

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY  
HELD FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2021 AT 9:00 A.M.**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, February 5, 2021 in the Board Room of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority*, 541 “H” Street, City of Los Banos, County of Merced, State of California.

The following persons were present:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Central California Irrigation District (CCID):** James O’Banion, Chairman  
**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Kimberly Brown, Director (arrived at 9:30 a.m.)

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Chris White, Executive Director; Steve Chedester, Director of Policy and Program; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist; and Darlene O’Brien, Administrative Assistant

In accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order (N-29-20) and the declared State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, the following members of the Exchange Contractors’ Board of Directors and staff, and members of the public participated via teleconference:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**CCID:** Jarrett Martin, Manager  
**San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):** James Nickel, Director (9:05 a.m.); John Wiersma, Manager  
**Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):** Mike Stearns, Director; Jeff Bryant, Manager  
**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Chris Cardella, Director; Randy Houk, Manager

**OTHERS:**

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; Darcy Villere, FCWD Director; David Cory, Consultant; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group; Mike Henry, Consultant; Kristi Robinson, Water Wise; Eric Ruckdaschel, Landowner; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; and Don Wright, Journalist

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman O’Banion opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Adam Hoffman to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The Executive Director proceeded to take roll call of the Board members in attendance via teleconference.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The unapproved minutes from the January 8, 2021 Board meeting were presented.

Director Cardella made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Stearns. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 3-0 vote.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

The Executive Director invited those participating by teleconference to introduce themselves. Following, he asked if there was anyone from the public wished to provide comments. There was no public participation presented.

**BOARD TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 2021 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

**Finance Committee Report:**

The Director of Finance and Administration presented the January 2021 Expenditure List for review. Joann White then provided the updated December 2020 Budget Comparison reports for the General, Water Transfer and Water Resources Plan Budgets, adding that the end of the year invoices had been received and are reflected in the update. She then provided the January 2021 Financial Report and highlighted the revenue and expenses for the General, Water Transfer, and Water Resources Plan Budget Comparison reports. She added that the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (SJVDA) approved their budget at their February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, noting that the Exchange Contractors' allocation came in under the estimated amount reflected in the 2021 approved budget. The invoice for the SJVDA first installment membership dues will be received in March. Ms. White concluded her report by providing a review of the Cash Activity Report.

Following the report, a motion was made by Director Stearns and seconded by Director Nickel to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

**2020 Summary of Charges on Visa Cards:**

Ms. White explained that the Board requires an annual breakdown of the charges on the Visa cards assigned to the following staff members: Executive Director, Director of Policy and Programs, Director of Finance and Administration, and Water Resources Specialist. The summary includes a breakdown of the category for each of the charges, in addition to a monthly breakdown for each credit card relative to public relations and lodging and meal expenses.

**2020 Report – Reimbursements to Employees in Excess of \$100:**

Ms. White stated that an annual report is provided to the Board outlining reimbursement of expenses to employees exceeding \$100 for the previous year. She then presented the Reimbursement Report which outlined the employee's name, date of reimbursement, amount, and description of the expenditures for the Board's review and information.

The Finance Committee meeting minutes of January 5, 2021 were provided for informational purposes.

**WATER REPORT:**

Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman provided a review of his water report that included the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 290 c.f.s., with 270 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 20 c.f.s from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 325 c.f.s., with 186 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford. Currently, there is 128 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool from the San Joaquin River, with 120 c.f.s. going past Sack Dam as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flows.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 2,146,296 a.f.; Millerton – 163,967 a.f.; and San Luis Reservoir – 1,069,601 a.f., observing that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 425,055 a.f., with the State project water at 644,546 a.f. Next, he stated that Pine Flat is 224,859 a.f. of storage and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 19,869 a.f. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 264,891 a.f., which is about 102% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 46% of average.

The Delta Operations data was then provided as follows: inflows are 18,287 c.f.s and exports are 3,231 c.f.s. The outflow index is at 21,687 c.f.s and 17% of inflows diverted, noting the controlling factor for this is the delta water quality.

