



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

# MINUTES

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

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(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, District 2 James Provenzano, District 3 Jared Mandrell, District 4 Brent Bonino, District 5 Jan Garrod, District 6 Robert Long, Santa Clara County Farm Bureau Dhruv Khanna, District 5 and Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod, and Loma Prieta Resource Conservative District and Chairperson presiding, Peter Van Dyke constituting a quorum of the Committee.

District 4 Sheila Barry arrived as noted below.

Committee members not in attendance in person were District 1 Mitchell Mariani and District 6 Tim Chiala.

Staff members in attendance were: Aaron Baker, Luan Buckley, Justin Burks, Vanessa De La Piedra, Walter Gonzalez, Jason Gurdak, Michele King, Candice Kwok-Smith, Emelia Lamas, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Nicholas Simard, Kirsten Struve, Darin Taylor, Sana Wazit and Tina Yoke.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Directors Jim Beall (District 4), and Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3).

Public in attendance were: Valley Water Directors Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7) and John L. Varela (District 1), Tim Chiala (AWAC, District 6), and Julie Morris (University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources).

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

Chairperson Van Dyke 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 January 8, 2024 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.**

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the January 8, 2024 Committee meeting.

Dhruv Khanna noted a request for additional details under Item 7.3 on page 17.

Nicole Merritt confirmed the request would be discussed with the Clerk of the Board and was subsequently directed after the meeting by the Clerk of the Board to add language to the Committee Minutes stating:

For full meeting record, please review meeting videos at:

<http://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/committees/board-advisory-committees>.

Public Comments:  
None.

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Garrod and seconded by Erin Gil and carried by majority vote that the minutes be approved. Dhruv Khanna opposed the motion.

**4. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**4.1. Review Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Groundwater Production Charges and Provide Feedback.**

Recommendation: Review proposed FY 2024-25 groundwater production charges and provide feedback.

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

Sheila Barry arrived.

Carmen Narayanan, Darin Taylor, Aaron Baker, Kirsten Struve,

Vanessa De La Piedra, Director Beall and Director Santos were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:  
None.

The Committee discussed the following topics: the maximum proposed agricultural water rate \$39.80 across all four zones, Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit's operational capacity, water rights, and retrofit of the fish ladder at the Coyote percolation pond, water rates per public safety, ecosystem benefits, and the impact on the low-income community, Delta Conveyance project participation costs, open space credits used solely for maintaining low agriculture rates, Sisk Dam Raise project financial involvement, Pacheco Reservoir Expansion project, and Water Supply Master Plan status updates, cofferdam regulatory restrictions, flood protection permitting processes, wetlands restoration, status of groundwater conditions in South County W-5, Calero Dam Seismic Retrofit project status update, subsidence and groundwater banking, current impacts on small reservoirs, community outreach/education, meeting with elected officials, and time frame of potential consultant report for ecosystem benefits-climate change/carbon sequestration/carbon dioxide cleansing/removal if Board approved.

The Committee received the information and noted the following:

- The Committee noted the legislation outreach potential of the Farm Bureau and the Board Representatives collaborating with Valley Water's Office of Government Relations on an invitation letter to the California State Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas to attend a future Farm Bureau meeting and support for additional information on the Calero Dam Seismic Retrofit Project.

It was moved by Dhruv Khanna and seconded by Erin Gil and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board to suspend any increases to the agriculture groundwater production water charges until the Board approves a consultant to conduct an updated accounting/mathematical study quantifying the ecosystem benefits including climate change, carbon sequestration, and carbon dioxide cleansing/removal of agricultural uses.

The Committee subsequently received after the meeting the Monthly Groundwater Condition Report for April 2024 and were provided the public link to access the future published groundwater updates.

4.2. Receive and Discuss Information on the Urban Heat Islands and Agricultural Carbon Sequestration.

Recommendation: Receive and discuss information on urban heat islands and agricultural carbon sequestration.

Samantha Greene reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and Julie Morris reviewed the information contained in Attachment 1.

Samantha Greene and Julie Morris were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:  
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and discussed the following topics: urban heat island impact, cost sharing versus big and small farms, potential of banning fake grass/turf and encouragement of pro-farming programs in the Palo Alto/Stanford area, and potential federal funding for climate smart practices.

4.3. Discuss the Potential of Forming a Subcommittee for the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC).

Recommendation: Discuss the potential of forming an AWAC subcommittee per the Committee's approval at the January 9, 2023 meeting.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:  
None.

Director Beall and Director Santos were available to answer questions.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted support for an AWAC subcommittee to promote productivity and communication. No specific purpose was confirmed for the Subcommittee at this time and support was noted for a Committee survey to confirm potential topics.

4.4. 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.

Kirsten Struve, Director Beall, and Director Santos were available to answer questions.

It was moved by Jan Garrod and seconded by Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod for the review of population growth versus water use and confirm the justification for the project capital costs when the water use is flat or slightly increasing to be addressed by the Water Supply Master Plan Update at a future meeting. The Committee noted support for the agenda item relating to the Unhoused with a County update to also be addressed at a future meeting.

**5. 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 the approval of the January 8, 2024 AWAC minutes with the request for additional comments on page 17 under Item 3.1; the Committee support for additional information regarding the Calero Dam, Seismic Retrofit Project and the monthly groundwater condition staff reports noted outreach potential for invitation letter to the California State Assembly Speaker Robert Revas, and confirmed formal approval of recommendation to suspend any increases to the agriculture groundwater production water charges until available updated mathematical study under Item 4.1; received and provided feedback and noted potential for banning fake grass/turf in Palo Alto/Stanford area under Item 4.2; noted support of subcommittees under Item 4.3; and formal approval of the review of population growth, water use, and capital costs for a future agenda and support for the Unhoused agenda item to also be addressed at a future meeting.

**6. REPORTS:**

- 6.1. Director's Report  
Director Beall noted attendance on the Delta Conveyance project tour.
- 6.2. Manager's Report  
Aaron Baker noted the lower imported water allocations for the state.
- 6.3. Committee Member Report  
Dhruv Khanna noted support for Valley Water seeking out public funding and concern regarding expenditures for Valley Water's public relations/advertising and investigations.
- 6.4. Information Links:  
Links noted on agenda.

**7. ADJOURN:**

- 7.1. Adjourn to Regular Meeting at 1:30 p.m. on July 1, 2024.

Chairperson Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m., to the regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. on July 1, 2024.

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