

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY
HELD FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2024**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, October 4, 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): Eric Fontana, Director; Jarrett Martin, General Manager

San Luis Canal Company (SLCC): David Pruitt, Alternate Director

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

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

STAFF MEMBERS:

Chris White, Executive Director; 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:

Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard; Mitch Partovi, The Water Agency, Inc.; Don Wright, Journalist; Shane Swartz, Lower San Joaquin Levee District; Anne MacMillan and Landon Stropko, Invariant (9:00 – 9:20 a.m.); Kim Craig, Arc Strategies (9:00 – 9:20 a.m.); and Andy Lynch and Steve Hansen, Lighthouse Public Affairs (9:00 – 9:20 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Cardella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., and asked Manager Martin to lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

The Executive Director explained that the lobbyist firms, along with the public relation’s firm will be providing their quarterly report, and to accommodate their schedules, he asked to change

the order of the agenda, moving up agenda items 11 and 12 following agenda item 4 Public Participation. Chair Cardella acknowledged the change to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The unapproved minutes from the September 13, 2024 Regular Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Director Fontana and seconded by Vice-Chair Stearns to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

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

LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH QUARTERLY REPORT:

The Executive Director asked Anne MacMillan to provide a recap of activities in Washington D.C. during the past quarter. Ms. MacMillan said of course the upcoming election has been the main highlight. Currently, they are predicting a close election, and Congress will be back in lame duck following the election. She reported that Senator Padilla authored a bill to authorize additional funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), and the Exchange Contractors and Invariant provided input on the bill, in addition to sending a letter of support. The Exchange Contractors had the opportunity to provide a site tour of projects with Congressman Duarte's representative, Kyle Lombardi. Invariant will be working with Exchange Contractors to schedule a first quarter visit back to Washington following the election. Landon Stropko added that there are moving targets and a lot of unknowns.

Next, Mr. White reported that Dominic DiMare of Arc Strategies was unable to participate but provided highlights of activities on the State side. Mr. White reviewed the report for the Board.

Andy Lynch of Lighthouse Public Affairs outlined the activities which included posting pictures and stories on social media sites of the various tours that have been scheduled throughout the past couple of months; putting together talking statements and articles relating to the South of the Delta Drought Plan; and developing outreach messaging about the newly formed Community Infrastructure Fund including a press release announcing recipients of this year's grant funds and providing awareness for future year opportunities. They have also provided support on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act compliance efforts and continue to coordinate with both Arc Strategies and Invariant teams on Exchange Contractors' interests. Steve Hansen added that he had the opportunity to join the CALF Ag Leadership tour in August and expressed the benefits and opportunities provided as a result.

The Executive Director thanked all for providing the updates.

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

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

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

DRAFT PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET:

Executive Director White presented the draft 2025 Budget providing an outline of the projected expenses under the General, Water Transfer and Water Resources Plan – General Budgets. He said that the numbers included in the Water Resources Plan – Participation Agreement Budget still need to be refined and will be brought back next month following a review by the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Standing and Finance Committees. Regarding the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (SJVDA) Budget, the Authority’s budget year runs from March through February, and the final amount will not be determined until their budget is approved on or about February 2025. The amount included is a preliminary estimate received from the SJVDA.

Concluding his report, the Executive Director stated that he will be presenting the proposed budgets to each of the member entity boards during the month of October and will bring it back to the Board in November for adoption.

WATER REPORT:

The Water Resources Specialist reported that Exchange Contractors’ current demands are 2,228 cubic per second (cfs), noting the recent increase in demands due to continued high temperatures. The San Joaquin River Restoration Program target flows are 100 cfs. and Shasta storage is currently at 2,760,723 acre feet (AF). Mr. Hoffman stated that the Bill Jones Pumping Plant was at five units most of September with both state and federal pumps down to one unit for a couple of days to meet outflow requirements. San Luis Reservoir is currently at 1,013,304 AF, reporting the split between Federal and State as follows: Federal - 367,178 AF and State - 6746,126 AF.

Upon review of Delta Operations, there has been a good result with Fall X2 requirements being off ramped in October. Mr. Hoffman also reported on the outage at O’Neill causing Jones Pumping Plant to reduce to 4 pumps, but maintenance has been completed and they will be going back to 5 pumps today. He referred to the remainder of his report for the Board’s information.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Executive Director White reported on the various meetings regarding the SJRRP which included the Department of Interior (DOI), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Making better progress and acknowledging concerns

regarding shortage of funds continues to be recapped. San Luis Canal Company/Henry Miller Reclamation District continues to work out the details of the operation's agreement with Reclamation regarding the Sack Dam project.

Next, Mr. White highlighted some of the regulations being monitored affecting Delta operations and continue to track the operations into next year.

Manager Martin provided an update on the SGMA activities throughout the month including having an outreach meeting with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) staff with a follow up meeting scheduled for later in October. He then laid out a process in moving forward and the necessity of keeping landowners informed throughout this process as they will be receiving notice of the hearing from the SWRCB once it is scheduled. Legal Counsel McClure explained the problem with identifying well owners in the Tulare Lake Subbasin and ultimately the injunction that was filed by the Subbasin.

Jarrett Martin said that he, Ricardo Ortega of Grassland Water District and Merced County Board of Supervisor Scott Silveira recently provided presentations to the SWRCB, noting it was somewhat disappointing that no SWRCB SGMA staff members were in attendance.

The Executive Director next reported that CCID and SLCC continue to work on the extension of the agreement with Triangle T Water District/Red Top area parties, currently looking at the previous year's data to determine if an algorithm can be developed to establish parameters for the agreement.

Other matters briefly covered included transfers, the Comprehensive Drought Plan, and the progress of the Water Resources Plan projects.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:

Chris White provided his report previously under Agenda item 8 and had nothing further to report.

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

Consultant David Cory reviewed his report. Mr. Cory responded to Manager Martin's question about the expected time frame for implementation of the findings once the SWRCB Expert Panel is formed.

Mr. Cory next stated that there have been proposed administrative changes with the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (SJVDA). He said that San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority currently administers the SJVDA and SLDMWA is requesting to separate from those responsibilities and have the SJVDA run independently. They are working through this process to determine how it can be done without increasing costs.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Andrew McClure reported that they filed the last brief filing on the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir CEQA case and provided some background information pertaining to the filing.

FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:

Columbia Canal Company: Manager Gardner said CCC current demands are 95 cfs., average for this time of the year. They will be shutting down their system around November 20th for winter maintenance and he is working on completing the final draft of the 5-year Water Management Plan which will be brought to the board in October for approval.

Firebaugh Canal Water District: Manager Bryant said they had average deliveries through the summer months, and he is coordinating with growers on scheduling fall irrigation as they will be shutting down to do some work at the main pump station, along with other winter maintenance. Work continues on the solar project.

San Luis Canal Company: In Manager Wiersma's absent, Alternate Director Pruitt reported that SLCC will be shutting down around November 15th for maintenance and construction projects; noting they are still experiencing a hyacinth problem.

Central California Irrigation District: Manager Martin reported on a subsidence report provided by the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, – better trend at the Mendota Dam. With regard to the Los Banos Creek Recharge project, he said that San Luis Water District has made progress on the agreement with the landowner. CCID also continues to work on their solar project, noting that the transformer has been received and they are in the construction phase of the project.

INFORMATIONAL:

The Executive Director did not have anything to report.

Chair Cardella adjourned the meeting to a recess at 10:14 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

The meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 10:20 a.m.

The Chair returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:06 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 11:06 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

MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR

DAVID PRUITT, ALTERNATE DIRECTOR