



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING SESSION
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024
1:30 PM**

(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Building Boardroom at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California, and by Zoom teleconference, at 1:30 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call.

Committee members in attendance were District 1 Erin Gil and District 2 James Provenzano, District 4 Sheila Barry and Brent Bonino, District 5 Trevor Garrod, District 6 Robert Long, Loma Prieta Resource Conservative District and Vice Chairperson Peter Van Dyke, and District 5 and Chairperson presiding, Jan Garrod constituting a quorum of the Committee.

District 1 Mitchell Mariani and Santa Clara County Farm Bureau Dhruv Khanna arrived as noted below.

Committee member not in attendance in person was District 6 Tim Chiala.

Staff members in attendance were: Aaron Baker, Luan Buckley, Justin Burks, Olivia Cobb, Enrique De Anda, Vanessa De La Piedra, Vincent Gin, Walter Gonzalez, Andrew Gschwind, Brian Hopper, Cindy Kao, Candice Kwok-Smith, Emelia Lamas, Becky Manchester, Nick Mascarello, Brian Mendenhall, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Don Rocha, Breanne Roderick, Desiree Sausele, Ashley Shannon, Kirsten Struve, Darin Taylor, Gregory Williams, and Jing Wu.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Directors Jim Beall, Board Alternate (District 4), Richard Santos (District 3), and John L. Varela (District 1).

Public in attendance: Valley Water Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7), and Tim Chiala (AWAC, District 6).

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chairperson Garrod declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no one present who wished to speak.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3.1. Approval of October 2, 2023 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the October 2, 2023 Committee meeting.

Mitchell Mariani and Dhruv Khanna arrived.

Vice Chairperson Peter Van Dyke requested further discussion on climate change and carbon sequestration; and Erin Gil requested further discussion on the materials identified as Handout: Agenda Item 4.3 from the AWAC October 2, 2023 meeting and the addition of climate change and ecosystem benefits on agricultural in Santa Clara County on the AWAC work plan.

Vincent Gin confirmed staff will follow up on this matter on a future agenda.

Director Varela noted monthly attendance with Directors Santos and Beall at the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority Board meetings and encouraged AWAC members to attend.

Director Santos noted Aaron Baker could follow up on AWAC's request for further discussion on climate change and carbon sequestration and noted support for AWAC networking with other agriculture legislative bodies regarding these topics.

Director Beall noted the California Air Resource Board as a potential resource for programs, funding and analysis for carbon sequestration and the agriculture sector.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Erin Gil and seconded by Jim Provenzano and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved.

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

4.1. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Recommendation: Elect 2024 Chair and Vice Chairperson.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Mitchell Mariani and seconded by Dhruv Khanna and unanimously carried that Peter Van Dyke would become the 2024 Chairperson; and it was moved by Erin Gil and seconded by Chairperson Peter Van Dyke that Trevor Garrod would become the 2024 Vice Chairperson.

4.2. Review and Approve 2023 Annual Accomplishments Report for Presentation to the Board (Committee Chair).

Recommendation: A. Approve the 2023 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board; and
B. Provide comments to the Committee Chair to share with the Board as part of the Accomplishments Report presentation pertaining to the purpose, structure, and function of the Committee.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Aaron Baker and Darin Taylor were available to answer questions.

Public Comments: None.

It was moved by Jan Garrod and seconded by Erin Gil and unanimously carried that the following Recommendation A be approved with an amendment to Item #9 on page 26 of Attachment 1 to include the language that the Board approved the Committee's recommendation at its May 16, 2023 meeting to keep the agricultural rates flat for one year.

Recommendation: A. Approve the 2023 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board.

The 2023 Annual Accomplishments Report was presented and accepted at the March 26, 2024 Board meeting.

4.3. Review and Provide Comment to the Board on Staff's Preliminary Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Groundwater Production Charges.

Recommendation: Review staff's preliminary Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Groundwater production charges and provide comment to the Board as appropriate.

Carmen Narayanan reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Carmen Narayanan, Kirsten Struve, Vincent Gin, and Aaron Baker were available to answer questions.

The Committee provided feedback noting interest in the inclusion of inflation consequences, potential for storm water capture, and carbon sequestration in the presentation to the Board, support for keeping water rates the same and the potential for big and small projects.

Director Santos noted costs of operation went up in all areas which accounts for the charges and encouraged increasing AWAC's relations with legislators for support.

Director Varela encouraged AWAC members to meet with elected officials and noted per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a current costly water issue.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Dhruv Khanna and seconded by Erin Gil and unanimously carried that the Committee recommend to the Board to hold the agricultural groundwater rate unchanged at 36.85 per acre foot.

