

**Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**May 11, 2022**

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

**ATTENDANCE**

Directors Present:

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

Others present:

Blaine Reely  
Nate Page  
Lee Knutson  
Willy Cunha  
Guests (by phone and videoconference)

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM by Hilary Graves.

**ITEM 2: CONSIDER MOTION TO RENEW AB361 TO CONTINUE HOLDING TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e) FOR THE REASONS STATED IN RESOLUTION 2022-003.**

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

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

Motion passed 3-0.

**ITEM 3: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2022 AND APRIL 13, 2022 MEETINGS**

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2022 AND APRIL 13, 2022 MEETINGS made by Lee Nesbitt, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 3-0.

**ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was presented.

**ITEM 5: UPDATE FROM BLAINE REELY, DIRECTOR OF GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE COUNTY**

Blaine Reely joined the meeting to give an update on four topics, not taken in agenda order.

b. Water Neutral New Development ordinance status: the ordinance will sunset this year and will likely be replaced by the new planting ordinance for which the draft EIR is in process. If not adopted before the sunset date of the existing ordinance, the Board of Supervisors plans to extend the existing ordinance. (Herb Rowland joins the meeting at 3:08PM)

c. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee Meeting May 3, 2022: The amended and revised sections of the GSP responding to DWR have been prepared. Todd Groundwater was contracted to look at whether measurable objectives were sufficient to consider effects on shallow domestic well levels where up to 10% could go dry if levels drop below minimum thresholds. GSI is contracted to do a supplemental analysis to quantify the risks. The second deficiency DWR found in the GSP was regarding the interconnections between groundwater and surface water. Todd Groundwater found no interconnection between the Salinas Rive and the Paso Robles Formation. Some areas might need more analysis (middle Estrella River, upper San Juan).

d. DWR Grant to SLO County: the grant has been approved, with \$7.6M allocated to the Paso Basin with funds to be utilized by the City of Paso Robles to extend the “purple pipe” for recycled water; by the San Miguel Community Services District for its treatment plant and to create recycled water capabilities; by the GSAs to expand the monitoring network and potentially drill new monitoring wells, install stream gauges and climatological stations; by the GSAs for management actions including potential well registration and well extraction programs, to develop strategies to reduce risk in clustered shallow well areas, and to potentially utilize unallocated water from Nacimiento Lake; by the GSAs to evaluate beneficial uses of Santa Margarita Lake water.

a. Governor’s Executive Order #N7-22 regarding new wells in the Paso Basin: The County’s policy in response to the Order is that the County GSA will not recommend permit issuance for new wells. Replacement wells must match the well being replaced in depth and casing diameter and be in close proximity to the well being replaced, and will also need a hydrogeological assessment regarding interference with nearby wells. If a well is “failing” due to lowered groundwater levels, the Order is designed to keep production the same and to not add additional stressors to the Basin. GSAs have the authority to regulate extraction, but none have any policies in place currently. In response to a question from Jerry Reaugh, Blaine explained that the County has updated the language for well permits, but the County GSA has no policy yet. Hilary Graves asked how about confirmation of the amount of water to be pumped from a new de minimis well (exempt from Order) and Blaine responded that it would be on a self-certification basis.

**ITEM 6: UPDATE ON JOINT WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING MAY 4, 2022**

No update was received for this item.

**ITEM 7: UPDATE ON THE GROUNDWATER LEVELS MONITORING PROGRAM**

Jerry Reaugh reported that the most recent readings were successfully taken of 27 wells and the program

has now been in place for a year. It is too early to draw any conclusions from the data collected. Hilary Graves attended the Adelaida Water Study meeting and there are 30 wells in that monitoring program with levels taken four times per year; she thought it an interesting contrast to the number of monitoring wells in the Paso Basin program administered by the County GSA – fewer wells and fewer readings per year.

**ITEM 8: UPDATE ON THE CONTINUOUS MONITORING PROGRAM**

Jerry Reaugh reported that approval from the landowner is in place. Nate Page of GSI will be the contact point and he confirmed that the process to monitor two wells continuously is underway, with the lead time being a couple of weeks.

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

Jerry Reaugh attended the State Water Contractors meeting. The County has 15,000AF that has been paid for in storage in San Luis Reservoir. If the State declares a “spill” (not necessarily an actual spill of water), that water will be lost. All the State Water Contractors recently were given more flexibility to manage and sell unused water.

**ITEM 10: TREASURERS REPORT**

- a. Monthly financial status report – accepted as submitted, no discussion
- b. Approve 2022-2023 budget – while the District has a FYE of December, the budgeting/assessment process is July through June. The proposed budget results in a reduction in the amount of the irrigated lands assessment to \$4.50/acre (from \$5.50/acre for the last two budget years) and the other levels remaining the same.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2022-2023 BUDGET made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed 4-0.

Herb Rowland asked about economic outreach, and Jerry Reaugh explained that Solterra was retained to be available to outreach due to their extensive connections.

**ITEM 11: NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was discussed.

**ITEM 15: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING JUNE 8, 2022**

**ITEM 16: ADJOURNMENT**

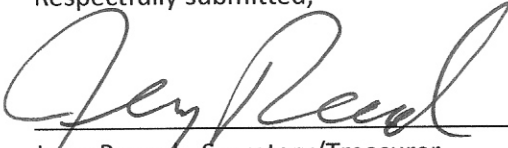
MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, roll call vote:

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


Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

  
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Dana Merrill, President

6/14/22  
Date