

MINUTES

**TEHACHAPI-CUMMINGS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
February 10, 2023, 10:00 A.M.  
22901 Banducci Road, Tehachapi, CA 93561**

CALIFORNIA DPH RECOMMENDS ALL PERSONS CONTINUE WEARING MASKS INDOORS IN PUBLIC SETTINGS

- Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**  
**Directors Present:** Hall, Sasia, Schultz, Zanutto  
**Legal Counsel:** Robert Kuhs via teleconference  
**Staff in Attendance:** Catherine Adams, Jon Curry, Tom Neisler
- Item 2. Announcement**  
 President Schultz announced this meeting is being audio recorded, including all Board, Staff, and Public comments.
- Item 3. Flag Salute**  
 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Sasia.
- Item 4. Approval of Agenda**  
 Director Hall moved to approve the agenda. Director Sasia seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote: Ayes: Hall, Sasia, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None. Motion passed.
- Item 5. Comments by any Party on Items of Interest and Within the Subject Matter Jurisdiction of the Legislative Body**  
 Mr. Neisler introduced the new Operations Assistant, Hector Sedano, stating he is already demonstrating great enthusiasm, great computer skills, and we are going to have a hard time holding him back. The Board welcomed him to the team and thanked him for coming today.
- Item 6. Appoint Director to Fill Division 3 Vacancy**  
 President Schultz asked if the District received any additional letters of interest and Mr. Neisler confirmed we have not. Mr. Neisler stated that all three previous applicants are here today and have not expressed any intention of withdrawing their interest. President Schultz stated if any of the applicants would like to make a statement today they are welcome to do so now.
- Mr. Clayton Strahan stated he thinks the Board should pick someone they feel fits the organization the most and understands that is challenging to know, but he asked that they pick someone who will serve the District the best. It concerns him that there was talk of the old way of thinking or of someone who has been here generationally, and he hopes the Board will not dismiss the fact that just because someone hasn't lived here for 40 years, they aren't qualified to be on this Board. He chose Tehachapi as his home and commutes two hours to work just so he can live here. He feels each of the applicants bring a different perspective that will bring value to the Board. He understands the challenges the Board is facing and deals with the same challenges at his job when you only have a pot of water so big but the ask is much bigger, how do you achieve that.
- Ms. Alex Mullenax stated that although she is young, she feels that her entrepreneurial background is something unique she can offer the Board. In her teens she sat on the 4-H State Advisory Committee and she saw at the last meeting how what the Board was doing at the workshop is exactly what she did for

years up in Sacramento. They discussed, created and revised policies that affected the entire 4-H program, including the youth here in Tehachapi. When the program advisor moved out of state, she fought and kept the State 4-H Horticulture program going so youth would have that opportunity. Overall, she has always been and will always be, a mover and a shaker. She looks at this Board and respects what they've done and believes she has something to offer as well.

Mr. John Ables stated he can appreciate the hard place this Board is in. He appreciates people mentioning he has been here a long time. He has experience in business and before he was 30 years old, he was running a multi-million dollar franchise in northern California where he had 25 people working for him before moving here. For the last 42 years here in Tehachapi, he has been in business and still going strong even after many electrical contractors have come and gone. He understands that being here and volunteering, takes away his time and income but he wants to give back what this valley has given him and his family and that is why he is here. He hopes the Board can find the best way to go and knows all the applicants can do a good job for them.

Director Sasia stated he is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Tehachapi resident and he knows the other Directors have been here a long time and he is honored to be on this Board with them. He feels the three applicants are amply fit for this seat and sees that two will be really good future candidates. He is very protective over this town, the community as a whole and this groundwater; he's dealt with this groundwater since 1986 when he started working here. He would really like to see someone with just a little more time in the District be in this seat and share our decisions. He is honored they are here and knows it takes a lot to get up and speak in front of everyone.

Director Hall commented that for the applicants that do not get selected today, if they are really interested, he thinks the subset of economics called Political Economy is important here and if they are an expert on that, he would be one of their greatest advocates. If they have questions on how you can pursue that, he can provide answers.

President Schultz stated that last week there was a comment of possibly picking someone we knew, and he would like to clear that he did not know any of these candidates until they applied. From the standpoint of getting to know them, he was able to talk to two of them and wished the Board had the opportunity to get to know each of them better. He felt getting to know the candidates was an invaluable experience that helped where his vote will go today.

Director Zanutto stated Director Sasia's comments were well said and stated that the reason we are here today is we had a candidate the was elected and resigned in the first meeting. He hopes that these applicants have given this a lot of thought and there isn't just Regular Board Meetings, there are Special Board Meetings, and you'll be asked to sit on Ad-Hoc Committees that meet during business hours, so it does take time. Some Board packets are 300 pages long, will you have the time to dedicate to reading that or will you open it up at the Board meeting? He appreciates all of them and their experience and he hopes that when he steps down, someone will fill his seat who has thier experience and expertise. This is not going to be an easy decision and he thanked the Board for all their thought going into this. President Schultz added that Director Zanutto came home early from vacation to be here for this, so talk about dedication.

Director Sasia moved that John Ables be appointed to the Board of Directors as the Division 3 Director with the term expiring on November 5, 2024. Director Hall seconded the motion, and the following votes were cast: Ayes: Hall, Sasia, Schultz; Noes: Zanutto; Abstain: None; Absent: None. Motion passed.

Mr. Neisler stated Ms. Adams will prepare the documents for Mr. Ables to sign and he will be sworn in and seated at the Regular Board Meeting (February 15<sup>th</sup>).

**Item 7. Director Comments**

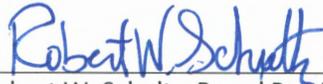
Director Zanutto mentioned to Mr. Ables that when he was appointed to this Board, it was not unanimous and he worked very well with the gentleman who voted "no". He stated he looks forward to working with Mr. Ables.

Director Sasia urged the other two applicants to keep going, stay in the valley, continue to watch what's going on here and run again. They are young and bring a lot to table. He welcomed Mr. Ables.

President Schultz stated he would like to see Ms. Mullenax on the ballot.

**Item 8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m. on a motion made by Director Hall, seconded by Director Sasia, and carried on the following vote: Ayes: Hall, Sasia, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None. Motion passed.



Robert W. Schultz, Board President



Catherine Adams, Board Secretary