It was moved by Dhruv Khanna and seconded by Erin Gil for the inclusion of 3 information slides to be presented to the Board regarding ecosystem benefits of groundwater recharge, climate change, and inflation. No vote was taken.

Darin Taylor confirmed this was a preliminary analysis agenda item which will return on the April 2024 agenda for further discussion.

4.4. Receive Information and Provide Feedback on the Development of Valley Water's Water Supply Master Plan 2050.

Recommendation: Provide feedback on the development of Water Supply Master Plan 2050.

Jing Wu reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo and per the information contained in Attachment 3.

Jing Wu, Aaron Baker, Vincent Gin, Kirsten Struve, and Cindy Kao were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee confirmed the contract with Semitropic Water District has an upcoming expiration to be renegotiated, past pump back programs have been successful during droughts, and Valley Water is looking into diversifying water banking outside the county.
- The Committee confirmed the increased cost benefits from Anderson reservoir as central to the drought emergency water supply; and staff is currently working on accelerating and streamlining the project.
- The Committee noted the potential for receiving an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for agricultural purposes.
- The Committee confirmed staff provided the pre-feasibility study for stormwater agricultural land recharge projects previously and will provide potential places once identified back to the Committee.

Director Varela noted that Valley Water is involved with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) where 450 water agencies collaborate on legislation.

Director Santos noted the significance of accelerated project times per cost increases and the limited funding for recycled water from the state.

4.5. One Water Plan Upper Pajaro Watershed Plan Priority Actions.

- Recommendation:
- A. Receive information about development of the One Water Upper Pajaro Watershed Plan; and
 - B. Review and provide input on One Water Upper Pajaro Watershed Plan Priority Actions.

Brian Mendenhall reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo; and Nick Mascarello reviewed the information contained in Attachment 2.

Brian Mendenhall and Nick Mascarello were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee confirmed staff is continuing to identify flood control projects while looking to enhance or restore the environment and encouraged the planting of more trees in the Stanford and Palo Alto area.
- The Committee noted support of the inclusion of the potential cost benefits to be received back from the cities for flood planning and utilizing working landscapes for fire suppression and water retention.
- The Committee confirmed that staff anticipates incorporating feedback, finalizing the plan, and presenting to the Board in around 2 to 3 months.

4.6. Review Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Work Plan, the Outcomes of Board Action of Committee Requests; and the Committee's Next Meeting Agenda.

Recommendation: Review the Committee work plan to guide the committee's discussions regarding policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee noted support to receive a future update on the One Water Plan noted under Item 4.5 and inclusion of water retention of grasslands versus brushlands.
- The Committee reconfirmed request for further discussion on the materials identified as Handout: Agenda Item 4.3 from the AWAC October 2, 2023 meeting regarding climate change and carbon sequestration at the next meeting.

5. INFORMATION ITEM:

5.1. Standing Items Report

Recommendation: This item allows the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee to receive verbal or written updates and discuss the Board's Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Work Plan Strategies. These items are generally informational; however, the Committee may request additional information and/or provide collective input to the assigned Board Committee.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the attached Board Work Plan standing items report.

6. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS:

This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.

Nicole Merritt confirmed formal approval action taken on election of 2024 Chairperson Peter Van Dyke and Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod under Item 4.1; approval of 2023 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board with amendment to Item #9 on page 26 under Item 4.2; approval of keeping agricultural groundwater rate unchanged at 36.85 per acre foot and request to include information regarding groundwater recharge, climate change, and inflation in future update under Item 4.3; feedback provided on water supply master plan and One Water Plan updates under Items 4.4 and 4.5 and request for a future agenda item for follow up discussion regarding the climate change and carbon sequestration under Item 4.6.

7. REPORTS:

7.1. Director's Report
None.

7.2. Manager's Report
None.

7.3. Committee Member Report
Dhruv Khanna shared thoughts regarding environmental groups and climate change and the continued collaboration between Valley Water and AWAC.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted support of staff's work and the Committee noted unanimous gratitude for Glenna Brambill's previous Committee Clerk support and welcomed Nicole Merritt.

7.4. Information Links:
Links noted on agenda.

8. ADJOURN:

8.1. Adjourn to Special Meeting at 1:30 p.m. on April 8, 2024.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 3:59 p.m., to the special meeting at 1:30 p.m. on April 8, 2024.

Date approved: April 8, 2024

Nicole Merritt
Assistant Deputy Clerk II