



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2019
1:30 PM**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee was held on April 8, 2019, in the Headquarters Building Boardroom at the Santa Clara Valley Water District, 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair David Vanni called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm.

Members in attendance were:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Representative</u>
District 1	Russ Bonino
District 3	William Cilker
	David Vanni
District 4	Brent Bonino
District 5	Jan Garrod
	Michael Miller
District 6	Robert Long
District 7	Sandra Carrico*
Private Well Owner (Non Retail)	Dhruv Khanna
Santa Clara County Farm Bureau	Sheryl O. Kennedy
Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District	George Fohner

Member not in attendance was:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Representative</u>
District 1	Mitchell Mariani
District 2	James Provenzano

*Committee members arrived as noted below.

Board members in attendance were: Director Nai Hsueh, Board Alternate, Director Richard P. Santos, and Director John L. Varela, Board Representatives.

Staff members in attendance were: Hossein Ashktorab, Joseph Atmore, Lisa Bankosh, Glenna Brambill, Jerry De La Piedra, Vanessa De La Piedra, Samantha Greene, Eric Leitterman, Anthony Mendiola, Paul Randhawa, Afshin Rouhani and Darin Taylor.

New Member Mr. Brent Bonino of District 4 was introduced.

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

There was no one present who wished to speak.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Michael Miller, seconded by Ms. Sheryl Kennedy and unanimously carried to approve the January 7, 2019, Agricultural Water Advisory Committee meeting minutes, as presented.

4. STANDING ITEMS REPORT

Chair David Vanni and Director Nai Hsueh gave an overview of the new standing agenda item.

There was a question on Item #7 (Ensure Immediate Emergency Action Plans and Flood Protection are Provided for Coyote Creek), use of Hydro models, land uses, subsequent lands, use of ag lands and open space.

Mr. Afshin Rouhani was available to answer questions.

*Ms. Sandra Carrico arrived at 1:38 p.m.

The Committee took no action.

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1 REVIEW AND COMMENT TO THE BOARD ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2019-20 PROPOSED GROUNDWATER PRODUCTION CHARGES

Mr. Darin Taylor reviewed the materials as outlined in the agenda. The Protection and Augmentation of Water Supplies (PAWS) report was distributed.

Mr. Dhruv Khanna, Ms. Sheryl Kennedy, Director Richard P. Santos, Ms. Sandra Carrico, Mr. Jan Garrod and Director John L. Varela spoke on the following: Anderson Dam Retrofit, public safety, bond measures, property taxes, recycled water usage, Williamson Act properties, lowering of rates, keeping rates equal, water supply, the ad valorem tax, and additional meetings on the proposed groundwater production charges.

Mr. Afshin Rouhani, Mr. Hossein Ashktorab, Mr. Jerry De La Piedra were also available to answer questions.

The Committee took the following action:

It was moved by Mr. Dhruv Khanna, seconded by Ms. Sheryl Kennedy and the motion failed to approve that the Board reject the Committee's opposition to staff's proposal of 19.3% increase of groundwater production charge rate.

The motion failed: 3 Ayes, 5 Nays, 3 abstained.

5.2 UPDATE ON OPEN SPACE CREDIT

Mr. Joseph Atmore reviewed the materials as outlined in the agenda.

Ms. Sandra Carrico, Mr. Jan Garrod, Ms. Sheryl Kennedy, Mr. George Fohner, Directors John L. Varela and Richard P. Santos and Mr. Russ Bonino spoke on the following: growing leafy greens indoor; Valley Water putting pressure on retailers to keep rates low on water bills, staff was thanked for a thorough response on this issue, comprehensive ag land and flood protection value, is 10% a hard number, ag community taking the brunt of the increase, more Board hearings (meetings) on this issue, delaying increase for 2 years and concern about the Williamson Act properties.

Mr. Darin Taylor was available to answer questions.

The Committee took the following action:

It was moved by Ms. Shery Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Michael Miller, and unanimously carried that the Committee approve submitting the following letter to the Board of Directors, April 8, 2019:

The AWAC opposes the proposed changes in the Open Space Credit policy at this time.

Members of the AWAC currently have the understanding that:

- 1) Valley Water apparently at this time does not have a precise, comprehensive valuation of the benefits that agricultural lands and open space provide in Santa Clara County with respect to mitigating flood risk,
- 2) Valley Water apparently at this time does not have precise estimates of the effect on flood risk that would result from various levels of urbanization of agricultural lands and open space in Santa Clara County,
- 3) Diverting funding from the Open Space Credit for the purpose of flood control may be counterproductive, and maintaining agricultural lands and open space may be among the most cost effective means of mitigating flood risk,
- 4) Agricultural land that is not under Williamson Act or conservation easement is the land that is most at risk for conversion to non-agricultural use.
- 5) At the moment when the County of Santa Clara has just launched a comprehensive Agricultural Plan with state and county funding to sustain agriculture and retain its many important benefits, this would be an unfortunate time to raise the cost of groundwater to most agricultural producers by almost 20%, and would undermine the hoped-for trust and collaborative spirit among diverse interests that will be needed for success of the plan.
- 6) Headlines about the proposed reduction in Open Space Credit might well read: Valley Water hits farmers with 20% increase in water costs at time when county launches major effort to preserve threatened farming and open space and Valley Water's price hike to farmers in response to 2017 flooding may increase flood risks and costs.

The Committee took the following action:

It was moved by Ms. Shery Kennedy, no second was received, therefore, the motion failed, that the Committee approve urging the Valley Water Board to freeze agricultural groundwater production charges unless and until there are corresponding and material reductions in the county's land use development regulations of ag land.

5.3 USING OPEN SPACE TO CAPTURE AND RECHARGE STORMWATER

Ms. Samantha Greene reviewed the materials as outlined in the agenda

Mr. George Fohner and Mr. Jan Garrod spoke on the following: inviting staff to make a presentation on this topic at their agency and are there any studies on where the water goes.

Mr. Jerry De La Piedra and Ms. Vanessa De La Piedra were available to answer questions.

The Committee took no action.

5.4 REVIEW AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN, THE OUTCOMES OF BOARD ACTION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS; AND THE COMMITTEE'S NEXT MEETING AGENDA

Ms. Glenna Brambill Committee Liaison reviewed the materials as outlined in the agenda.

The Committee took no action.

6. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS TO THE BOARD

Ms. Glenna Brambill reported there was one action item for Board consideration.

Agenda Item 5.2

The Committee approved to send a letter to the Board with the following information:
April 8, 2019

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- 5) At the moment when the County of Santa Clara has just launched a comprehensive Agricultural Plan with state and county funding to sustain agriculture and retain its many important benefits, this would be an unfortunate time to raise the cost of groundwater to most agricultural producers by almost 20%, and would undermine the hoped-for trust and collaborative spirit among diverse interests that will be needed for success of the plan.
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Water's price hike to farmers in response to 2017 flooding may increase flood risks and costs.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Director's Report

Director John L. Varela reported on the following:

- Meeting on 4/10/19, 6:30 p.m., at the Morgan Hill Community Center to discuss an update on the Anderson Dam
- A public hearing on 4/11/19, 7:00 p.m. on groundwater production charges at the Morgan Hill City Chambers

Director Nai Hsueh reported briefly on the following:

- The Committee's July Agenda will discuss the Water Supply Master Plan which connects with the Board's 2020 focus

Director Richard P. Santos reported briefly on the following:

- Staff does a great job of providing information but ultimately, the Board, as elected officials, make decisions for Valley Water and are the ones to be held accountable

7.2 Manager's Report

Ms. Vanessa De La Piedra reported on the following:

- Water Supply and groundwater basins are in great shape

7.3 Committee Member Reports

Mr. Jan Garrod reported on the following:

- Concerned about the District and County not working together in land use matters. It was moved by Mr. Jan Garrod, second by Ms. Sandra Carrico, unanimously carried to have the Board of Directors be more proactive in working with the County regarding land use issues. Director Richard P. Santos advised the Committee that the Board of Directors will need to be advised about County meetings on these issues to be engaged.

Mr. Robert Long reported on the following:

- Planting of alfalfa—water wasn't pure enough for eating
Like to plant with clean water and how it's processed

7.4 Committee Member Reports

- None
- The Committee would like to receive Water Tracker reports in the future

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair David Vanni adjourned at 3:44 pm to the next regular meeting on Monday, July 1, 2019, at 1:30 pm, in the Santa Clara Valley Water District Headquarters Building Boardroom.

Glenna Brambill
Board Committee Liaison
Office of the Clerk of the Board

Approved: 7-1-19