

MINUTES

TEHACHAPI-CUMMINGS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
July 9, 2021 9:00 A.M.
22901 Banducci Road, Tehachapi, CA 93561

PLEASE NOTE THAT STATE-MANDATED COVID PRECAUTIONS WILL BE ENFORCED

Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Directors Present: Cassil, Hall, Schultz, Zanutto, Pack arrived at 9:06 a.m.

Legal Counsel: Robert Kuhs (available remotely for Closed Session)

Staff in Attendance: Catherine Adams, Jon Curry, LaMinda Madenwald, and 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 Cassil.

Item 4. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Neisler stated COVID precautions are still in place for this meeting and informed the Board he arranged for Legal Counsel to be available at 12:00 p.m. sharp via Zoom to conduct Closed Session. He recommended stopping the meeting at 12:00 p.m. for Closed Session and then resuming with any remaining items to follow. He introduced Chris Vigil, Pumping Systems Supervisor, and Graysen Oldham, Pipeline Supervisor, who will be joining the meeting for the Strategic Plan workshop and noted they were instrumental in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Director Hall moved to approve the Agenda with Closed Session being held at 12:00 p.m. and the remainder of the Agenda to follow. President Schultz seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote: Ayes: Cassil, Hall, Pack, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None.

Item 5. Comments by any Party on Items of Interest and Within the Subject Matter Jurisdiction of the Legislative Body

None.

Item 6. Direct General Manager to Cast District Vote for CSDA Director

Mr. Neisler stated the ballots have been presented for the upcoming CSDA 2022-2024 term for Seat A in the Central Network. There are four candidates available for one seat and their applications and biographies are attached to the Staff Report. The votes must be cast by July 16th. The only candidate Mr. Neisler knows personally is Patrick Ostly; he was the manager of the North of the River Sanitation District. The decision rests with the Board and Mr. Neisler will cast the District's vote electronically. The Board had a short discussion as not much was known about the candidates.

President Schultz moved that the Board direct the General Manager to cast TCCWD's vote for CSDA Director, Seat A Central Network, for Patrick Ostly. Director Cassil seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote: Ayes: Cassil, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: Hall, Pack; Absent: None.

Item 7. Direct Staff to Initiate Regional Water Conservation Effort with Partner Agencies

Mr. Neisler stated we are in a significant drought and as the summer continues, we become more concerned about the severity and the duration. Director Cassil and Mr. Neisler met last week, and she suggested the Board consider this item and he felt it was best to have it at this meeting since the Tehachapi Regional Water Group meets next week. In the last drought this was done with a regional effort and it was effective. There were mandatory drought measures implemented by the State last time and that has not been done yet this year.

This item is for the Board to consider if they want Staff to promote and front a regional, coordinated effort to encourage water conservation efforts. He suspects this will continue into next year so this will be a good start. This effort would be through BVCSD, SSCSD, City of Tehachapi, and GHCS, and any others would be welcome to join.

Mr. Neisler made the Board aware the Water Association of Kern County has implemented publicity for drought measures and has solicited contributions from member agencies. Mr. Neisler approved a \$2,500 contribution on behalf of the District.

President Schultz asked the Board for input on what seems to be the most effective measures taken in the past. He commented the signs on vehicles do not seem to be as effective as signage on roads. He suggested signage at entrances to communities and on main roads. Director Cassil suggested a sign with a picture of one of the empty reservoirs helps the community realize the concept of the drought we are in. She feels we need to somehow get people to understand that the water this District has pumped from the State Water Project (SWP), might not be forthcoming in the next year. The second concept is that we are communities that depend on our basins to sustain our ability to have water. Either we conserve water, in a unified way, or this area could be in trouble in the coming years if there is now water coming up from the SWP. She realizes this is looking at the situation to the extreme, but she feels it is important to consider the worst case scenario now, rather than look back and wish we would have planned better for the grim possibility. President Schultz asked her to elaborate on her idea of a sign and she explained it should be professionally done, feature a slogan, and be displayed at major intersections and areas of town with the most traffic. President Schultz added we should be mindful of any pictures we use as there was an agency that used a picture of an empty reservoir in their drought message, however, it was later explained that reservoir was low to do repairs on the dam. Director Pack commented he feels simple signage is the most effective.

Director Cassil pointed out she feels that the slogan "Make Every Drop Count" is no longer effective as she sees people in her community wasting water through irrigation run off on a daily basis. She does not think people really understand how severe the drought is and that there is not as much water coming up the hill this year. Director Zanutto commented that he can understand how the public is not aware of the severity of the situation when it takes until July for the Governor to decide there are some counties in the drought. There are a lot of mixed messages and maybe even the fact that the District did not cutback water to customers this year sent the wrong message. Regardless, it is never too late to conserve and people should be conserving all the time. He suggested in the future the District should take matters into their own hands and not wait for the State to decide or not decide there is a drought.

President Schultz moved that the Board direct the General Manager to reach out to other, local public agencies to determine interest in a coordinated conservation awareness campaign. Director Pack

seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote: Ayes: Cassil, Hall, Pack, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None.

Item 8. Conduct Workshop to Consider Updates to the District Strategic Plan

Mr. Neisler stated he anticipates this workshop being direction from the Board to Staff on revisions to the Strategic Plan. It is intended for discussion only as there is no necessary action. Staff is not prepared to provide detailed, technical discussions on the information at this time. There is no deadline or time constraints to complete this update; it can take as long as the process requires. He is bringing this to the Board now so that if there are significant changes requested from the Board that affect the Budget, they can be incorporated prior to the adoption of the Final Budget.

The Board adopted the Strategic Plan in 2019 and has requested it be reviewed biennially. A hardcopy of the outline of the Plan was provided and the following updates and discussions took place:

1. Introduction- Update officers and terms.
2. Process- No updates.
3. SWOT Analysis
 - 3.1 Human Resources- Average age of workforce has lowered by succession through retirements, update statistic in Aging Workforce section. President Schultz inquired if Staff foresees any issues coming up regarding technical expertise of Staff and the outside help available for engines. Mr. Neisler stated the Engine Replacement project will come up in two years and in-house mechanical expertise is being conveyed to the newer, younger workforce as well as providing them Waukesha Gas Engine Technology Training.
 - 3.2 Water Supply- Discussed that supply is more vulnerable now than 2 years ago. Mr. Neisler has joined the ACWA Board to better access state level information and have a greater presence for the District. Discussed if the Delta Conveyance were in operation, how that would affect the current water situation. The competition for water storage and conveyance is increasing. Discussed that contracts are expiring in 2035 and how there is too much pressure for them not to be extended.
 - 3.3 Water Importation System- Hiring a consultant is in the budget to do formal investigation/report on Natural Gas (NG) vs. electrification of the system. Rising NG prices affects long-term planning. Update plan to include investigation of electrification of system so Public is aware. Discussed investigation of automated meter system to monitor flow on a real-time basis. Schultz suggested installing totalizers as well. Mr. Neisler explained the data gets skewed because there are wells pumping into the system in addition to system flow. The benefits of both were discussed and they decided to have two separate bullet points for the two meter types. Update Infrastructure List to include new CB Westerly Recharge Basin.
 - 3.4 Support Systems- Add information about GIS and inventory management system.
 - 3.5 Financial Resources- Stated no updates currently but mentioned there are future challenges like NG price increases, large project costs, restricted supplies, and unreliable revenue.
4. Major Challenges
 - 4.1 Human Resources- Staff is on a regular Performance Review cycle, they use Zoho Management System, have improved communication, and team building activities. Director Zanutto commented that he really sees Vision, Alignment, and Execution working at this District; everyone seems on board, projects are getting completed, and things are moving forward. He commended all the Staff.
 - 4.2 Water Supply- Additional Challenges to add:

- i. Climate- We are in an extended drought, there is a statewide need for storage (SGMA), the State is exploring capture of storm water, snowpack is projected to decrease.
- ii. Additional Storage- Brite Lake is the only surface water storage available, groundwater storage capacity is good, TCCWD is actively looking for banking areas.
- iii. Drought/Emergency- Conditions next year will be worse than the current year. Even if we have a wet winter, the allocation will be low due to low reservoir levels. Earthquakes can cause a breach of the Delta resulting in saltwater intrusion and cause the SWP to be offline for years. Mr. Neisler suggested TCCWD should develop a zero allocation planning scenario: 80% reduction in Ag surface water, 20% reduction in M&I, and 50% reduction in M&I irrigation. He explained a broad overview and stated there should roughly be enough groundwater stored to survive for 4 years with no imported water (customer Banked Water Reserve Accounts were not considered for this rough calculation). Mr. Neisler feels this kind of discussion needs to be in the Plan. There is an unprecedented amount of growth in the community and this building boom needs to be acknowledged in the water planning process.

4.3 Infrastructure- Update main titles and section information to match current conditions.

5. Capital Improvement Plan

5.1 Short-Term Goals- Staff has extensively updated this list for this year and next. Staff is working to update costs from budgeted amounts to actual cost amounts for the Completed Projects list. Staff described the project list. Director Cassil asked about potential changes to regulations regarding storm water capture and credits. Mr. Neisler stated storm water is already being captured in our flood control structures, the State just does not allow it to be credited. Director Cassil suggested sharing the potential benefits of storm water capture with the CSDs. Mr. Neisler suggested to Mr. Curry to put this topic on the Tehachapi Regional Water Group agenda. The Fairview Ranches Irrigation project was described and the line repairs will happen over the course of 5 years.

5.2 Mid-Term Goals- The District is ready to close escrow on the Nunes Well. All the wells are old and this project list includes updating the wells over a course of 3 years. Staff described the remaining projects on the list pointing out the Indirect Potable Recharge project may change if production remains low and the Cummings Valley Loop Line Completion project could provide many benefits but is costly, so Staff will investigate grant opportunities or cost participation from customers. There is a Reserve Fund dedicated to these projects.

5.3 Long-Term Goals- Vehicles are scheduled to be replaced over 5 years. President Schultz asked about the State's pressure for more electric vehicles. Mr. Neisler responded the State is starting to realize how untenable those targets are. President Schultz suggested looking into data logging as it may be required to qualify for grants for electric vehicles to show duty cycles and demand. Mr. Neisler discussed the idea of adding a vehicle charging station at the office and a publicly accessible water connection with a card reader system rather than individual temporary meters.

6. Conclusions

- a. Update Organizational Chart and CIP based on discussion.
- b. Mr. Neisler summarized there is no need to bring this back to the Board for additional consideration other than the update to the Strategic Plan as outlined in this discussion.
- c. Schultz addressed the ongoing issue of Ag meters breaking by overflowing them and he has researched this problem. He found many field sets are 20 acres and need 1800 gpm, yet the meters are set at 1500 gpm, so they must cut off 1 or 2 water lines and keep an irrigator there an additional 8 hours to finish the set. He suggests looking into meters that can go

- higher than 1500 gpm if the District is looking at putting different meters on the system anyway. This may help alleviate some of the meter breakages.
- d. Staff will make updates and bring back to the Board for final approval.

Item 9. Lunch Break (as necessary)

Item 10. Board of Director's Comments

None.

Item 11. 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, Potential Litigation

The Board went into Closed Session at 11:57 a.m.

Item 12. Return to Open Session

The Board returned to Open Session at 1:29 p.m.

Report Action Taken in Closed Session:

- a. Board authorized retention of outside counsel.

Item 13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m. on a motion made by Director Hall, seconded by Director Cassil, and carried on the following vote: Ayes: Cassil, Hall, Pack, Schultz, Zanutto; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None.


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: _____
Name of Case: _____

2. Anticipated Litigation: _____
Gov. Code § 54956.9 (b): 1 potential case
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: _____