

**MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE WEST TURLOCK SUBBASIN
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY**

via Videoconference

5:00 p.m.
February 4, 2021

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Alamo called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Directors Chair Alamo, Alvarez (City of Modesto), Chiesa (Stanislaus County), Espinoza (Merced County), Vice Chair Jorritsma (Hilmar CWD), Lindo, (Denair), Lopez (City of Ceres), Maldonado (Delhi CWD)

ABSENT: Director Odom (Denair), Nosrati (City of Turlock),
Chair Buck (City of Hughson) seating at 6:15

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: *Motion* by Director Jorritsma, seconded by Director Espinoza that the minutes of the meeting of November 5, 2020 be approved as submitted. The Chair declared the motion carried.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comment.

E. STAFF UPDATES

- **Joint Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Update** – Michael Cooke, TAC Member, the TAC met on 4 occasions. Meeting every 2 weeks instead of monthly, to go over the critical components of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. On November 19th, the first presentation on the Baseline Modeling scenario which is on the agenda for this meeting. Through this item we learned what will happen to groundwater levels if we stay on our current trajectory. It also points out what management actions will be required to obtain a sustainable groundwater basin. On December 17th, we had an update from Perry Klassen, Valley Water Collaborative regarding the CV-Salts Program, which is a State required program to reduce the Nitrite in groundwater. The Turlock Subbasin is a priority area. We are looking for options for a collaborative MOU with Valley Water Collaborative to work on issues of groundwater quality. On January 14th, Todd presented their findings on how continued groundwater production could affect the surface waters in the region particularly the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers. On January 28th, we picked up on establishing the sustainable management criteria particularly looking at minimum water levels that would be acceptable going forward to address the potential chronic lowering of groundwater levels. Development of the GSP and working with the ETSGSA to meet the goals regarding SGMA. The TAC formed an Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee comprised of members of both TACs to review issues and develop recommendations to the TACs. We need to work quickly to complete the GSP to meet the mandated date of January

2022. Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool development is ongoing. With meetings weekly with the consultant team.

- **Interbasin Coordination Update** – Michael Cooke, TAC, reported coordination nothing to report. Have not met with Modesto or Merced subbasins recently.
- **GSP Update** - Debbie Montalbano, reported on the GSP. Presentation on the data the TAC has been reviewing. Ms. Montalbano provided a brief update regarding the grant projects, to develop the GSP as well as the supporting projects funded through Proposition 68. The next invoice and progress report for the grants are due to DWR later this month. Ms. Montalbano is working with consultant staff on these administrative items. The Consultant team will send revisions to the TAC on the information on hydrologic and water budget information called the Basin Setting, and the early chapters of the GSP. We will receive comments from the TAC and incorporate the comments. Once the TAC has the revision ready, it will be presented to the Board, and then released to the Public for review. The GSP is due to DWR by January 2022. The TAC is working on a detailed final schedule stay on track. Ms. Montalbano also reported that the TACs and consultant team are moving forward with the projects funded under the 2nd grant designed to support the GSP efforts. She reminded the Board that there are 3 projects funded under this grant: a Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool (GRAT); Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR); and 5 monitoring well sites. This will include 2 multi-depth wells located on the western side of the Subbasin, and 3 single completion wells on the eastern side of the Subbasin. The GRAT committee is meeting regularly and understanding the information and resources needed to develop the Tool. The GRAT is tailored to the specific basin (area). The GRAT consultant team is reaching out to the agencies to gather the necessary data and information to complete the work. The PEIR consultant has been hired. The project work will begin soon. The well locations have been identified for the eastern side along with 1 well location on the western side. We have a lead on the 2nd well location for the west side. We will continue to keep the Board apprised and progress continues on these projects.
- **Public Outreach Update** - Herb Smart, TAC Member reported on three brief items: 1) three, one-hour lunch meetings had been held and another was to be scheduled in February. These are informal sessions from stakeholders. 2) The Turlock Subbasin Stakeholder survey is still open, and the group is finding ways to encourage people to be involved. 3) Ad-Hoc Committee which reports to the TAC is working on the second video with the same vendor on Water Budget and make the concept less confusing for stakeholders.
- **Budget Update** – Michael Clipper, Treasurer, reported on the revenue and expenditures for the WTS GSA and Basin-wide account and on the status of member agency dues received and those still owed.

F. AGENDA ITEMS

1. **ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS** – Every two years per Article 4, Section 4.2 of the Bylaws for the WTB calls for the election of officers every two (2) years. On February 4, 2021 for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Motion: Director Chiesa moved, seconded by Director Jorritsma to accept the motion of re-electing a Chair Alamo for a period of two (2) years

Motion: Director Chiesa moved, seconded by Director Espinoza to accept the motion of re-electing a Vice Chair Jorritsma for a period of two (2) years

Motion: Director Jorritsma moved, seconded by Director Espinoza to accept the motion of re-electing Secretary Chiesa for a period of two (2) years

Motion: Director Chiesa moved, seconded by Director Jorritsma to accept the motion of re-electing Michael Clipper as Treasurer for a period of two (2) years

- 2. APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) OFFICERS –** On February 4, 2021 the Board elected to re-appoint Michael Cooke, City of Turlock, to serve as TAC Chair, and elect Karen Morgan, City of Ceres, to serve as TAC Vice Chair, for an additional two (2) year term. Executive Director would report to the Board as work is being completed. Lacey McBride was commended for the work she has done as Vice Chair.