Mr. Hoffman concluded his report with a summary of the recent significant storms and discussed the current regional snowpack for the state.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program** – Executive Director White reported that we are currently working with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and other settling parties to set up a meeting to discuss the OMR issues down at the Mendota Pool projects. The Director of Policy and Program will report further on the SJRRP and after the recent Board workshop, a set of principals have been developed and will be discussed and reviewed in Closed Session.

**Operations** – The Executive Director stated that operations are being tracked very carefully and expecting the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to put out their forecast next week, in which we will use as the basis for our model run of CVP and SWP operations.

**SGMA/Groundwater** - Manager Martin reported that all the data has been collected for the second annual report. CCID staff is currently compiling the data into a management system for the subbasin. Dr. Kenneth Schmidt is working on an analysis review of the annual groundwater management report from the data provided from the entities. Dr. Schmidt plans on providing his presentation to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board on March 5th. In conclusion, we are awaiting receipt of remaining grant funds and have submitted for additional grant funding as part of the DWR GSP Implementation Program.

**Water Resources Plan** – Executive Director White reported that we are progressing in three areas. First, work on the permitting process is being completed on the Orestimba Creek Banking project. Second, regarding the Los Banos Creek Reservoir project, flood flow releases were made last week with water being delivered into the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC); we are now awaiting the accounting of that process. Lastly, there will be an updated progress report on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir later in the agenda.

**DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAM REPORT:**

Steve Chedester provided the following updates:

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program** – Currently, waiting for Reclamation to provide their appraisal plan for seepage mitigation. It was reported that the hydraulic model is on schedule to be finalized in March, with the cost estimate following. At the Mendota Pool Fish Screen, Jacobs Engineering will complete responses to Reclamation’s comments by the end of February. We received an approval from Reclamation on the fish screen layout. We are starting to see more coordination between Jacobs and the Technical Service Center (TSC) on the projects. The CCID Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) expires at the end of the year, we are working on completing the extension and the cost modification will soon follow. Regarding the Sack Dam projects, we are working on SLCC’s FAA and a final draft report has been submitted to Reclamation. TSC has taken over the design of the fish screen alternatives and they are currently evaluating five different screen types and we are anticipating a 10% design package by the end of March.

**Temperance Flat Reservoir Authority (TFRA)** – TFRA is sponsoring a workshop with the California Water Commission (CWC) in February or March to discuss reallocating some remaining funds to other projects.

**WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM:**

Executive Director White gave a brief description and level of progress on the draft Agreement of Storage and Extraction of Water between the Exchange Contractors and Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District, with further discussion to take place in Closed Session.

**WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:**

**Del Puerto Creek Reservoir (DPCR) Project:** The Executive Director presented a letter from Department of Interior notifying Congress of a Finding of Consistency on the DPCR for feasibility to qualify for future WIIN Act funding. He asked Andy Neal of Woodard and Curran to provide an update on the recent activities with the reservoir project:

- Completed the Feasibility Report in December 2020
- Made some minor updates to become 508 compliant, which is a law that requires federal government websites to be safe and accessible for people with disabilities.
- Preparing to hire the designers and clear the project site for environmental permitting.
- Working on the FAA

- Planning to setup a workshop to work with PG&E and Barnard Construction on the utility relocation.

Executive Director White reported that we expect through a Financial Assistance Agreement to receive about \$400,000 for our cash flow in the first installment of matching funds from the WIIN Act. In December, Congress approved another \$1.5 million for the project. Woodard and Curran have put together a cost estimate and scope of work for the project in which the Executive Director will present to the member entity boards in February and bring back to the Exchange Contractors' Board for approval in March.

**BAY-DELTA WATER QUALITY AND REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (RWOCB) REPORT:**

**CV-SALTS:** David Cory discussed the recent Notice to Comply (NTC) from the Regional Board to the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. All permit holders that discharge salt including irrigated land coalitions received NTCs related to the Salt Control Program developed as part of CV-SALTS. Two choices were given in the notice: A) Conservative Approach, which utilizes existing regulatory structure and focuses on source control; or B) Alternative Approach, which provides a compliance option to permittees who participate in and provide a minimum level of financial support for the Prioritization and Optimization Study led by Central Valley Salinity Coalition. Permittees in the Alternative Approach are not required to meet the more stringent limitations of the Conservative Approach but must continue to implement efforts to control salt discharges through salinity management practices. The San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority approved the Alternative Approach as the permitting option.

**Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP):** The Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition sent the ILRP forms required by the State to all growers. Failure to return the forms will result in Water Board enforcement actions. Additionally, the Regional Board will send information packets to growers explaining the requirement for growers to sample all drinking water wells on irrigated lands parcels in 2021.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT:**

**State:** Executive Director White presented Dominic DiMare's report in which he noted the potential recall of Governor Newsom and that state legislators have until February 19<sup>th</sup> to introduce legislation. A Legislative Committee meeting has been scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup> in which Mr. DiMare will brief the committee as to what activities are occurring and certain legislation to follow this year relative to water supply/operations/storage.

**Federal:** The Executive Director referred to Nancy Williams' report noting President Biden's new appointments and his series of Executive Orders including revoking Trump's Presidential Memorandum from 2018 and 2020 regarding western water. She noted that Congressman Valadao has been appointed to the House Appropriations Committee along with Congressman Harder, who will also serve on the House Agriculture Committee.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

Legal counsel reviewed the following issues and said that some of the discussions will take place in Closed Session:

- Friant Court of Claims
- DPCR Settlement Conference
- GSA Litigation

**FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:**

**Central California Irrigation District:**

Manager Martin reported that CCID was successful in their strategic rehabilitation of the District's canals. The south maintenance crew was able to get the work completed on the Colony System and it is back up and running. Water deliveries were off in January but began to see demands starting on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Firebaugh Canal Company:**

Manager Bryant reported that the Grassland Basin Authority is now fully staffed, and they continue to work with Reclamation to get their grants reinstated. After the significant rain event, Panoche Silver Creek created 4,000 c.f.s. and overtopped FCWD's 3<sup>rd</sup> Lift Canal and caused some damage. The New Horizon Pistachio plant also flooded and FCWD is now trying to excavate hulls out of the canals. The canal lining project continues but the contractor is falling behind schedule. However, there are pumps in place and they are trying to schedule irrigation around that. Currently have some calls for water and will begin filling canals over the next week.

**Columbia Canal Company:**

Manager Houk stated that CCC will be starting water around February 15<sup>th</sup> and all their projects are now complete. Due to the recent rain, CCC was able to test their drain pumps, which has not been done in a few years, noting that most of them worked.

**San Luis Canal Company:**

Manager Wiersma reported that about 1,200 AF was delivered in January which is about average. A lot of time has been spent with staff working with Reclamation on the SJRRP trying to figure out the best path forward with close coordination and collaboration between the two technical teams. Construction projects are wrapping up and are on schedule to open all canals by February 15<sup>th</sup>. Office staff has begun the budget process for the next year's budget which runs July 1 to June 30.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

Executive Director White discussed the letter that was written by Legal Counsel to PG&E regarding the Crane Valley Project/Bass Lake Sale reminding them that there is a contractual arrangement with the Exchange Contractors and Reclamation. They have responded and a conference call has been scheduled for next week. Mr. White also presented the architectural proposals that have been received in response to the Milliken Museum and Office Complex project. We are working jointly with the Milliken Museum Society and San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority for potential

office space. The interviews with the firms will take place next Wednesday with the project partners and the City of Los Banos.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairman O'Banion adjourned the meeting to Closed Session at 10:07 a.m.

Chairman O'Banion returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:50 a.m. and announced that the following action was made: motion made by Director Nickel and seconded by Director Stearns to approve the Principles document between the Exchange Contractors and Reclamation relative to the SJRRP. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

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JAMES O'BANION, CHAIRMAN

Attest a true record of proceedings had  
And taken at the foregoing meeting, our  
Presence thereat and our consent thereto.

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CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

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JAMES NICKEL, DIRECTOR

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MIKE STEARNS, DIRECTOR

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CHRIS CARDELLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN