

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2022**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, May 13, 2022 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.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Columbia Canal Company (CCC):

Chris Cardella, Chair; Randy Houk, Manager

Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):

Mike Stearns, Vice-Chair; Jeff Bryant, Manager

San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):

James Nickel, Director; John Wiersma, Manager

Central California Irrigation District (CCID):

Eric Fontana, Director, Jarrett Martin, Manager

STAFF MEMBERS:

Chris White, Executive Director; Steve Chedester, Director of Policy & Programs; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist (arrived 9:10 a.m.); and Darlene O’Brien, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Andrew McClure, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; Justin Darnell; Kevin Hurd, FCWD Director (arrived 9:27 a.m.); Kimberly Brown, CCC Director (via teleconference); Don Wright, Journalist (via teleconference); Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard (via teleconference); and Kristi Robinson, Waterwise (via teleconference)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Cardella opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Director Fontana to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The unapproved minutes from the April 1, 2022 Board meeting, and the Special Board meeting minutes of April 4, 2022; April 11, 2022 and April 15, 2022 were presented.

Director Nickel made a motion to approve the four sets of minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Stearns. The motion was unanimously carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Executive Director invited those participating by teleconference to introduce themselves. There was no public participation presented following introductions.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE APRIL 2022 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joann White presented the April 2022 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 Fontana to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

The Finance Committee meeting minutes of March 28, 2022 were provided for informational purposes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The Executive Director gave brief updates on the following issues:

Operations: Jones Pumping Plant has been at one larger unit for all of April and into May, which is a better situation than previously thought. Reduced outflow is being maintained under the Temporary Use Change Petition (TUCP). We are looking at the numbers and hopeful the current pumping system will last through the summer. The forecasting that came out May 1st looks better than what we saw in April, with potential to bring additional pumping later this summer. Flows down the river began in April to meet our demands, but within a few days the flow exceeded the seepage thresholds, and the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) reduced their flows. The United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) was estimating flows in the river through September but may be less depending on the pumping scenario this summer.

Legislative: Work continues with Congressional staff on projects utilizing some of the current drought funding. We are also working with state Senator Caballero on additional state funding for the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project.

Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR) Project: The Terra GeoPentech team has been selected for the Geotech and dam design. The next step includes assembling the drilling and investigation plan to submit for review to the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). Drilling and field work is scheduled to begin in July. The current schedule will get the project to 30% design by early 2023.

Museum/Water Office Facility Project: The Cost-Share Agreement has been signed by the project partners. Land surveying and Geotech work has been completed and submitted to the architectural firm. A stakeholder's meeting has been scheduled for June 9th at the Los Banos Community Center.

SGMA/Groundwater: Manager Martin reported that last week the Delta-Mendota subbasin was awarded \$7.6 million grant funding as part of SGMA implantation which will be used for water resource projects and updating the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in response to direction given by Department of Water Resources (DWR).

WATER REPORT:

Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman reviewed his water report that included the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 1,300 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.), of that, 1,123 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 180 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 1,500 c.f.s., with 1,286 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford. Currently, there is 1,174 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool from the San Joaquin River, noting that no San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flows are going past Sack Dam.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 1,821,256 acre-feet (AF); San Luis Reservoir – 944,149 AF, stating that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 354,815 AF, with the State project water at 589,334 AF. Subsequent, he stated that Millerton's current storage is 369,760 AF and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 19,425 AF. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 368,019 AF, which is about 96% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 52% of average.

The Delta Operation's data was then provided as follows: inflows are 8,207 c.f.s., with exports at 1,428 c.f.s. The outflow index is 4,579 c.f.s., noting the controlling factor for these flows.

In conclusion, Mr. Hoffman referred to 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.

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* – Jacobs is at 60% design for the reverse flow facility with a June 16th delivery of Basis of Design Report (BODR) to CCID and Reclamation. The combined 30% design for the compact bypass facility, fish ladder and fish recapture facility will be available in June from Reclamation.
- *Sack Dam, Fish Passage and Arroyo Canal Fish Screen* – Reclamation conducted a Value Engineering Study and provided two alternatives (Alt 1 & Alt 4). Reclamation prefers Alt 4 but likes certain elements of Alt 1. They are reaching out to SLCC for input.

