

**SIERRA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SIERRA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
81059 HIGHWAY 70 BECKWOURTH, CA 96129
Monday, October 21, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.**

This meeting will also be available via Zoom Teleconferencing:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87847235864?pwd=YWFYaTErR1BUTjA3cHFiOHUvRTcydz09>

Meeting ID:
878 4723 5864
Passcode:
647657
By Phone:
+1 (669) 900-9128

Board of Directors
Einen Grandi, Chairman
Jim Roberti, Vice-Chairman
Dwight Ceresola, Director
Dave Goicoechea, Director
Matt Kilmurray, Director
Greg Ramelli, Director
Paul Roen, Director

MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL OF DIRECTORS

Chairman Grandi called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Directors present: Goicoechea, Roberti, Kilmurray, Ramelli, Roen

Directors absent: Ceresola

Also present: Doug Lawler, Bill Murtton, Jim Thomas, Betsy Elzufon, Jim Swann, Jim Thomas, Andrew McClure, Judie Talbot, Rick Roberti, and Laura Foglia

Via Zoom: Steve Reich, Jay Huebert, Tracey Ferguson, Debbie Spangler, Dwight Smith, Gus Tolley, Rebecca Smith, Carl Butz, David Shaw, Mark Woyshner, Tracy Schohr, Alexa Daniel, and Joel Barnard

2) PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY – limited to 5 minutes per speaker

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District Board of Directors at this time.

Jim Swann commented that the Kern River stopped flowing through Bakersfield and the public had no idea it was about to happen. He thinks that's why we're here; to prevent such things from happening because it can create problems for the public.

Rick Roberti commented that he recently had a friend come visit that hadn't been here in about 30 years and he asked how the Sierra Valley had stayed the same for all that time. Roberti would like to credit Boards like this and thanked the Directors for serving. He said it doesn't mean we don't want change; we just want to do the right thing. He believes we're experiencing the blessings from the foresight of those that were previously on the Board that are no longer here.

3) REPORTS

A. Meter Technician Report – Jay Huebert

Huebert took readings on October 5th. He said the monitoring wells are down a bit, but gradually recovering now that the pumping season has ended, which is anticipated for this time of year. The wells were higher last year, but there was a heavier winter and a cooler, wetter spring. The total ag pumping for the October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 water year was 7,813 acre-feet. He is collecting the municipal pumping numbers and will have those totals at next month's meeting.

Huebert is working with Your H20Pro to get the DMS 12 meter swapped out at Green Gulch.

B. DWR Update – Debbie Spangler

Spangler shared that DWR will be up in the Sierra Valley to take fall measurements next week. The State has halted funding for new monitoring wells under Technical Support Services, so while that well agreement has been sent to Sierra County for approval, it cannot be drilled until funding starts up again. She reported that there is still funding available for a continuous subsidence monitoring station. Director Roberti will talk to D&S Ranch about the possibility of placing a station near the elevation monument that is already on their property.

C. LWA Team Project Update – Laura Foglia

Betsy Elzufon, LWA Associate, said the recharge project permit application has been submitted to the State Water Board, so the team is waiting for them to issue the temporary permit. She shared that one of the requirements is that CDFW has to review the application projects, and they responded very positively to the report LWA submitted. Soil boring testing has begun at Bryan Williams' property, the Easley's property, and Richard Griffin's property.

D. Stetson & DRI Team Project Update – Steve Reich/Jim Thomas

Steve Reich, Principal of Stetson Engineers, provided an irrigation efficiency work update. Their team has been working with several irrigators to update pivot systems to improve water efficiency. Estimates are being gathered for Martin Goodwin to get two systems installed, Bar One would like to convert one pivot, and they're working with Goodwin Ranch to determine their needs. Systems will also be installed at McHenry's, Grandi's, and Roberti's. Reich is going to work with the irrigation efficiency ad hoc committee (Directors Grandi and Roberti) to make a list of recommended irrigation efficiency equipment, such as LEPA and LESA systems, orbiter sprinkler heads, in-line filters, remote sensing and metering on pivot heads, software tracking, and variable frequency drives (VFD) for center pivots.

Jim Thomas, Project Manager for DRI, shared that several soil moisture meters were installed over the summer and all are operational. Four stations are at Roberti Ranch and four stations are at Grandi Ranch. Fences have been installed around the stations where cows will be. He has talked to the manufacturer and they say the meters can stay out during the winter without freezing. They collected soil data with an auger, so they will be able to look at very specific soil sized distribution to see if the readings are different based on differing soils.

4) DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

A. Discussion with Andrew McClure, Minasian Law Office Regarding District Representation and Counsel

Andrew McClure, Partner and attorney with Minasian Law, attended the meeting to introduce himself to the Board. His firm is located in Oroville, CA and he primarily represents water and irrigation districts. He also represents the Last Chance Creek Water District in the Sierra Valley. Most of his clients are also now GSAs, so he has seen the process of writing, adopting, and implementing GSPs. He likes to attend meetings in person as much as possible, but it's up to the Board about whether he should attend meetings or not. He has read the SVGMD enabling legislation, JPA, and an annual report for SGMA. He shared that the District has a lot of founding power, plus GSA powers, and that nothing under SGMA takes away from the authority of the original legislation. The object is to do what's best, and what is sustainable and defensible, for landowners and the District. The Board thanked McClure for attending the meeting and said his services will mostly be used for phone calls and reviewing documents, beginning with the proposed amendments to Ordinance 18-01

Director Roen made a motion to approve the attorney-client fee contract with Minasian Law, Director Ramelli 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

B. Plumas/Sierra County Well Permit Application Review

1. Meadow Edge Park

Doug Lawler, Meadow Edge Park owner, provided the Board with an update on their permit application. They have reduced the development size from 151 units down to 50 additional units, which will cause a substantial drop in their acre-feet suggested use. Based on testing done by Balance Hydraulics, it doesn't look like any of the four wells will need to be upgraded at this time as they're getting plenty of water. To date they have conducted a 90-minute capacity study on all four wells with positive results. Last week they did an 8-hour pump test on well number four because it hasn't had a system update yet like well number three. They were able to pump 26,000 gallons in that 8-hour period, so that one well would be able to provide the water needed for the project. Balance Hydraulics will finish the final report soon.

Lawler asked the Board if one well test is sufficient to show capacity, or do the other three wells still need to be tested? He expressed the difficulty for occupants to have no water access for 24 hours for each test. There is also a narrow window of time when the aquifer is at its lowest to conduct these tests.

Dwight Smith, Principal Hydrogeologist for UES, shared that he has reviewed the letter from Balance Hydraulics. Based on what's been presented, he believes one pump test should be adequate at this location because all four wells appear to have very similar aquifer properties. The next step will be to predict draw down over time. Director Ramelli motion that Meadow Edge only needs to conduct one well pump test and not all four as previously directed, Director Roberti 2nd, discussion of Board concerns, no vote taken, motion and 2nd withdrawn.

The Directors expressed concerns over the potential impact to nearby existing wells, sustainability, and whether the additional water use is consistent with the District's objectives. Balance Hydraulics is compiling the test data and expects to have that analysis completed in the next week or two.

The Directors asked Smith to review the Balance Hydraulics report once it's completed and present his recommendations at the next Board meeting.

C. GSP Updates and Comments – Laura Foglia

Laura Foglia, GSP Project Manager, shared that she would like to begin addressing the comments made by the public and DWR to the District's GSP. Those comments should be addressed in the five-year GSP update, which is due in January 2027. However, the DWR implementation grant ends in April 2026, so Foglia would like to complete most of the update before then.

D. Irrigator's Workshop – Steve Reich

Reich provided the Board with the draft agenda for the irrigator's workshop. The workshop will be on Monday, November 18 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. with a quick break for food in the middle. There will be four presentations with time for questions. The presentation topics will be: On-Farm Efficiency; Irrigation Efficiency; Remote Sensing and Climatic Data; and Irrigation Application and Water Management. The next step will be to create a flyer and conduct public outreach.

E. Irrigation Efficiency Equipment and Installation Purchases for Grant Projects

The Board discussed which equipment will qualify for irrigation efficiency funding. Grandi stressed the importance of conveying to irrigators that an effort needs to be made to all do better and maintain equipment since the purpose is to save water. The irrigation efficiency ad hoc committee (Grandi, Roberti and Reich) will create a memo of eligible equipment purchases and installations. Director Roen also recommended working with the attorney to create a partnership agreement between the District and landowners, stating that the equipment will be taken care of.

1. Agri-Lines Irrigation Inc. Invoices

Director Goicoechea made a motion to approve the Agri-Lines Irrigation Inc. invoices for a total of \$31,535.10, Director Roen 2nd, motion passed, Directors Roberti, Kilmurray, Goicoechea, Ramelli, Roen in favor. Director Grandi abstained.

2. Isaacs & Associates Invoices

Director Goicoechea made a motion to approve the Isaacs & Associates invoices for a total of \$49,134.87, Director Roen 2nd, motion passed, Directors Kilmurray, Grandi, Goicoechea, Ramelli, Roen in favor. Director Roberti abstained

3. Roberti Ranch, Inc. Installation Quotes

The installation quotes were not approved. Roberti Ranch will need to use a contractor that is not associated with the SVGMD Board.

F. Ordinance 24-02 - Enacting a Large-Capacity Well Management Charge for FY24-25

Director Roberti made a motion to approve Ordinance 24-02, Director Kilmurray 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

5) CONSENT CALENDAR

All items on the Consent Calendar shall be considered routine and will be enacted by one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Board member requests that specific items be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate action. Any item removed from the consent calendar will be considered after the regular business items.

A. Approval of The Minutes as Read/Distributed for 9/16/24

B. Approve payment of bills and finance reports

Director Roen made a motion to approve the consent calendar, Director Goicoechea 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

6) ADJOURNMENT

Director Grandi adjourned the meeting at 8:39 PM

Jenny Gant, Board Clerk