



Board of Directors Meeting/Stakeholder Workshop

March 18, 2021

Via Zoom

MINUTES

Directors Present

Director Kelly Long, Chair
Director Ed McFadden, Vice Chair/Secretary
Director Gordon Kimball
Director Candice Meneghin
Director Glen Pace
Director Christina Villaseñor

Staff Present

Anthony Emmert, Executive Director
Steve O'Neill, Legal Counsel
Eva Ibarra, Clerk of the Board

Public Present

Lisa Ballin, CSUS/DBS&A
Bryan Bondy, Fillmore and Piru Pumpers Associations
Christian Brodrick, Stillwater Science
Katie Brokaw
Dan Detmer, UWCD
Michael Fetchner
Carole Fornoff
Matt Freeman
Burt Handy
Debbie Jackson
Rachel Laenen
Murray McEachron, UWCD
Helen McGrath
Tony Morgan, DBS&A
Patrick O'Connell, DBS&A
Bruce Orr, Stillwater Science
Eddie Pech, DWR
Zachary Plummer, UWCD
Lara Shellenbanger
Stacie Ann Silva

Steve Slack, CDFW
Lita Spencer
Dr. Jason Sun, UWCD
Richard Tate
Jean Thirkettle
Roy Thun
James Thurber
Ambry Tibay, UWCD
Jim Van de Water
Gilead Wurman
Steven Zimmer

1. Call to Order – First Open Session 5:00 pm

Chair Long, called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

1A. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Kimball led the meeting participants in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

1B. Directors Roll Call

Roll call: (Kimball, Chair Long, Vice Chair McFadden, Meneghin, Pace, Villaseñor); six present.

1C. Public Comments

Chair Long asked if there were any public comments; none were offered.

1D. Approval of Agenda

Motion

Motion to approve the agenda, Vice Chair McFadden; Second, Director Villaseñor. Roll call vote: six ayes (Kimball, Chair Long, Vice Chair McFadden, Meneghin, Pace, Villaseñor); none opposed. Motion carries 6/0.

2. UPDATES

2A Director Announcements/Board Communications:

Oral Reports from the Board

Fillmore Pumpers Association Stakeholder Director Update
Director Kimball reported the Fillmore Pumpers Association's Board had a combined Fillmore and Piru Pumpers Associations meeting on March 9, during which time the members discussed, reviewed, and approved the

letter to the GSA on the subsidence SMC and discussed the added cost of the two GPS monitors mentioned in the letter, with general widespread support for the cost of the monitors. Additionally, he said the members also discussed groundwater storage, groundwater elevation SMCs and he received general support for the groundwater elevation SMC, as proposed, as well as support for matching elevations for the groundwater storage SMC. He stated that there was concern expressed for the progress of the monitoring wells project. He reported that members are willing to help in any way possible, as they are aware that this is a difficult and time consuming process and are also concerned that Department of Water Resources will not grant an extension on the grant terms if deadlines are not met.

Piru Pumpers Association Stakeholder Director Update

Director Pace echoed the same sentiments expressed by Director Kimball and simply stated the concern is time, adding “it is not on our side.”

Environmental Stakeholder Director Update

Director Meneghin stated she had no update and would be commenting further on other agenda items during the meeting regarding SMCs and GDEs.

City of Fillmore Member Director Update

Director Villaseñor reported that she summarized the SMC at the last City Council meeting and mentioned the City of Fillmore continues to waive the water non-payment penalties and water shut off orders for its customers during the COVID-19 period. The City has extended the deadline for another 120 days or until the Governor officially ends the emergency declaration. She also mentioned community members stepped up and promoted vaccination, and Fillmore now has its own vaccination clinic.

United Water Conservation District Member Director Update

Vice Chair McFadden stated he had nothing to report.

County of Ventura Member Director Update

Chair Long reported she has forwarded the GDE Technical Memo for County staff review. She also mentioned that County is now in the red tier at the COVID-19 one year anniversary.

2B Executive Director Update

Information Item

Executive Director Anthony Emmert provided an update stating open groundwater invoices are down from \$57,000 in November 2020 overall, but one customer with two wells represents almost \$23,000 of the receivables total. He stated that the pumper is being sued by United for non-payment. He reported that staff timely submitted progress report seven and invoice to the Department of Water Resources. DWR requested edits to progress report seven and staff are currently making edits and will return the report to DWR this week. Mr. Emmert mentioned the United staff are proceeding with documentation for the expanded Regional Groundwater Model, with a target date of the end of April 2021. He also mentioned a few future agenda items to be added for next month's agenda.

