

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, September 3, 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): Jarrett Martin, Manager
San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): James Nickel, Director

STAFF MEMBERS:

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

OTHERS:

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP

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:

Central California Irrigation District (CCID): James O’Banion, Chairman
Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD): Dan McCurdy, Director; Jeff Bryant, Manager
Columbia Canal Company (CCC): Chris Cardella, Vice-Chairman; Randy Houk, Manager

OTHERS:

Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; David Cory, Consultant; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group; Don Wright, Journalist; Kristi Robinson, Waterwise; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Chase Hurley; and Antonio Bejarano, Westlands Water District

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman O’Banion opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Director Nickel to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The Executive Director proceeded to take roll call of the Board members to confirm a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The unapproved minutes from the August 6, 2021 Board meeting were presented.

Director Nickel made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Cardella. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Don Wright extended an invitation to an event he's hosting on October 2nd in Clovis.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE AUGUST, 2021 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joann White presented the August 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 Nickel and seconded by Director Cardella 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 August 2, 2021 were provided for informational purposes.

WATER REPORT:

Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman reviewed his water report that included the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 1,362 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.), of that, 1,036 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 326 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 265 c.f.s., with 19 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 1,226,673 acre feet (a.f.); San Luis Reservoir – 275,176 a.f., stating that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 24,888 a.f., with the State project water at 250,288 a.f. Next, he stated that Millerton is at 234,473 a.f. of storage and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 17,889 a.f. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 310,393 a.f., which is about 81% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 43% of average.

The Delta Operation's data was then provided as follows: inflows are 7,818 c.f.s., with exports at 2,200 c.f.s. The outflow index is 2,600 c.f.s., noting the controlling factor for this is the Delta Outflow.

In conclusion, Mr. Hoffman referred to the following additional data included in his report for informational purposes: 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:

Operations – The Executive Director reported that operations are looking more favorable as a result of less borrowing from the State Water Project than originally anticipated, which is largely due to more Jones pumping, less use of transfer water by westside districts, delayed start to the wildlife area's flood up, and the conservation practices within the entities. Friant Water District also began delivering water into the California Aqueduct at the beginning of August to be backed into San Luis Reservoir for our use.

SGMA/Groundwater – CCID is collecting summer data for next year's submittal of the annual report. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has released and made comments on some of the local adjoining Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The Exchange Contractors' GSP will be reviewed by the end of this year. Merced County recently held a meeting to discuss their well permitting process and a brief outline of the discussions were provided.

Subsidence – The July subsidence survey has been completed and results indicate that subsidence at Sack Dam from January to July reflected 2.5", mainly due to increased pumping and less flow in the river. CCID and SLCC are working with Triangle T Water District on the mitigation agreement which is up for renewal.

Water Transfer Program – A Strategic Plan Closed Session Water Transfer Workshop is scheduled for September 8.

Museum/Water Office Facility Project – City of Los Banos has received the deed from the Redevelopment Agency for the property and we are scheduled to make a presentation on the concept at a City Council meeting later this year.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:

Steve Chedester provided a report on the following issues:

San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP)

- *Mendota Pool Fish Screen and Control Structure* –Most of the work effort is focused on responding to the SJRRP/TSC request for further details in Jacobs written response to the 30% design.
- *Sack Dam, Fish Passage and Arroyo Canal Fish Screen* – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) conducted geotechnical work at the Sack Dam complex in August. Anticipating the 30% design package in November.

ADOPT CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE:

Legal Counsel Andrew McClure explained that the 45-day posting for the amended Conflict of Interest Code had ended and now requires adoption by the Board.

Mr. McClure opened the public hearing for comments at 9:30 a.m. After receiving no comments, Mr. McClure closed the hearing at 9:31 a.m.

Director Nickel made a motion to adopt the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Conflict of Interest Code. The motion was seconded by Director Cardella. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

Steve Chedester provided the following WRP updates:

Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project – The in-depth cultural report was completed and submitted to Reclamation for the long-term permitting approval process. All five test holes will be completed by next week for the initial well analysis and the information will be provided to Dr. Kenneth Schmidt for a recommendation. Progress continues on 60% design on the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC) turnouts, piping and diversion structure. CCID completed the final agreement on the Storm Water Grant and submitted it to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in July. The SWRCB staff responded in August with a revised eligibility of certain elements of the project, and the parties are working to resolve the differences.

Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project – On August 24th, we held a video meeting with all interested parties to bring Reclamation up to speed on the description of the project, cost estimate, NEPA/CEQA, water rights and schedule.

Community Projects Funding – In August, we were notified the Senate Committee included \$500,000 for the project, currently waiting for the Infrastructure Bill to move forward.

Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR) – Executive Director White reported that currently in the process of procuring a design consultant for the dam to advance to the 30% design for Division of Dam Safety. We have been informed that Reclamation has put in \$15 million WIIN Act funding for this project for fiscal year 2022. We are working with PG&E and Stantec on the utility relocation process.

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

Consultant, David Cory gave the following update:

CV-SALTS – Coalitions within the Priority 2 areas should begin to coordinate with GSAs in their area so that the cost savings for the two efforts can be maximized. Compliance with these requirements require significant effort to organize, develop and implement a nitrate management zone proposal.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: Executive Director White presented Dominic DiMare’s report which noted an effort to put together a budget trailer bill to fund projects associated with drought and wildfire resiliency and relief. The report also discussed SB 599 (Hurtado), the Water Conveyance Restoration Fund Bill.

Federal: The Executive Director referred to Nancy Williams' report discussing the FY22 Appropriations process and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Mr. Chedester stated that he just learned that the SB 599 (Hurtado) has been moved into the suspense file which means no action this year.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

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

- SWRCB Adopts Curtailment Regulations
- SGMA Litigation

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:

Firebaugh Canal Company:

Manager Bryant reported that they have been working on basic operations and watching for overages due to the critical year. A contractor has been hired to begin the environmental work for the canal lining project for Fall 2022 and he has spent some time installing a remote system on the tile sumps through a state grant to help manage storm events.

Central California Irrigation District:

Manager Martin stated that CCID is working on coordination with James Irrigation District, Tranquility Water District and the refuges to put together a comprehensive plan to neutralize the hyacinth around Mendota Pool and looking at funding opportunities including grants for the removal of invasive species.

Columbia Canal Company:

Manager Houk said that harvest has began

San Luis Canal Company:

In Manager's Wiersma's absence, the Executive Director reviewed a written report prepared by Manager Wiersma as follows: SLCC deliveries were consistent with the critical water year; their Conflict of Interest Code was recently updated; and staff has been working on designs for capital projects with five projects going out to bid.

CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman O'Banion adjourned the meeting to Closed Session and called for a short recess at 9:59 a.m. Chairman O'Banion reconvened the meeting to Closed Session at 10:05 a.m.

The Chairman returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:28 a.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

JAMES O'BANION, 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 L. NICKEL, DIRECTOR

DAN McCURDY, DIRECTOR

CHRIS CARDELLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN