

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2024**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, September 13, 2024 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): Kirk Jensen, Alternate Director; Jarrett Martin, General Manager

San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): Cannon Michael, Director; John Wiersma, General Manager

Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD): Mike Stearns, Vice-Chair; Jeff Bryant, General Manager (via teleconference)

Columbia Canal Company (CCC): Chris Cardella, Chair; Mike Gardner, General Manager

STAFF MEMBERS:

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

PRESENT:

Andrew McClure, Minasian Law; and David Cory, Consultant

The following participated via Conference Call:

Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard; and Don Wright, Journalist

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Cardella called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m., and asked Manager Wiersma to lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

There were no proposed changes to the Agenda.

The Executive Director recognized Aldo Sansoni, who recently passed away, and read an excerpt from the Resolution passed in 2016 acknowledging his many years as an agriculture and water resources advocate, in addition to his 40 plus years as a Director on the San Luis Canal Company Board. Chair Cardella followed by asking for a moment of silence in his memory.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The unapproved minutes from the August 2, 2024 Regular Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Director Michael to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Introductions were provided by those participating in person and via teleconference.

BOARD TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 2024 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joann White provided a summary of the August 2024 Expenditure List and Financial Report.

Following her report, a motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Director Michael to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

WATER REPORT:

The Water Resources Specialist began his report by stating that the San Joaquin River Restoration Program's (SJRRP) flows at Sack Dam through the summer have been at 90 cubic feet per second (cfs). He said that the program recently scheduled a pulse flow of 1,500 cfs from Friant for half a day, and then reduced to 400 cfs the following day. The purpose of the pulse flow was to wash out algae at the ponding area below Friant. There were 350 cfs at Sack Dam at the peak of the releases but was reduced and will continue to hold at 90 cfs until the next pulse flow release scheduled for November.

Mr. Hoffman, in reviewing the data included in his report, said that low point in San Luis Reservoir (SLR) was 865,000 acre feet (AF) on August 3rd. He then reported that releases began from upstream storage into Millerton in July and will continue through September. Upon review of Delta Operations, an extended discussion on Fall X2 concerns was held, and the actions taken by various agencies, districts and authorities to address the concerns was outlined.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director White referred to information included in the supplemental packet and provided a recap of the two letters with both responding to the Draft Environmental Impact

Statement for the Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP). He next provided an update on the discussions relating to the SJRRP's lack of funding and operational issues.

Manager Wiersma was asked to provide an update on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) activities. Manager Wiersma said that there had been a State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) meeting set for September 4th where Manager Martin, Ricardo Ortega of Grassland Water District and Merced County Board of Supervisor Scott Silveira were scheduled to speak. It has since been cancelled and they are now planning to make presentations at the October meeting. Discussions were held concerning the State Water Board's staff recommendations for the Tule Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency; the public hearing is scheduled for September 17, 2024. The Exchange Contractors continue to closely monitor these activities.

Mr. Wiersma concluded that the SWRCB staff has pushed back the hearing for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the second quarter in 2025.

Other matters briefly covered included the extension of the agreement between CCID, SLCC and Red Top Area parties; and the response submitted on the Notice of Preparation of a CEQA Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Aquaterra Water Bank project.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:

Steve Chedester provided an outline of his report that included updates on the SJRRP projects, estimated timeframes, and available grant funding options; Bay Delta Re-consultation on the Long-Term Operations of the CVP and State Water Project (SWP); SWRCB Phase 2; Voluntary Agreements; and Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

The Director of Policy & Programs said they received four protests to the Water Rights Permit for the Orestimba Creek project and are working through those responses. The electrical control panels are still on track to be received by the end of the year for this project, as well.

Chris White provided a brief update on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project noting no significant changes to activities from the previous month; the next Technical Review Board meeting is scheduled for November.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-03 – AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF UPDATED APPROVAL AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES BUREAU OF RECLAMATION CONCERNING GROUNDWATER BANKING OF WATER IN ROSEDALE RIO-BRAVO WATER STORAGE DISTRICT:

The Executive Director outlined the changes to the previous Approval Agreement and recommended approval of Resolution No. 2024-03.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Director Michael to approval Resolution No. 2024-03 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04 – APPROVING ISSUANCE OF 2024 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AWARDS:

Executive Director White explained that the Standing Committee had met twice, reviewed the proposed applications and made the following recommendation as proposed in Resolution No. 2024-04:

1. Award of \$125,000.00 to the City of Los Banos for the Installation of solar lighting along the HG Fawcett Canalside Trail, with a special condition of the funding contingent upon City of Los Banos obtaining authorization from CCID to install facilities on CCID lands, with the City of Los Banos to own, operate, maintain, repair, and reconstruct lighting.
2. Award of \$150,000.00 to the City of Newman for the installation of Stormwater Treatment Education, including Learning Plaza, Demonstration Pollinator Garden, Nature-themed Fitness Court, and Project Administration.
3. Award of \$180,000.00 to the City of Firebaugh for the rehabilitation of approximately 7,000 linear feet of existing pedestrian and bike trail adjacent to the Poso Canal and the San Joaquin River, with a special condition of the funding contingent upon City of Firebaugh obtaining authorization from CCID to install improvements on CCID lands.
4. Award of \$30,000.00 to the City of Gustine for the Infrastructure to aerate Schmidt Park Pond. Project to facilitate environmental benefits and recreational opportunities to the City’s Park.
5. Award of \$95,000.00 to the City of Gustine for the conversion of Borelli Basin detention pond to Groundwater Recharge Facility. Project to aid groundwater sustainability, flood mitigation, drought preparation, and water quality.

A motion was made by Director Michael and seconded by Vice-Chair Stearns to approve Resolution No. 2024-04 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Executive Director said notifications will be sent out to the recipients next week.

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

Consultant David Cory reviewed his report and provided some upcoming highlights that are being closely monitored.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

State: The Executive Director referred to Arc Strategies report included in the Board packet and reviewed information pertaining to new legislatures and planned visits to Sacramento to be

scheduled in the January - February timeframe. He also noted the information relating to Governor Newsom's activities.

Federal: Chris White provided some highlights from the federal lobbyist's report. He next mentioned the draft bill included in the Board packet proposed by Senator Padilla to authorize additional funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, in addition to the letter from Wade Crowfoot, California Secretary for Natural Resources Agency to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton reaffirming California's commitment to pursue funding for the SJRRP. He said that both documents support our position in finding additional funding for the SJRRP to complete the construction projects needed to protect the Exchange Contractors' operations under the implementation of the SJRRP.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Executive Director White referred to the Lighthouse Public Affairs report included in the Board packet.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Andrew McClure provided an update on the CSPA Groundwater cases following the submittal of the single Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Otherwise, he said he had no updates on the Friant Litigation or the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir CEQA filings.

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:

San Luis Canal Company: Manager Wiersma said that SLCC had a below average for deliveries in August; they are gearing up for off-season construction; and will be starting some flow testing to calibrate gates, looking at about 30 to 45 days to complete. He concluded by providing an update on their high groundwater mitigation project reporting that they received two comments to the CEQA document and are currently going through the review process.

Central California Irrigation District: Manager Martin said they will have some of their canals down around Thanksgiving for planned winter projects. They also plan to close down the Poso Canal after Thanksgiving to construct the canal crossing. Regarding demands, they were running high through August but dropping off due to harvest.

Columbia Canal Company: Manager Gardner said CCC deliveries were about 140 cfs with half turned off today. He is focusing on completing the 5-Year update of the Water Management Plan that is due to the Exchange Contractors by the end of October.

Firebaugh Canal Water District: Manager Bryant said the month of August was normal for water deliveries; they are prepping for winter construction projects and continue to work on the solar project. He said that FCWD were awarded grant funds that will be used to line two miles

of their third lift canal and adding a regulating reservoir at the end of their system. It will go out for bid at the end of the year.

INFORMATIONAL:

The Executive Director provided information for upcoming events.

Chair Cardella adjourned the meeting to a recess at 8:38 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

The meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 8:43 a.m.

The Chair returned the meeting to Open Session at 9:31 a.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel.

No further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 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

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR

KIRK JENSEN, ALTERNATE DIRECTOR

CANNON MICHAEL, DIRECTOR