



Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 8, 2023

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

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Jerry Reaugh.

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill - absent (joins at 3:12 PM)

Lee Nesbitt - present

Jerry Reaugh - present

Hilary Graves - absent

Herb Rowland - present

Others present: Guests (by phone and videoconference)

ITEM 2: Review and approve Minutes of January 30, 2023 and February 8, 2023 meetings

Motion to approve the minutes for January 30, 2023 and February 8, 2023 meetings made by Lee Nesbitt, seconded by Herb Rowland, roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – absent

Hilary Graves – absent

Jerry Reaugh – yes

Lee Nesbitt – yes

Herb Rowland - yes

Motion passed 3-0.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

Presiding officer chose to hold item #s 4 and 5 until later in the meeting

ITEM 6: Consider comments to be submitted by District to draft Paso Robles Subbasin Water Year 2022 Annual Report

Jerry Reaugh reported that the Annual Report will be reviewed by the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee at the March 16, 2023 meeting. The report reflects a generally downward trends in groundwater storage. Herb Rowland asked if there might be a bounce back due to the recent storms; delayed/reduced irrigation might play a bigger role in reducing the rate of decline in certain areas. The consensus was that the Board would decline to submit comments for the District, but encourage individuals to comment.

ITEM 7: UPDATE ITEMS

- a. DWR conditional approval of Paso Robles Subbasin GSP
Approval is subject to further review of the interconnectivity of ground and surface waters, as well as residential dry wells.
- b. SLO County Board of Supervisors meetings February 7, 2023 and February 28, 2023
No update.

- c. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee meeting – next meeting is March 16, 2023
No update.
- d. Groundwater Levels Monitoring program
Item held for discussion later in the meeting.
- e. State Water Consulting project, Subcontractors meeting March 3, 2023
No update.
- f. WRAC meeting – March 1, 2023 meeting cancelled, next meeting April 5, 2023
No update.
- g. GSA ad hoc committee and equity statement
Item held for discussion later in the meeting
- h. Update on Robert Hall Town Hall meeting February 15, 2023
The meeting was well-attended, with Dana Merrill making a presentation on EPCWD, and Blaine Reely (SLO County Director of Groundwater Sustainability) presenting information on the Multibenefit Irrigated Lands Repurposing Program (MILR), among other presenters and topics. There was a question of Blaine Reely regarding funding implementation using pump taxes and his response was that the alternative is a grant from DWR that could provide the necessary funds for implementation of the GSP.
- i. SWRCB revision of Nacimiento Water license restrictions

ITEM 4: Update and budget review of Continuous Monitoring Project

The original project was project to have \$4,000 in equipment costs and approximately \$5,000 for support from GSI. The equipment is ready to install, but was upgraded with telemetry with an increased cost of \$3,800, bringing the equipment cost to \$7,800. The addition of telemetry will preclude having to pay costs of field monitoring. The increased cost is within the scope of affordability.

ITEM 5: Consider approval for District Secretary-Treasurer to decide on a case-by-case basis abeyance of annual assessments in amounts not to exceed amount determined by Board per assessment for hardship or other cause for non-irrigated parcels within the District

Jerry Reaugh led a general discussion of what mechanism should the District have in place to decide if certain assessments should be held in abeyance, such as for hardship situations. MOTION TO ADOPT THE PROPOSAL TO ALLOW THE SECRETARY/TREASURER TO DECIDE ON ABEYANCE REQUESTS made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt. Discussion followed and the motion was clarified so as not to include a mechanism to detach, to use special needs in the decision-making process, and require any abeyance of assessments in excess of \$250.00 to be brought before the entire Board. Motion passed 4-0.

The Board then returned to tabled items from Item 7:

- d. Groundwater Levels Monitoring program
Jerry Reaugh presented a summary sheet on the readings for 2022 and 2023 to date which show declines in some network wells (9) and steady state or increases in some network wells (12).
- g. GSA ad hoc committee and equity statement
Lee Nesbitt presented and committee's draft equity statement and suggested considering a joint statement with Shandon-San Juan Water District. MOTION TO BRING BACK AMENDED

EQUITY STATEMENT AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Herb Rowland, motion passes 4-0.

i. SWRCB revision of Nacimiento Water license restrictions

The Blended Water project had an impediment due to license restrictions on the use of Nacimiento water. SLO County asked Monterey County to agree to modify the restrictions which would remove that impediment, and Monterey County agreed. The Blended Water project can now move forward. The discussion moved to the technical advisory committees that Blaine Reely is putting together which would include a committee concerned with State Water and Blended Water. Paso Robles City is moving forward their Purple Pipe (treated wastewater) project using a \$3.5M grant for a pipeline under the Salinas River to River Road; the final bid has been approved.

ITEM 8: TREASURER'S REPORT

The preliminary budget shows that the District finances are on track. Jerry Reaugh is projecting increased attorney and engineering costs as the District moves forward with its GSA request, which may come before the Board of Supervisors in May. Contact with the other GSAs to garner support is in process. Dana Merrill asked if a new map will need to be prepared; the answer is unclear at this time.

ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS


Dana Merrill would like to investigate further what steps are necessary to become a GSA, likely including a resolution of the Board. Relinquishment by the County of authority over parcels enrolled in the District is the last step.

ITEM 10: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – APRIL 12, 2023

ITEM 1: ADJOURNMENT


MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nestbitt. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,




Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:



Dana Merrill, President



Date