Water Resources Plan Update:

- *Orestimba Creek* – The NEPA/CEQA were adopted in March. We continue to make progress on the box culvert analysis. CCID staff removed and replaced a landowner crossing and regraded the DMC drain ditch. CCID also removed sediment from the box culvert under the DMC and is scheduling the inspection of the culvert for later this month. Regarding the grant process, in March, another request for revised budget and grant documents was requested and provided. CCID anticipates receiving the final agreement in June.
- *Los Banos Creek Project* – Project partners met during the recent Spring ACWA conference and agreed on a project description and will be meeting regularly moving forward. The Area Potentially Effected (APE) map was completed in May and submitted to Reclamation. In March, a 2022 appropriations bill was adopted, and funding agreement with Reclamation is being pursued. A request was also submitted for funding from SGMA funds, and we were informed in early May that the project received an additional \$600,000 from those funds.

Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley: The Board is currently working on developing a strategic plan. The second planning session was held April 29th where the Mission and Vision statement and worked on goals and objectives.

WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM:

The Executive Director reported that CCID has requested approval of an additional groundwater exchange transfer application. He stated that all required documentation had been submitted and reviewed by staff and was recommending approval on the following transfer proposal: CCID groundwater exchange transfer of up to 62 AF to Del Puerto Water District.

Director Stearns made a motion to approve the CCID groundwater exchange transfer as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Nickel, and unanimously carried.

Mr. White then stated that the Water Transfer Committee had previously recommended approval of the SLCC to Panoche Water District under the Eastside Conveyance Project of up to 5,000 AF for 2022, adding that it was uncertain this transfer/exchange would take place this year, therefore, had not been brought to the Board. SLCC has since been notified that the water will be made available for the program; therefore, an approval by the Board is required.

Director Fontana made a motion to approve the transfer/exchange between SLCC to Panoche Water District under the Eastside Conveyance Project as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Nickel, and unanimously carried.

Executive Director White presented 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. He is recommending approval to move forward with the agreement contingent on legal counsel's finalization.

Director Nickel made a motion to approve the draft Agreement of Storage and Extraction of Water between the Exchange Contractors and Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District. The motion was seconded by Director Stearns. The motion was unanimously carried.

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

Consultant, David Cory gave the following update:

CV-SALTS

- *Nitrate Permitting Strategy* – The Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition is in a Priority 2 basin and is working to develop a Management Zone plan to comply with requirements.
- *Salt Control Program* – Phase 1 of the CV-Salts program involves the development of the Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study) for Phase 1, and work is being done on the P&O Study under the direction for the CV-SALTS executive committee.
- *Groundwater Protection Formulas, Values and Targets* – Coalitions are continuing to develop a methodology to establish nitrogen loading targets and, in July 2022, they must submit to the Regional Board the Groundwater Protection Targets for each high vulnerability townships within the Central Valley.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: The Executive Director referred to Dominic DiMare’s report noting the Assembly and Senate budget priorities for water.

Federal: The Executive Director presented Nancy Williams’ report noting the FY23 Appropriations.

ATTORNEY’S REPORT:

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

- State Water Resources Control Board Curtailment Orders and Information Requests
- Governor’s Executive Order on Well Permits
- DPCR Litigation
- Friant Court of Claims case

FOUR ENTITIES’ MANAGER REPORTS:

Columbia Canal Company:

Manager Houk reported that they have had good cooperation among the growers in trying to maintain a constant diversion from the Mendota Pool to help stabilize demands. CCC will hold their annual grower meeting later this month on May 24th.

Firebaugh Canal Company:

Manager Bryant stated that they are working through construction issues on their new office building; also working on solar projects and a desalinization project for wells; and moving into the planning phase of 2.1 miles of canal lining.

San Luis Canal Company:

Manager Wiersma reported water usage lower than average due to the district's and growers' conservation efforts. Staff is working on the upcoming budget as well as operations and standard maintenance routines.

Central California Irrigation District:

Manager Martin reported that CCID is working on solidifying a hydrograph for operations. They are working on a coalition with Mendota Pool users to help tackle the issue of hyacinth and aquatics. Staff is also spending time in coordinating with the surrounding disadvantaged communities in regard to growth and development as it relates to SGMA.

INFORMATIONAL:

Upcoming Events/Meetings:

- Stakeholders Meeting for Museum/Office Project – June 9th (LB Community Center)

CLOSED SESSION:

Chair Cardella adjourned the meeting to Closed Session and called for a short recess at 10:17 a.m. The meeting was reconvened to Closed Session at 10:25 a.m.

Chair Cardella returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:50 a.m. and reported that no action was taken in Closed Session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

CHRIS CARDELLA, CHAIR

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

CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

ERIC FONTANA, DIRECTOR

(Signatures Continue on Following Page)

JAMES NICKEL, DIRECTOR

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR