

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 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): Eric Fontana, Director; Jarrett Martin, Manager
San Luis Water District (SLCC): James Nickel, Director; John Wiersma, Manager
Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD): Mike Stearns, Vice-Chair
Columbia Canal Company (CCC): Chris Cardella, Chair

STAFF MEMBERS:

Chris White, Executive Director; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; and Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist

PRESENT:

Andrew McClure, Minasian Law

The following participated via Conference Call:

David Cory, Consultant; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Manny Amorelli, James Irrigation District; Don Wright, Journalist; Mitch Partovi, The Water Agency (9:13 a.m.); and Kristy Robinson, Waterwise (9:17 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER:

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

The Chair then asked for a moment of silence in memory of Randall G. Houk who passed away earlier in the month.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

There were no proposed changes to the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The following unapproved minutes were presented: Regular meeting of June 2, 2023; Special Joint Workshop with Del Puerto Water District of June 20, 2023; Special meeting of June 22, 2023; Special meeting of June 27, 2023; and Special meeting of July 5, 2023.

Director Fontana made a motion to approve the five sets of minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Stearns, and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

No public comments were provided.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE JUNE 2023 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joann White presented and reviewed the June 2023 Expenditure List and Financial Report.

A motion was made by Director Nickel and seconded by Director Fontana to approve the June 2023 Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

WATER REPORT:

Beginning his report, Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman said that they are at peak demands; San Joaquin River releases have decreased; and that they began spilling a small amount over the top at Friant Dam. Even though flows will begin decreasing following the latest warm up, flood flows should continue until the end of July. They have also had to adjust operations at Mendota Dam due to changes at Crescent Weir on the Kings River side.

Mr. Hoffman then referred to his Board report and reviewed the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 2,247 c.f.s., of that, 1,872 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 375 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). Releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River was 3,518 c.f.s., with 3,099 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford, 2,058 c.f.s. in the Chowchilla Bypass, 1,130 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool, 2,804 c.f.s. at Mendota Dam, and 1,691 c.f.s. going past Sack Dam.

Next outlined were the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 4,172,706 acre-feet (AF); San Luis Reservoir (SLR) – 1,945,453 AF, with the Federal share at 952,355 AF, and the State project water at 993,098 AF. Other current storage reflected Millerton's at 513,785 AF and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is 22,717 AF. The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 555,006 AF, which is about 92% of average, and the accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 102% of average.

Concluding his report, Mr. Hoffman reported on the Delta Operation's data as follows: 23,058 c.f.s. of inflows, with exports at 10,974 c.f.s. The outflow index is 7,600 c.f.s.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Covering some current activities, the Executive Director asked Manager Wiersma to provide an update on the Sack Dam gates project. In response, Manager Wiersma acknowledged they have received the Financial Assistance Agreement for the Sack Dam project to install gates. Continuing to cover other activities, Manager Wiersma also reported that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) held a hearing on June 21st where they issued proposed timelines for the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP’s) that were deemed inadequate, noting that the probationary hearing for the Delta-Mendota’s six GSP’s has been scheduled for September 2024. Meanwhile, they continue to coordinate with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the SWRCB staff to attempt to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements and submit a revised GSP or GSP’s before the September 2024 date.

Next, Manager Martin provided information regarding the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project groundbreaking ceremony that took place on June 29th, noting that Congressman Duarte and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the SWRCB were present for the dedication and have received good support from various agencies. In response to a question regarding funding of the project, Manager Martin confirmed that CCID is currently funding the project and will bring the option back to the other entities once the project is completed to determine if they will want to participate in the project once developed. The Executive Director articulated that the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir (DPCR) project workshop held earlier this month focused largely on technical findings and overall costs and that the project partners are working on development and construction financing options to be brought to the respective boards.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-02 – BOARD TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-02
RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RANDALL G. HOUK:**

A motion was made by Chris Cardella and seconded by Mike Stearns to approve the Resolution recognizing the contributions of Randall G. Houk. The motion was unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:

In Steve Chedester’s absence, the Executive Director referred to the Director’s report included in the Board meeting packet, adding that some of the matters were reviewed earlier in the meeting.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

The Director of Policy and Programs update report was again referred to in his absence.

The Executive Director referred to the information included in the Board packet for additional information relating to the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project.

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

Consultant, David Cory reviewed several items that were included in his written report as follows: Regional Board’s Executive Officer issued a conditional approval of the Groundwater Protection

Targets (GWP Targets), adding that they will be putting together a workplan to fulfill obligations required by the Regional Board. He also reported that the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority continues to work with the Valley Water Collaborative to help organize, create, and administer a nitrate management zone on the Westside of the San Joaquin River.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: The Executive Director referred to Arc Strategies report and provided an update on AB 1337 announcing that the bill had been pulled and considered inactive for the year. He then acknowledged the effectiveness of various agencies working with authors on the various water rights proposed bills.

Federal: Mr. White next referred to the report provided by Nancy Williams regarding Federal legislation and activities.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

The report from Lighthouse Public Affairs was referred to for an update on public outreach. Director Fontana recommended having a verbal report be provided to the Board on a quarterly basis.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Andrew McClure reported on the status of the California Sportfishing Protection Agency (CSPA) lawsuit on all Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Delta Mendota Subbasin explaining that a Motion to Dismiss has been filed by some of the defendants which is set, along with other matters involving the case, for the end of October. He next gave an update on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir CEQA litigation explaining that the Friant petitioners filed an appeal, and their opening brief is due this month. Attorney McClure then reported that the case filed by the Sierra Club, et al., the parties met for settlement discussions and the matter will be discussed in Closed Session. Lastly, he reported that the Delta Mendota Subbasin GSA's are working on an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to form an agreement to adopt and implement a single GSP for the Subbasin.

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:

Central California Irrigation District: Manager Martin said that CCID is moving a lot of water in July, with June being an average month for water deliveries. They are again dealing with aquatics and will start gearing up for winter maintenance which will include dewatering Mendota Dam for construction work.

San Luis Canal Company: Manager Wiersma reported an average month for water deliveries in June with July picking up. SLCC is also working on treating aquatics and preparing to work on an engineering survey for the placement of Sack Dam gates.

Firebaugh Canal Water District: In Manager Bryant's absence, Director Stearns said that FCWD had an average month for water deliveries in June.

Columbia Canal Company: Chair Cardella reported that CCC’s current demands are high, and they are getting ready for winter projects. He then thanked each of the managers, along with the Exchange Contractors’ staff, for their support following the passing of their General Manager.

INFORMATIONAL:

A copy of a certificate provided by Congressman John Duarte at the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project groundbreaking ceremony was included in the meeting packet for informational purposes.

CLOSED SESSION:

Chair Cardella asked if there was any public input and hearing none, adjourned the meeting to Closed Session and called for a short recess at 9:40 a.m. The meeting was reconvened to Closed Session at 9:46 a.m.

Chair Cardella returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:58 a.m. and said that direction was provided to staff and Legal Counsel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 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

JAMES L. NICKEL, DIRECTOR

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR