

# TRI-COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 2, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Tri-County Water Authority met in the second-floor conference room, 944 Whitley Avenue, Corcoran, California, on Thursday, September 2, 2021, at the hour of 1:00 p.m. Per Executive Order N-29-20, the meeting was conducted via Zoom.

Chairman VanderHam presided and Executive Director Jackson kept the minutes.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Cory VanderHam  
Mark Grewal  
Carlo Wilcox

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Wade Magden

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Deanna Jackson, Executive Director  
Staci Wilkins, Executive Assistant  
Amer Hussain, Geosyntec  
David Armanasco, California Strategies  
Molly Thurman, Farmland Management Services  
Jason Howard, McCormick Barstow  
Adriana Barba, Wonderful Company  
Brandon Spain, Farmland Management Services  
Bryant Platt, DWR  
Reyn Akiona, Watershed Coordinator  
G. Patrick O'Dowd  
Don Wright  
Corey McLaughlin  
Claire Van Zuiden, California Strategies  
Peter Nelson  
Mike M.  
H2O Joe

Chairman VanderHam called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Director Wilcox was welcomed to the Board. He is assuming the position previously held by Steve Jackson. Executive Director Jackson administered the Oath of Office.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - Don Wright mentioned that he would be having a get-together at his home in Clovis for water clients and that postcards would be going out with information.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on May 6, 2021

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Minutes were approved as presented. (3-0)

2. Warrants and Finances (05/01/2021 – 06/16/2021)

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Warrants and Finances were approved as presented. (3-0)

## **ACTION CALENDAR**

3. Item #6 on the Agenda was moved to Item #3.

Consider for adoption Resolution 21-12 **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TRI-COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION OF G. PATRICK O'DOWD AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF ACWA VICE PRESIDENT.**

Executive Director Jackson introduced Mr. O'Dowd and indicated that she has worked with him on different committees in ACWA and is confident in recommending him for the position of Vice President. Mr. O'Dowd summarized his qualifications for the position and answered questions.

On the motion of Director Wilcox and seconded by Director Grewal, the Board voted to adopt Resolution 21-12. (3-0)

4. Item #3 on the Agenda moved to Item #4.

Consider for adoption Resolution 21-09 **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TRI-COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY IN RECOGNITION AND DEEP APPRECIATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE BY STEVEN JACKSON.**

Executive Director Jackson referenced the outstanding efforts made by Mr. Jackson over the past few years, especially on the Authority's planning and implementation of the GSP and drafting of the water allocation policy.

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director VanderHam, the Board voted to adopt Resolution 21-09. (3-0)

5. Item #4 on the Agenda moved to Item #5.

Consider for adoption Resolution 21-10 **A RESOLUTION OF THE TRI-COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY CONSENTING TO ENTER THE JOINT PROTECTION PROGRAMS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES/JOINT POWERS INSURANCE AUTHORITY.**

Executive Director Jackson explained that this coverage is additional property insurance added to the existing coverage the Authority already has with ACWA. Since the Authority's vehicle was recently paid off, it must be covered under its own insurance plan.

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Board voted to adopt Resolution 21-10. (3-0)

6. Item #5 on the Agenda was moved to Item #6

Consider for adoption Resolution 21-11 **A RESOLUTION OF TRI-COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY AUTHORIZING ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN THE LOCAL AGENCY INVESTMENT FUND.**

On the motion of Director Wilcox and seconded by Director Grewal, the Board voted to adopt Resolution 21-11. (3-0)

7. Review and consider approval of the **California Strategies Agreement to provide general and strategic grant consulting services.**

Executive Director Jackson explained that California Strategies has a grant-writing service separate from the lobbying service that the Authority already pays for. David Armanasco introduced Claire Van Zuiden who is a partner in California Strategies and heads up the grant writing department. Their department has been extremely successful in securing grants for their clients. Ms. Van Zuiden indicated that there will be significant amounts of funding becoming available from the State. The proposal would incorporate research on key projects that would be eligible for funding with public benefits, developing a funding matrix that will include both current and future funding opportunities, reviewing and ranking matrix items on likelihood of success, and creating a strategy to pursue those opportunities.

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Board voted to approve the 60-day proposal for the grant consulting services. (3-0)

8. Review policy and authorize staff to **set a date to conduct a Public Hearing in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Collecting Delinquent Fees, Assessments, or Charges and to notify landowners with delinquent accounts of that Public Hearing.**

Executive Director Jackson indicated that there are a few delinquent accounts that have not paid the 2018 land-based assessment or 2020 pumping fees, despite numerous invoices that have been mailed out requesting payment. Her recommendation would be to focus on delinquent accounts as of June 1, 2021, and with balances of \$500 or more. With the November 2020 policy in place, the Authority is required to hold a Public Hearing prior to pursuing any action against a landowner. General Counsel Howard confirmed that the Board has the authority under the Water Code to collect on delinquent assessments or fees.

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Board voted to set a Public Hearing date for November 4 and directed staff to send notification of that hearing to delinquent accounts. (3-0)

9. Review and consider approval of draft response letters to DWR in response to comments received on TCWA's GSP.

Amer Hussain explained that after the submission of the GSP in January 2020, there were comment letters submitted on the GSP. After reviewing those letters, it was determined that two of those letters contained information that was now out of date and it would not be beneficial for DWR to base their comments on information that is no longer relevant. Prior to the comments being received from DWR on the GSP, it is possible to respond to those letters to make them a part of the record.

On the motion of Director Grewal and seconded by Director Wilcox, the Board voted to finalize the wording of the letters and to get them uploaded to the SGMA portal for DWR review. (3-0)

### **COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

10. Director's Reports/Comments/Suggestion

None

11. Communications

None

12. Reports of General Interest

- a) California Strategies Update – David Armanasco

David Armanasco mentioned that they are continuing to stay in touch with Secretary Crowfoot, following up with items they are trying to get accomplished in Allensworth. He's been in touch with Paul Gosselin, Deputy Director of SGMA, trying to keep lines of communication open. In Sacramento, they are quite busy focusing on the drought.

- b) Advisory Committee Update– Amer Hussain

The most recent meeting's main focus was on the draft Land Repurposing Policy. There seems to be a lot of funding opportunities available for both current and future following programs. Participants were asked to give feedback so that comments can be collected prior to making a presentation to the Board for future consideration. Tri-County will need to provide matching funds for many of the opportunities and the money received from landowners will be the source of that funding.

- c) Tulare Lake / Tule Subbasin Update – Amer Hussain

Amer recently attended a quarterly meeting with DWR as representative of Tulare Lake. The comment letters are still on track to reach us by the end of the year. Our response to those comments will be considered an amendment to our GSP and will need to be voted on by the Board. The comments will be for the entire subbasin and the preferred method for making those changes will be with strikeouts from the current plan and updated information shown within that same section. The challenging part of receiving one set of comments for six different GSPs for the Tule Subbasin will be how to coordinate the response.

Funding for critically over-drafted basins will be available for projects. DWR is anticipating taking the bulk of the money and allocating it to each basin rather than making the GSAs compete for the funds. They are still working out the language and how to set up the funding. GSAs will have to decide on how to use their allocation for projects, taking into consideration how it relates to the GSP, whether there are other benefits, or whether it helps disadvantaged communities.

AEM surveys are still slated for this Fall. We have not received confirmation of an exact start date.

The September monitoring event for the Tule Subbasin will be taking place soon by 4 Creeks. They will be taking readings on the wells, in addition to completing the subsidence surveying monitoring.

A water trading policy within the subbasin is still important to our landowners. At this point, there is not any interest amongst the GSAs to create that policy.

There is Bureau of Reclamation funding available for meters and a water market grant. Deanna and Amer will come up with ideas to present to the Authority's Board for future consideration.

Prop. 68 Round 2 funding will be available at the first of the year through a competitive bid.

For Tulare Lake, the State Water Resources Control Board created comments to the GSP that they sent directly to DWR. These comments may be along similar lines to what we can expect on our GSP comments from DWR in the future. There is no plan by the Tulare Lake GSA managers to write a response.

d) Interbasin Coordination Agreement – Deanna Jackson

No update.

e) Other Updates, as appropriate

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

13. There being no further business to come before the Board on the occasion of the September 2, 2021, meeting, Chairman VanderHam adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m. until the next Regular Meeting to be held on November 4, 2021, at 1:00 p.m., in the Tri-County Boardroom or as otherwise directed by the Board.

Attest:



Cory VanderHam, Chairman



Deanna Jackson, Executive Director