



Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)
Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EPCGSA)
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 13, 2024

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

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Dana Merrill.

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill – present
Lee Nesbitt - absent
Jerry Reaugh – present
Hilary Graves – present
Ryan Scott - present

Others present: Guests (in person and by teleconference)

ITEM 2: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2024 REGULAR AND OCTOBER 28, 2024 SPECIAL MEETINGS

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2024 REGULAR AND OCTOBER 28, 2024 SPECIAL MEETINGS made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, voice vote:

Motion passed 4-0.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

ITEM 4: CONSIDER FOR APPOINTMENT REPRESENTATIVE AND ALTERNATE FOR EPCGSA REPRESENTATION TO THE PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE

Hilary Graves volunteered to be the EPCGSA representative and Ryan Scott volunteered to be alternate.

MOTION TO APPOINT HILARY GRAVES AS REPRESENTATIVE AND RYAN SCOTT AS ALTERNATE FOR EPCGSA REPRESENTATION TO THE PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Hilary Graves, roll call vote:

Dana Merrill – yes
Jerry Reaugh – yes
Hilary Graves – yes
Ryan Scott – yes
Lee Nesbitt - absent

Motion passed 4-0

ITEM 5: CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION INITIATED AT OCTOBER 28, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BASIN MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

The Board and attendees were asked to give their impressions of the discussion on October 28, 2024. Consensus was that the participants in the October 28 meeting were in agreement that the portion of the Proposed PBCC 5-year Budget directed towards “Keep the Lights On” (KTLO) funding was important to pursue and that while projects funding shouldn’t be cut off, without an idea of the cost of water and with the projects being complex and dependent on conditions closer to the time of funding, that projects should be pursued with a longer-term approach. If reductions in pumping alone could bring the Basin to sustainability, then projects and approaches that focus on pumping reduction should be pursued. The issue of how to prevent extraction done solely to maintain water pumping rights was discussed. Getting a funded management/governance structure and authority in place should be the primary focus of the Rate Study. Charging for extraction might have the double benefit of funding KTLO while encouraging pumping reduction, though the vagaries of weather over time could result in budget deficits if there is not enough extraction – perhaps a hybrid fee structure based on, for example, extraction along with a base fee should be considered. Jerry Reaugh proposed sending a letter to the PBCC informing them of the consensus view of our members that KTLO funding should be pursued and the sooner the better, while projects funding should move to a slightly lower priority until there is more information about the potential cost of water as well as the scope of the needs in specific areas of the Basin and how potential projects could address those needs.

MOTION TO DRAFT AND SEND A LETTER TO THE PBCC AS PROPOSED made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Dana Merrill, roll call vote:

- Dana Merrill – yes
- Jerry Reaugh – yes
- Hilary Graves – yes
- Ryan Scott – yes
- Lee Nesbitt – absent

Motion passed 4-0.

ITEM 6: UPDATE ITEMS

a. Groundwater Levels Monitoring

1) EPCWD Groundwater Monitoring Network

November 20 is scheduled for the final readings for 2024, completing 4 years of readings data.

2) EPCWD/GSA Real-time Groundwater Monitoring Program using Continuous Monitoring Devices

Hilary Graves asked if this program could be taken on by members, and said that she is willing to recruit. Six wells have real-time telemetry in place, and another six wells are slated for telemetry installation.

b. SLO County Board of Supervisors meetings (comments)

No comments were presented.

c. Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) meeting November 6, 2024

Ryan Scott reported on topics from the meeting including a presentation by the Resource Conservation District. The Committee may consider bringing a representative of the Water Resources Control Board to the WRAC to speak in the future.

d. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee

1) PBCC staff report

Jerry Reaugh reported on the November 12 staff meeting where presentations for the November 20 PBCC were reviewed: the final report on the Blended Water project, the draft of the 5-year Basin update, and a report on the State Water project.

2) First meeting of MILR design group with Land IQ (contractor)

Jerry Reaugh reported that meeting with Land IQ on the MILR project generated enough questions without answers to look at refocusing the project. One of the primary discussion items was around developing a fallowing program, and the Board suggested the possibility of EPCWD developing its own fallowing program, independent of any County program.

3) Next PBCC Meeting November 20, 2024, and possible PBCC Town Hall meeting on December 12, 2024 (now scheduled for December 16, 2024)

The County is in process of organizing a PBCC Town Hall meeting to disseminate information and receive feedback from stakeholders in the Basin. More information to follow.

e. Outreach efforts – Tripepi Smith meetings September 3 and October 3, 2024

1) Postcard

Hilary Graves reported on the Outreach meeting on November 12. Peter Johnson is reaching out to media. The next quarterly newsletter will be issued in January 2025. Costs for an outreach postcard to be mailed to all EPCWD members to elicit email opt in were discussed.

ITEM 7: TREASURER’S REPORT

a. Monthly Financial Status Report

No comment was presented on the Report.

Jerry Reaugh commented on the potential funding collection mechanism which likely would involve putting assessments on property tax bills in the 2025/2026, with the first collected funds available in January 2026.

ITEM 8: NEW BUSINESS

No new business was requested.

ITEM 89 SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 11, 2024

There was a brief discussion on whether to skip the December 11 regular meeting. TBD closer to the date.

ITEM 9: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Hilary Graves, seconded by Jerry Reaugh, voice vote, motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:42PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

Dana Merrill, President

Date

DRAFT