2C Legal Counsel Update

Information Item

Legal Counsel Steve O'Neill provided an update stating he has been working with staff on the monitoring wells project, providing some well drilling contract templates and easement agreements for the well sites. He said that his firm received a favorable court decision in recent groundwater litigation adjudication. He stated that this documentation will help in providing guidance on decision making regarding customers who are delinquent in their payments to Fillmore Piru Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

2D GSP Consultant Update

Information Item

Mr. Tony Morgan from Daniel B Stephens & Associates provided an informational update regarding the Groundwater Dependent

Ecosystems (GDE) Technical Memo that was posted on the website for stakeholder review and comment. Consultants have been working on many aspects of the GSPs, analyzing and reanalyzing information as they develop the SMC matrix for presentation to the Board. He stated there is no update on the Monitoring Wells Project, as they wanted to focus more on the SMCs, but will provide an update at the next meeting.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine by the Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Board member pulls an item from the Calendar. Pulled items will be discussed and acted on separately by the Board. Members of the public who want to comment on a Consent Calendar item should do so under Public Comments.

3A Approval of Minutes

The Board considered and approved the Minutes from the Board Meeting of February 18, 2021.

3B Approval of Warrants

The Board approved payment of outstanding vendor invoices.

Daniel B. Stephens & Associates	\$119,477.76
Ventura County IT Services	\$686.50
Olivarez Madruga Lemeiux O'Neill	\$1,983.50

3C Monthly Financial Report

The Board received the Agency's monthly profit and loss statement and balance sheet.

Motion to approve Consent Calendar items, Director Villaseñor; Second, Vice Chair McFadden. Roll call vote: six ayes (Kimball, Chair Long, Vice Chair McFadden, Meneghin, Pace, Villaseñor); none opposed. Motion carries 6/0.

4. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

4A Presentation on Groundwater Ecosystem

Informational

The Board received a presentation from Christian Braudrick, PhD, Fluvial Geomorphologist, with Stillwater Sciences, on the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Technical Memorandum (see attached slides).

Director Meneghin asked about impacts to the Sespe Cienega, specifically if any conclusions or assumptions were being made around conservation releases, drought, or pumping, as there were conservation releases from Santa Felicia Dam within the years mentioned. Dr. Brodrick explained his theory behind what he presented.

Vice Chair McFadden asked a related question and pointed out the map presented on the normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) for the Sespe Cienega. Dr. Brodrick explained his theory as presented and Bruce Orr from Stillwater Science also joined the discussion providing his input on the subject.

Chair Long asked if *Arundo donax* is an invasive plant and why are the consultants giving it any credit in the NDVI analysis. She stated that many organizations are paying to remove it. Dr. Brodrick replied that the plant is not given credit, it is just there, and they are ongoing efforts to control the *Arundo*.

Director Meneghin asked Dr. Orr about the regeneration of *Arundo* after the drought. Dr. Orr explained his observations on the subject.

4B Presentation on Draft Sustainable Management Criteria Matrix

Informational

The Board received a presentation from Mr. Tony Morgan of Daniel B. Stephens & Associates on the SMC matrix (see attached slides).

Director Meneghin stated that by following the SMC table, the GSA is going to be impacting Groundwater Depended Ecosystems on the Sespe Cienega during future drought conditions and made suggestions

for what she felt would help meet the SMC goals listed, along with other questions on what was presented. Mr. Morgan explained his reasoning on the information used in his presentation.

Vice Chair McFadden asked both Mr. Morgan and Director Meneghin about the Fish Hatchery plans. Mr. Morgan stated he did not have any information and Director Meneghin stated she has only heard rumors of them not being operational in the future and mentioned other restoration is planned within that general site. Vice Chair McFadden asked if the GSA was relying on the water outflows from the Fish Hatchery operations to support the Sespe Cienega. Director Meneghin stated that the restoration area is going to be regraded and replanted and recommended that the GSA review the restoration plan at future Board meeting. Chair Long stated she had heard that the restoration area will be regraded but will not have a higher water demand.

4C. Stakeholder Input and Discussions on Draft Sustainable Management Criteria Matrix

Informational

The Board and consultant team received stakeholder input on the draft Sustainable Management Criteria matrix.

4D Summarize Workshop Stakeholder Input

Mr. Bryan Bondy stated that Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems tend to occur in the context of surface water flow and recommended focus on the specific criteria for surface water depletion.

Director Kimball mentioned it is clear from the stress test model runs that these basins fill rapidly and effectively, and it would be the Pumpers' recommendation to have the groundwater storage reduction minimum threshold match the minimum thresholds or groundwater elevation and provided a brief explanation of the Pumpers' discussion.

Director Pace added the pumpers are assuming that the model shows that it does refill, and as long it does refill, that is what makes more sense to the Pumpers.

