

MINUTES

**TEHACHAPI-CUMMINGS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
July 30, 2025, 12:00 P.M.
22901 Banducci Road, Tehachapi, CA 93561**

- Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 12:31 p.m.
Directors Present: Ables, Davis, Schultz **Absent:** Hall, Sasia
Legal Counsel Present: Counsel joined via Zoom for Closed Session
Staff Present: Catherine Adams, Jon Curry, Tom Neisler, Crystal Sampson
- 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 President Schultz.
- Item 4. Approval of Agenda**
 Director Ables moved to approve the agenda. President Schultz seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote: Ayes: Ables, Davis, Schultz; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Hall, Sasia. Motion passed.
- Item 5. Comments by any Party on Items of Interest and Within the Subject Matter Jurisdiction of the Legislative Body**
 There were none.
- Item 6. Conduct Workshop to Consider Updates to the District Strategic Plan**
 Neisler stated the Strategic Plan was adopted in 2019 and the Board directed Staff to conduct biannual reviews of the document for changing conditions and updates that are required. Similar reviews were conducted in 2021 and 2023, after which the Board adopted changes and the Strategic Plan document was updated. A copy of the current Strategic Plan has been distributed and there are copies available at the back table. Neisler prepared an outline for the workshop as well as a slideshow presentation to guide the discussion. He announced to the Board, Public and Staff to please stop him at any time for questions. All comments and directions received from the workshop will be collated and an updated version will be brought back to the Board for review.

The workshop began with introductions around the room of everyone in attendance. Neisler announced all emergency exits, evacuation meeting point, location of the restrooms, and that there are food and refreshments available at the back of the room. Input from everyone is welcomed and will be respected and considered during the course of this workshop. The following discussion and updates were done on the sections below.

Introduction

Neisler discussed the purpose of having a Strategic Plan, the Mission Statement, Core Values, and Vision of the District. A member of the Public asked if environmental is included in the District's social responsibility and Neisler confirmed it is as the District has strict environmental guidelines and ensures safety of the Public.

Strategic Planning Process

The District uses a process called Vision, Alignment and Execution. There is continual improvement and training of Staff. Key points that were considered when crafting the vision include imagining an improved future condition that the group will make a reality through its planning and work. Alignment was built through managers, supervisors, and line employees being part of the long-term plans which includes the District Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He discussed the continual monitoring and realignment as needs change as well as the meetings held with Board, Management, and Staff, to keep things on task. Goals have to be measurable and achievable.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

He noted the five major business areas; Human Resources is the most valuable resource, Water Supply is the most vulnerable resource, Water Importation System is the most limited resource, Support Systems are the internal infrastructure used to make things happen and Financial Resources is how things are accomplished.

-He reviewed Human Resources describing District practices and noted updates needed to photos, wording revisions to update positions and current processes, and updates to percentages to reflect current statistics. Employees are the Districts great asset and described the positions, training and skillsets of the workforce.

-He described the Water Supply is comprised of imported water, ground water, and recycled water. He discussed the State Water Project (SWP), the Districts allocation, and DWRs new concern for subsidence in the project. A member of the Public asked about funding with regard to the SWP and Neisler explained DWR is the only one with access to the funds. He discussed the purpose of the Regional Urban Water Management Plan and its current status. He explained the four groundwater basins within the 415 square miles of the District, how those are managed, and the adjudications in place. Updates were noted to add more detail and update projects.

-He explained that without the Water Importation System, this area would have less than half of the water available that we do today. The available supply of imported water is dependent upon the State. He addressed misconceptions that there are hundreds of thousands of acre feet of groundwater in storage and explained that only the top layer is available to pump as the underlying water is needed to support water levels that can be extracted. A question was asked regarding surrounding water basins in Ridgecrest and Lancaster, and Neisler stated those have ongoing adjudications. A member of the Public expressed concern for all the new houses under construction in Bear Valley and what impact that has on the water supply. Neisler explained the lots in Bear Valley, Stallion and Golden Hills are part of planned developments so the build-out has been considered in water supply projections. Another member of the Public asked what the possibility of constituents in the valley having a voice in requesting a moratorium be put on building. Neisler stated moratoriums are outside of his purview and have very stringent requirements so he is unable to answer questions on that. Neisler went on to describe the Engine Replacement Project as the engines are key components of the importation system. Notes were included to update sections with the Engine Replacement Project information. He discussed the dynamics of purchasing Natural Gas to run the engines for the systems. He described the roles of District wells, reservoirs, and recharges in the overall system and added the Westerly Recharge to the Recharge Facilities section. He shared the age, inspections, repairs, and maintenance done on the pipeline of the system.

-The Districts Support System is comprised of the Office Complex and Vehicles and Equipment. He described the current buildings and the scheduled new warehouse improvement and their roles in providing support to the operations of the District. He described the fleet and the importance of well-maintained vehicles for navigating the Pump Plant roads during inclement weather. Heavy equipment is needed for projects, repairs, and maintenance and have to meet emission standards.

-Financial Resources are the basis of the District's financial planning and control. The budget process includes meetings with Staff and the Ad-Hoc Budget Committee for review and recommendation. Staff prepares Preliminary, Amended and Final Budgets for Board approval and the budget is available on the District website. The District has targets for reserve balances and those are presented in the budget as well. Projections of future costs are important for planning ahead. He discussed the main expenses such as energy costs, the State Water Project, and increasing costs of materials. The District maintains a Capital Improvement Plan with Short-Term, Mid-Term and Long-Term projects. An overview was provided of the projects in these plans. President Schultz asked questions on the Brite Lake Tank item on the Long-Term Plan regarding whether that was already part of the maintenance plan with Superior Tank. Staff stated they will look into the contract and this line item and provide clarification. President Schultz discussed San Joaquin Valley water storage and was glad to see it is in the Long-Term Plan.

Opportunities/Threats

Neisler discussed the various opportunities and threats associated with each of the above resources highlighting continual improvement, succession planning, decreasing SWP allocations and available supply, the Delta Conveyance Project, the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Agreement extended to 2085 (previously Voluntary Agreements), conditions of the District mainline, Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), Geographical Information System (GIS), and conducting a Rate Study.

President Schultz asked if there were any thoughts on the future of the computer systems regarding cyber attack analysis and mitigation. Neisler stated he does not feel there is a need because the systems are up-to-date and that is part of the Operating Budget. The District has subscriptions and an IT consultant who manages cyber threats. There is also hardware solutions in place and these have been very successful in controlling the risk, so additional expenditure has not been programmed. President Schultz asked if there is a need for Artificial Intelligence (AI) patterning tools or a system within the District data sets or GIS. Neisler stated this is an excellent idea and Staff will look into those possibilities. The GIS Technician, Brandon Kirby, stated the GIS currently has AI incorporated for analysis, patterning, and notifications.

Neisler stated Staff will prepare a redline version of the Strategic Plan incorporating all of the updates for Board review and approval in August. He discussed options for hardcopy versions of the final plan.

Item 7. Board of Directors Comments

Director Ables stated that it was a very good, extensive presentation, so he knows it was a lot of work and thanked everyone.

President Schultz commented he wished the other Directors would have been able to attend to provide input but he thanked Neisler and Staff for the input, brainstorming and everything it took to put all this together.

Item 8. Adjourn to Closed Session

President to reference Closed Session items as presented on Agenda, then Board to adjourn to Closed Session.

- a. In Accordance with Exhibit A Attached hereto, TCCWD v. City of Tehachapi *Et al.*
- b. In Accordance with Exhibit B Attached hereto, Potential Litigation – One Case

The Board adjourned to Closed Session at 3:10 p.m.

Item 9. Return to Open Session

The Board returned to Open Session at 3:14 p.m.

Report Action Taken in Closed Session:

- a. No reportable action
- b. No reportable action

Item 10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m. on a motion made by Director Ables, seconded by President Schultz and carried on the following vote: Ayes: Ables, Davis, Schultz; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Hall, Sasia. Motion passed.


Robert W. Schultz, Board President


Catherine Adams, Board Secretary



CLOSED SESSION ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

(Gov. Code § 54954.5)

A. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR (Gov. Code § 54956.8.)

Description of Property: _____
Proposed District Negotiator: _____
Negotiating Parties: _____
Subject of Conference: _____

B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL (Gov. Code § 54956.9.)

1. Existing Litigation: County of Sacramento Superior Court Case No. 34-2022-
80003892
Name of Case: TCCWD v. City of Tehachapi *Et al.*

2. Anticipated Litigation: _____
Gov. Code § 54956.9 (b): _____
Gov. Code § 54956.9 (c): _____

C. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (Gov. Code § 54957.)

1. Appointment: _____
Title: _____
2. Employment: _____
Title: _____
3. Performance Evaluation: _____
Title: _____
4. Discipline/Dismissal/Release: _____

D. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR (Gov. Code § 54957.6.)

Agency Negotiator: _____
Employee Organization: _____
Unrepresented Employee: _____



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Gov. Code § 54956.9 (c): One Potential Case

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