Motion: Director Chiesa moved, seconded by Director Lindo to accept the motion of re-electing Michael Cooke as TAC Chair, and electing Karen Morgan as TAC Vice Chair for a period of two (2) years.

- 3. FORM 700s –** Valerie Kincaid, Per Federal Political Practices Commission requires each elected official or public employee that influences government decisions to fill out a Form 700 to disclosure financial interest and identify potential conflicts of interest.
- 4. LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR GRAT –** Valerie Kincaid - We have received funding to develop a Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool (GRAT) to help evaluate how and where we can do recharge and how it may be best facilitated. We need to have an agreement to facilitate the development and use of the GRAT. The Agreement basically describes how we as the WTSGSA will use the GRAT tool and will not sublicense the tool. It also stipulates that all data will be owned by the WTSGSA.. The Tool will be useful to help develop and implement the GSP. The Agreement also outlines the cost to maintain the GRAT, as well as updates to the GRAT. Implementing the Agreement requires approval by the Board.

Motion: Director Lindo moved, seconded by Director Chiesa to accept Chair Alamo to sign the License Agreement for GRAT.

- 5. GSP UPDATE** - Phyllis Stanin provided a presentation on the Baseline Scenario developed for the GSP, what are we are trying to learn from the technical information within the water budget, how it is being used and what the results mean. Ms. Stanin provided a summary of the water budgets that are required by the regulations and where we are in this process. Historical water budgets (developed by use of a groundwater model have been reviewed previously) cover a 25-year history (1991-2015). The historic water budgets provide an understanding of where we have been. The historic water budgets and model go through 2015, as that was the most complete data and information available in the start of the GSP development process. The Baseline Scenario was constructed to project conditions 50 years in the future. This is an average hydrologic condition within the Subbasin. Forecast of the future if we do not do any actions at all. The scenario evaluates what are the impacts would be if we were to stay on the course for another 50 years. The Subbasin is also required by the State to look at Climate Change factors along with the 50 year forecast. That analysis is being developed. Tonight's presentation is focused on the future "Baseline" scenario. Our projected water budget forecasted looks at inflows and outflows over the planning and implementation horizon over 50 years. The analysis assumed Agricultural Land Uses would remain constant. The analysis assumed urban acreages would increase consistent with current planning documents. Urban demand will have more demand in Urban pumping with population increase and projected growth. Agricultural demand looks constant, but recent switchover to be less per acreage on the west due to project urban growth. Increase in Urban demand, going to take some ag land out of production. It's difficult to project 50 years into the future with certainty. To be conservative, we utilized current planning documents to guide the land use and pumping estimates. Use of currently undeveloped land within the spheres of influence, as well as some additional higher density development minimize conversion of land uses within the baseline analysis. Ag conversion acreage will be considered in the future as programs are developed.

The results of the operational water budget components include and analysis of recharge and extraction, as well as the interaction between the groundwater and surrounding rivers. WTSGSA is a net contributor to the Subbasin through recharge. The ETSGSA doesn't have a surface water source and relies solely on groundwater which results in a withdraws from the Subbasin. The GSP needs to show sustainability in the entire Turlock Basin. The information from the Baseline will be used to evaluate projects and actions to implement to bring the Subbasin into sustainability.

Results on the Projected Water Budget Baseline Assumptions on the River Operations. Future modeling was the best way to evaluate streamflow interaction with the subbasin. River operations in the model were informed by the river and dam operations along the Tuolumne and Merced rivers. We have and will need to evaluate interconnected groundwater and surface water, including where the river is

a gaining or a losing stream. Gaining is when groundwater levels are high compared to instream water levels. Conversely, a losing stream is when groundwater levels are lower than water levels within the stream. Groundwater can become disconnected from the river as well. Historical water budgets show the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers were net gaining rivers; Merced River was a slightly losing river, on average. The projected future baseline analysis suggests the Tuolumne River will transition to a slightly losing stream and the Merced River losses will increase in the future. These flows change over time and with location.

Ms. Stanin described the next steps including upcoming modeling scenarios, climate change analysis, sustainable yield analysis, as well as the selection of Sustainable Management Criteria and Project and Management Actions.

6. **WELL ACCESS AGREEMENT** – Valerie Kincaid - To consider to approve the installation of monitoring wells under the Proposition 68 Grant program, the Department Water Resource requires the GSAs have an agreement with landowners where a monitoring well is located. They do not want us to lose access on any of the monitoring wells so that we do not lose data. This is an agreement that can be utilized by either WTSGSA or ETSGSA. This would protect both parties. This will be a recorded on the deed and will transfer with property ownership changes. The Board was asked to consider approving the agreement as to form, and authorize the Chair to sign the agreement once the final site locations are established. If any of terms were to change it would come back to the Board for approval.

MOTION: Director Chiesa moved, seconded by Director Espinoza to approve Chair to sign the Well Access Agreement

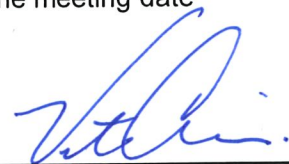
COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Director Chiesa commented that he was pleased with the work that is being completed by the TAC and Phyllis Stanin.

H. ADJOURNMENT

The next scheduled regular meeting is planned to be held May 13, 2021. Additional details about time and location will be provided as the meeting date nears.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m.



Vito Chiesa, Secretary