Mr. Bondy summarized the comment letter provided by the Pumpers.

Participant chat question, “if land subsidence is not an issue, is it necessary to use the continuous Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) monitoring system?”

Mr. Bondy answered on chat, stating the benefit of the GPS monitoring is to make sure the GSA can properly interpret the satellite data should there be land movement and prevent an incorrect conclusion that land movement caused by tectonics is due to groundwater pumping.

Vice Chair McFadden asked if the Pumpers are suggesting we change the Minimum Thresholds and Measurable Objectives to what Mr. Bondy is suggesting. Director Pace replied yes, that is what the pumpers think are reasonable numbers to be taken into consideration. Vice Chair McFadden said he agreed on the recommendations.

Mr. Bondy mentioned that Tony Morgan has proposed one foot per year, and the GSA should consider the basis that Mr. Morgan has for the one foot per year. Mr. Morgan explained why he made that choice.

Director Kimball stated in the next five years, the GSA needs to consider having a study done to identify what is the critical infrastructure that might be affected by subsidence, as it needs to know where they are and what sensitivity they have.

Participant chat question, “is it likely that the overall footprint of Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE's) is currently larger due to more water in the basins because of new water introduced into Ventura County from LA County Sanitation District annually over the last 50 years?”

Dr. Brodrick replied by sharing his screen and providing an explanation supported by a previous slide and invited Dr. Orr to provide his input.

Chair Long asked Dr. Orr various questions and Dr. Orr provided responses for her clarification.

Board members had an extensive discussion on different aspects of the information provided by Stillwater, and Dr. Orr provided answers to all their questions and concerns.

Participant chat statement, “I would like to continue to encourage the board to always be as aggressive as possible when finalizing these Sustainable Management Criteria’s SMCs, we have very resilient basins, and it would be prudent to make sure we do not artificially limit ourselves.”

Participant chat statement, “I agree with previous statement, everything presented here indicates we have very resilient basins and there is no need to set unnecessary limits.”

Vice Chair McFadden asked Dr. Brodrick about the table of groundwater dependent species. He wanted to make sure which plants were mentioned in the report. Dr. Brodrick stated the species mentioned in the report are named in the table. Dr. Orr joined the discussion and provided more clarity on the question asked.

Director Meneghin requested Dr. Brodrick share the GDEs that he is referencing. Dr. Brodrick did not reply.

Director Pace mentioned there are still a lot of conversations to be had to determine what is significant and unreasonable, to help make a decision as to what is critical and how the GSA stays within its guidelines.

Director Kimball echoed the same and thanked Dr. Brodrick on the report and stated the GSA needs input from environmental stakeholders.

Director Meneghin stated the delay in the release of the GDE Technical Memo made it impossible to provide any input from the environmental organizations at this time, but would encourage the submittal of comment letters.

Participant chat comment, “I also agree with Rachel's comment regarding our resilient basins even to the extent that I am almost ready to reverse my support of continual GPS monitoring of Subsidence for the Piru Basin and that maybe it should be declared as ‘Not Applicable’ because much of the Piru Basin soil profile where many of our wells are located is mostly comprised of sand, gravel, rock and very little clay, therefore, we need to be very careful to set minimum thresholds and measurable objectives for Subsidence that may or may not be necessary given a very stable basin that is

not very expansive, I understand the potential that any subsidence truly be attributed to plate tectonics and not subsidence.”

Motion to receive and file, Meneghin; Second, Pace. Roll call vote: six ayes (Kimball, Chair Long, Vice Chair McFadden, Meneghin, Pace, Villaseñor); none opposed. Motion carries 6/0.

5. MOTION ITEMS

5A Sustainable Management Criteria Development

Motion

The Board did not approve the Sustainable Management Criteria matrix for use in developing the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

No action taken by the Board at this time.

5B Special Board Meeting on Sustainable Management Criteria

Motion

The Board selected April 1st as the date for the Special Board Meeting of a Sustainable Management Criteria matrix, should the matrix not be approved during the current Board meeting.

Motion to approve April 1, as the date for a Special Board meeting on SMC matrix, Director Meneghin; Second, Director Kimball. Roll call vote; six ayes (Kimball, Chair Long, Vice Chair McFadden, Meneghin, Pace, Villaseñor); none opposed. Motion carries 6/0.

FUTURE TOPICS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

None mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:45 pm

Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m. to the next **Regular Board Meeting** on Thursday, **April 15, 2021** or call of the Chair.

ATTEST:



Kelly Long, Chair, FPB GSA Board of Directors

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Fillmore and Piru Basins Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Board of Directors meeting of March 18, 2021.

ATTEST:



Eva Ibarra, Clerk of the Board