implementation phase of the GSP. There is a grant application in process for \$7.6M in grant funding for each critically overdrafted basin, and Mr. Reely presented a spreadsheet showing how those funds might/will be allocated to various projects such as expanding the well monitoring network, update the County's model, establishing a well verification registration program, establishing a Basin-wide pumping fee program, establishing an extraction measurement program, establishing a well interference mitigation program, establishing an irrigated lands best management practices program, and establishing a pumping allocation program (likely in conjunction with EPCWD and SSJWD). There are also potential projects such as utilizing the City of Paso Robles' recycled water, same for San Miguel CSD's recycled water, and studies on Nacimiento/blended water potential, the Salinas Dam acquisition and expanded storage, storage of supplemental water for in lieu pumping and recharge, State Water potential, and distribution of stormwater recharge.

Dana Merrill asked about whether the County was considering stakeholder advisory committees and Mr. Reely responded "Yes". Jerry Reaugh suggested that the jointly funded Economic Study be included in the GSP. Mr. Reely briefly discussed the County's Planting Ordinance, currently in the CEQA process, as well as looking at a multi-benefit land repurposing program which might include fallowing as an option with an accompanying freeze on the lookback period.

**ITEM 6: REVIEW OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS CURRENTLY IN PLACE AND CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE PROJECTS**

Jerry Reaugh suggested future consideration by the Board to fund additional SkyTEM data. Willy Cunha reported that the existing expanded data should be coming online any time. Dana Merrill talked about utilizing satellite data versus metering data and levels of accuracy. Willy Cunha reported that Open ET is getting ready to release data on aerial remote sensing of usage. Jerry Reaugh asked about how Open ET compares to Land IQ.

**ITEM 7: UPDATE ON BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING JANUARY 11, 2022**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the only item of note was the consent agenda item to approve Blaine Reely's grant application request (discussed as part of item #5 today).

**ITEM 8: UPDATE ON WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 5, 2022**

Lee Nesbitt reported that an RFP for the Master Water Report, last produced in 2012, is out and to be awarded in May.

**ITEM 9: UPDATE ON STATE WATER SUBCONTRACTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 7, 2022 AND UPDATE ON STATE WATER CONSULTING PROJECT**

Dana Merrill reported that a consultant has been hired to do an analysis of how the pipeline is managed between the State, Santa Barbara, Paso Robles, and considering the recent increase in flexibility in

management and use options. There is currently approximately 15,000AF of unclaimed State Water and there is unused capacity in SLO County. Does it make sense to consider selling the water to benefit the Basin? Retain some of the unused capacity in the event of a recharge possibility in the Basin? It appears that the timeframe to request the County obtain the unallocated water for the benefit of the Basin may be approaching. The Edna Valley Basin is considering a similar action in partnership with the city of San Luis Obispo.

**ITEM 10: UPDATE ON THE CIMIS STATION**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the equipment has been purchased for the station by EPCWD. Jerry Lohr has supplied the required 6 acres of mown irrigated grass for the station.

**ITEM 11: UPDATE FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE GROUNDWATER LEVEL MONITORING NETWORK PROJECT**

Jerry Reaugh reported that there were three completed readings in 2021 and that the first readings for 2022 will be starting on February 15. There has been a meeting with the Network team at GSI to start compiling and summarizing the data to date. Dana Merrill asked about what the GSAs are doing in terms of publicly available data, and Jerry Reaugh indicated that the County has many years of data that hopefully Blaine Reely will be able to access and pursue expansion.

**ITEM 12: NOTIFICATION OF UPCOMING PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON JANUARY 26, 2022 WHERE APPLICATION FOR GRANT MONIES TO FUND ONGOING SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE BASIN WILL BE DISCUSSED**

Dana Merrill asked if any of Mr. Reely's numbers would be in the PBCC's budget and Jerry Reaugh responded that those numbers represent fund from State grant monies, with an application currently in process. Lee Nesbitt asked if Mr. Reely's mention of a pumping fee program would require a Prop 218 vote. Willy Cunha responded that if the fee is used for GSP administration, there would be no need for a Prop 218 vote.

**ITEM 13: TREASURER'S REPORT**

- a. Jerry Reaugh presented the monthly financial status report and there was a general discussion about possible approaches to landowners who have incurred late fees that remain unpaid. Jerry Reaugh will develop a proposed direction on this for the February meeting. Dana Merrill suggested considering sending past-due accounts to the County sooner for collection. Staff reported that submission can be made sooner with no chance of redemption by the landowner with EPCWD, but it will not be part of the County's property tax rolls until the next cycle regardless.

**ITEM 14: NEW BUSINESS – REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON NEXT AGENDA**

There were no items for new business submitted.

**ITEM 15: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – FEBRUARY 9, 2022**

**ITEM 16: ADJOURNMENT**

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

Dana Merrill – yes



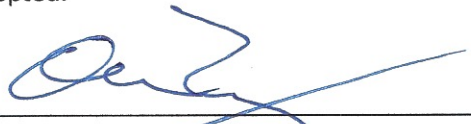
Hilary Graves – yes  
Lee Nesbitt – yes  
Herb Rowland – yes  
Jerry Reaugh – yes

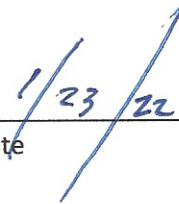
Motion passed 5-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date