

**SIERRA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SIERRA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
81059 HIGHWAY 70 BECKWOURTH, CA 96129
Monday, September 16, 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 6:12 PM
Directors present: Ceresola, Goicoechea, Roberti, Kilmurray, Ramelli, Roen
Directors absent: none
Also present: Ben Volk, Judie Talbot, Betsy Elzufon, Jay Huebert, Jim Swann, Dwight Smith, Gus Tolley, Tracey Ferguson, and Laura Foglia
Via Zoom: Steve Reich, Rob Thorman, Matt Bromley and Rebecca Smith

2) PUBLIC HEARING

Adoption of an Ordinance Enacting a Management Charge for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

The Board of Directors will hear comments from the public regarding SVGMD's proposed ordinance to fix a large capacity well management charge for the fiscal year 2024-2025 for the purpose of paying the costs of initiating, carrying on, and completing all of the powers, projects, and purposes for which the District is organized, fixed at \$100.00 per well per year.

The public hearing was opened at 6:13 p.m.

Director Roen asked if reducing the charge from \$200 to \$100 will affect the District's budget? The Board Chair responded that this would only affect the designated meter fund and there are substantial meter funds that will support the reduction this year.

The public hearing was closed at 6:14 p.m.

3) 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 shared that he enjoyed at the last meeting the acknowledgement that there's a point of subsidence, but wanted to note that the land that's probably 18" down is hundreds of meters and undulates like the bottom of a lake. The point on the map that shows a foot down of subsidence could be a thousand acres. He said subsidence happens because of the ag wells pumping water and it's hard to get that land back. He said he is bringing it up is because the water has been pulled down north of Maddalena Road. There used to be artesian wells that fed cattle to graze, but no one puts cattle up there in the hills anymore without water.

4) REPORTS

A. Meter Technician Report – Jay Huebert

Director Roen made a motion to amend the agenda and move to item 5B as the first discussion item, Director Goicoechea 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

Huebert took readings on September 1st. He shared that monitoring well levels are typically at their lowest point in August and then begin to come back up at the beginning of September when wells aren't pumped as much. A few of the monitoring wells (e.g. MW4) tend to continue dropping until early January/February and then start to come back up. He reported that compared to previous years, this is a pretty typical year. The pumping total for ag wells for this water year so far is 6,456 acre-feet.

Huebert researched options for DMS 12 at Green Gulch but was unable to find an option with a cable to place the meter higher up. Other options include using a spare prop meter or a magmeter that are already in the District's inventory. The Board directed Huebert to pull out the current meter, plate it for the winter, and put it back on in the spring. He will call Your H2OPro to come and do work on the spool and meter.

B. DWR Update – Debbie Spangler

Spangler was unable to attend the meeting – no update.

C. Grant Work Plan and Timeline – Judie Talbot

Judie Talbot, GSA Facilitator, is continuing to adjust the grant timeline based on last month's discussion and is working on a look ahead schedule for three months in advance that can be used for planning purposes.

D. LWA Team Project Update – Laura Foglia

Laura Foglia, GSP Project Manager, shared that the LWA team has begun working on the well inventory component of the DWR grant, which is a GSP requirement. They are working on using available data and maps to develop the website. A re-evaluation of the SVGMD Plan is due by January 2027, but will need to be done in 2026 before the grant ends. The team is revamping the model to have a better simulation of the future climate. She would like to review DWR's comments on the Plan at next month's meeting. They are still in the evaluation phase of what can be done for recharge projects. Based on last year's project, the data showed that it was a promising area for recharge. The current task is to submit the permit application because nothing can be done without the permit. Director Roberti suggested the District should use some of the irrigation efficiency grant funding to incentivize cleaner pumping from surface water instead of groundwater. Roberti Ranch had a new sprinkler package put onto pivot 2 for the Plumas Watershed grant demonstration project. He said that pivot was one of the worst plugging pivots before, but the new system has better filtering and it is not plugging up, which is making a huge difference.

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

Steve Reich, Principal of Stetson Engineers, reported he will be coming this week to follow up with a few ranches for assessments. The ad hoc committee formed at last month's Board meeting (Reich, Chairman Grandi and Director Roberti) met and discussed irrigation efficiency projects for the Plumas Watershed and DWR grants. For the Plumas Watershed demonstration project, Stetson plans to get everything metered and setup this fall to have control measurements taken next summer, and then convert sprinkler systems in the fall of 2025. Matt Bromley, DRI, shared that soil moisture meters have been installed and the team is working with remote sensing data to develop evapotranspiration rates, which will be used to compare pumping data in multiple fields.

F. Drought Resiliency Meeting with Plumas and Sierra Counties

The Board clerk reported that the committees from Plumas and Sierra Counties were not ready for a meeting tonight. Director Goicoechea suggested the domestic well inventory could be beneficial to the Counties' plans. Tracey Ferguson recommended talking to the Environmental Health Departments in each County for their GIS data.

5) DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

A. Plumas/Sierra County Well Permit Application Review (if any)

1. Domestic well in Beckwourth

One domestic well in Beckwourth was approved by the Chairman on September 3, 2024.

2. Bar One Cattle Company Replacement Well

Chairman Grandi gave Bar One's completed SVGMD well application to the Board clerk, which he received from Chad Smith. Smith was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Bar One would like to replace an ag well that originally test pumped at 1,300 gpm but was discharging 1,100 gpm in 2017.

Director Goicoechea made a motion to authorize the Chairman to obtain the necessary information and make an approval decision if the replacement criteria are met, Director Roen 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

B. Lake Davis/Frenchman Lake Water Transfer Opportunity

Rob Thorman, Plumas County Flood Control & Water Conservation District, shared that Plumas County purchases 2,700 acre-feet from the State each year. That water comes primarily from Lake Davis. Currently, only 500 acre-feet of that is being utilized, so the Flood Control District has been operating at a deficit. They are looking to sell those water rights – within Plumas County, if possible. However, an amendment made in 2023 will allow them to sell water outside of the County to another state water contractor. They've been discussing options with DWR and the Last Chance Creek Water District about transferring some of the allocation from Lake Davis to Frenchman Lake, which would allow for the possibility of using that water in the Sierra Valley. The Flood Control District doesn't want to get rid of the water rights, but is looking to sell them to at least break even and not be in a deficit. They were able to carry over some water that wasn't used last year, so there's about 1,850 acre-feet available. The cost they've been paying is \$110 to \$115 per acre-foot.

Director Roberti asked how this would work if water isn't literally being transferred? Dwight Smith replied that the concept is to preserve the existing 15,000+ acre-feet of irrigation and storage rights at Frenchman Lake, and release the water from the recreational water right of the State. Or it might be possible for a willing rancher to swap from their surface water rights an equal amount of groundwater for that year to help reduce groundwater pumping. Director Grandi asked if the water isn't transferred if it's likely the water will be sold to other users? Thorman responded yes, there are users in Southern California that are actively looking to purchase water.

C. Professional Services Agreements: Eligible Reimbursements

Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning Director, reported that the professional services agreements for grant work have unclear language about eligible reimbursements. The DWR grant only allows for mileage reimbursement at the federal rate and no other costs are eligible for reimbursement. The CDFW and Plumas Watershed grants are open to what the Board considers eligible (e.g. travel and lodging).

Director Goicoechea made a motion to only reimburse mileage for all three grants, Director Ramelli 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

D. Irrigation Efficiency Workshop Date

Reich shared that an irrigators' workshop is being planned for November. The purpose will be to bring farm efficiency and system improvement information and benefits to local irrigators. Chairman Grandi said that irrigation efficiency is at the heart of what the District is trying to accomplish with the grants and is where effects can be seen. He is glad the Stetson team will be sharing evapotranspiration information with the farmers. The date for the irrigators' workshop will be Monday, November 18th at 5 p.m.

E. Attorney-Client Fee Contract with Minasian Law, LLP

The Board clerk has been in touch with Andrew McClure, a water rights attorney with Minasian Law. With the Board working on amending Ordinance 18-01 (pertaining to new water wells) and making other management decisions surrounding SGMA and the GSP, it would be helpful to have legal review of the District's regulations.

Director Goicoechea made a motion to ask McClure to attend the next Board meeting to discuss the contract and services, Director Kilmurray 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

F. US Geomatics Proposal: Elevation Surveying for Sierra Valley Land Subsidence Monuments

The Board clerk received a proposal from US Geomatics, the company that installed the subsidence monuments and took readings the last two years. The Board would like this year's readings taken close to last year's reading date (October 23rd).

Director Roen made a motion to approve the US Geomatics quote for \$5,500, Director Ceresola 2nd, motion passed, all in favor.

G. Plumas Bank Account for Plumas Watershed Grant Funds

Director Roen made a motion to authorize the clerk to open a money market account at Plumas Bank with the Chair and the clerk as co-signers, Director Ramelli 2nd, Directors Kilmurray, Roberti, Ramelli, Grandi, Goicoechea, Ceresola and Roen in favor.

6) 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 8/19/24

B. Approve payment of bills and finance reports

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

7) ADJOURNMENT

Director Grandi adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM

Jenny Gant, Board Clerk