

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, May 7, 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:

Columbia Canal Company: Chris Cardella, Vice-Chairman
San Luis Canal Company: James Nickel, Director

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: James O’Banion, Chairman; Jarrett Martin, Manager
San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): John Wiersma, Manager
Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD): Mike Stearns, Director; Jeff Bryant, Manager
Columbia Canal Company (CCC): Randy Houk, Manager

OTHERS:

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; Eric Fontana, CCID Director; Cannon Michael, SLCC Director; Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; David Cory, Consultant; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group; Eric Ruckdaschel, Landowner; Don Wright, Journalist; and Alan Becker

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chairman Cardella 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 April 9, 2021 Board meeting and the April 15, 2021 Special Board meeting were presented.

Director Nickel 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 4-0 vote.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was no public participation presented.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE APRIL 2021 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joann White presented the April 2021 Expenditure List and Financial Report and provided highlights of the revenue and expenses for the General, Water Transfer, Water Resources Plan, and San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Budget Comparisons. An outline of the Cash Activity Report was then presented.

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.

The Finance Committee meeting minutes of April 6, 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: 1,029 c.f.s., of that, 780 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 249 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 365 c.f.s., with 139 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford. Currently, there is 58 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool from the San Joaquin River, with 45 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 – 2,260,050 a.f.; Millerton – 224,094 a.f.; and San Luis Reservoir – 1,018,637 a.f., observing that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 383,574 a.f., with the State project water at 635,063 a.f. Next, he stated that Pine Flat is 342,892 a.f. of storage and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 19,406 a.f. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 359,225 a.f., which is about 100% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 41% of average.

The Delta Operations data was then provided as follows: inflows are 7,365 c.f.s and exports are 1,345 c.f.s. The outflow index is at 3,970 c.f.s and 15% of inflows diverted, noting the controlling factor for this is the Delta outflow.

Additional data included in the report for informational purposes was: Current Reservoir Conditions, San Luis Reservoir Storage Levels, Shasta Dam Operations, Millerton Lake Daily Operation's Report, and Daily CVP Water Supply Report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director White reported that staff's highest priority at this time is tracking operations and helping with the planning efforts in dealing with the drought situation. He stated there will be further discussion in Closed Session on this item. Time is also being spent on the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, in which the Director of Policy & Program will provide details in his report.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAM REPORT:

Steve Chedester provided a report on the following issues:

San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) –

- *Mendota Pool Bypass* – The focus has been mainly on the fish recapture facility with progress moving at a slow pace. The combined 30% design package will probably be delayed a month.
- *Sack Dam, Fish Passage and Arroyo Canal Fish Screen* – SLCC received the 10% report and should have responses back on the comments by next week. The full 30% design package, including screen and fish passage designs, should be complete by October 2021. Close coordination will be required with the Technical Service Center (TSC) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation).

Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project – The write-up of the 2020 program has been submitted to Lisa Holmes at Reclamation and we will begin pursuing the long-term permit process later in May.

Community Projects Funding – We have coordinated with our congressional representatives to submit a request for funding of the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam Reservoir Regulation and Storage Project and the Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project under the Community Projects application. We received several letters of support, including from the City of Los Banos and County of Merced. which were submitted with the application. The projects are within Congressman Costa's district and have been selected as one of his ten projects to support.

WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM:

The Executive Director reported that CCID has requested approval of additional groundwater exchange transfer applications and/or changes to existing proposals. He said that all required documentation had been submitted and reviewed by staff and was recommending approval.

Director Stearns made a motion to approve CCID's updated changes to their groundwater exchange transfer program for 2021. The motion was seconded by Director Nickel. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed unanimously by a 4-0 vote.

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. He explained that there had been some minor edits to the agreement. Manager Wiersma reported that the SLCC Board has approved the agreement with the minor edits at their last meeting. Manager Martin stated that the CCID Board has decided to table the agreement until the updated water balance study by Cal Poly is complete. Managers Bryant and Houk both reported that they would be presenting the agreement with the edits to their boards in May. No board action was taken at this time.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN:

Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Expansion Project – The Director of Policy and Program presented Provost & Pritchard’s status update report on the Orestimba Creek project. Mr. Chedester next referred to a PowerPoint presentation and provided a quick overview of the current progress and future goals of the project.

Del Puerto Creek Reservoir (DPCR) Project – Executive Director White reported that the DPCR team is currently working with Reclamation on completing the environmental work for the draft EIS which should be done by mid-Summer. They have also been working on completing the Financial Assistance Agreements (FAA) to receive the WIIN Act funding associated with the project. A Request for Quotes (RFQ) on the dam designs and the relocation work of the roadway has been drafted and will be sent out to advance the dam design to 3%. This month, the priority will be working with PG&E on the relocation of the power lines.

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

Consultant, David Cory gave an update on the following activities:

CV-SALTS: Dischargers representing the Priority 1 basins submitted their preliminary management zone proposals and early action plans in March. The Westside San Joaquin Watershed Coalition is in the Priority 2 basins and will likely receive the notice to comply in 2022. Compliance with these requirements entail significant effort to organize, develop and implement a nitrate management zone proposal and early action plan. Coalitions within Priority 2 areas should begin to coordinate with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in their area so cost savings for the two efforts can be maximized.

Groundwater Protection Formulas, Values and Targets: The coalitions are working to generate the Groundwater Protection Values for each high vulnerability township in the Central Valley by the July 19th deadline. The coalitions are also working to develop a methodology to establish nitrogen loading targets as required on a township level.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: Executive Director White presented Dominic DiMare’s report noting the current bills being tracked at this time.

Federal: The Executive Director referred to Nancy Williams’ report which discusses the current appropriations process; the Feinstein/Costa legislation-Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act and recent nominations at the Department of Interior.

ATTORNEY’S REPORT:

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

- State Water Board approves Reclamation’s Temporary Change Petition for restoration and recirculation flows
- Letter from State Water Board to the State Water Project and Central Valley Project
- Governor’s Drought Declaration

FOUR ENTITIES’ MANAGER REPORTS:

Firebaugh Canal Company:

Manager Bryant reported they are currently dealing with the drought conditions and water supply. April deliveries were higher than usual but not surprising given that March water was down. The new Drainage JPA is up and running with new management and staff.

Central California Irrigation District:

Manager Martin reported that demands were starting to pick up with April being fairly normal for deliveries. The aquatic weeds continue to be a challenge. There was a successful trial for the hyacinth removal, which was cost effective and now trying to make it more efficient. The Division of Boating and Waterways has committed to come out and spray the Mendota Pool.

San Luis Canal Company:

Manager Wiersma reported a higher water usage in April than normal. They recently hired two new office staff members. Staff is working on the drought year operations and the supplemental supply programs for their growers. Aggressive aquatic growth is becoming a big issue and working on a joint CEQA document with CCID to begin copper treatment.

Columbia Canal Company:

Manager Houk stated that aquatics has also become a huge problem with personnel working full-time to keep the moss and aquatics down.

INFORMATIONAL:

Mr. White reported that next week, there will be a field visit with PG&E at the DPCR site, in addition to the Exchange Contractors’ annual ACWA meeting with Reclamation via Teams meeting.

CLOSED SESSION:

Vice-Chairman Cardella adjourned the meeting to Closed Session at 10:10 a.m.

The Vice-Chairman returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:01 a.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

CHRIS CARDELLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN

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

CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

JAMES O'BANION, CHAIRMAN

JAMES L. NICKEL, DIRECTOR

MIKE STEARNS, DIRECTOR