

# Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board Meeting

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## Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: July 27, 2020

Time: 4:00 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/93436085424?pwd=WGFTQko3empTWZ4MzFpYjZUeldSUT09>

Meeting ID: 934 3608 5424

Password: 887998

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### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

**Director Sangiacomo** called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. After reviewing meeting protocol, he asked Ann DuBay to conduct roll call. **Directors Hundley, Mulas, Prushko and Sangiacomo** were present. Also, in attendance were Ann DuBay, Administrator; Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager; Marcus Trotta, Technical Staff; Rob Pennington, Permit Sonoma; Fred Allebach, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee Chairman; Tim Parker, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee Facilitator; Gina Lisa Tamayo; Ken Johnson, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee member; John Bliss, Executive Director SCI; Simone Peters, Administrative Aide (recording minutes).

### 2. Public comment on matters not listed on the agenda but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board

No public comment.

### 3. Consent Calendar

- a. **Approve Minutes of June 1, 2020**
- b. **Approve Year-to-Date Financial Report FY2019-20**
- c. **Approve Year-to-Date Member Agency Contributions**
- d. **Approve Auditor Contract Amendment**
- e. **Approve Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget Adjustments**
- f. **Approve Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Adjustments**

No Board member questions.

No public comment.

**Director Hundley** moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, **Director Mulas** seconded. Motion passed unanimously 4-0-2. **Director Gorin** and **Director Rabbitt** were absent.

*Roll call Vote:*

**Director Hundley** – aye

**Director Mulas – aye**  
**Director Prushko – aye**  
**Director Sangiacomo - aye**

#### 4. Directors/Subcommittee Report

None.

#### 5. Advisory Committee Report

Fred Allebach, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee Chairman – The Advisory Committee has been moving along quite well, they have worked on declining groundwater levels, seawater intrusion and land subsidence sustainable management criteria. Staff did a great job preparing the Advisory Committee, giving options and being flexible and adaptive. Mr. Allebach feels the Advisory Committee recommendations to the Board are good ones.

#### *Questions/Comments*

No Board member questions.

No public comment.

#### 6. Information Items:

- a. **Draft Sustainable Management Criteria – Seawater Intrusion:** Receive update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan and provide feedback on proposed Sustainable Management Criteria for Seawater Intrusion.

Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager said staff has been working very hard with the Advisory Committee on land subsidence and seawater intrusion. They are not quite far enough along to give final conclusions on seawater intrusion but are far enough along to bring a draft package to the Board for consideration. Staff will include Board input, work on one last aspect with the Advisory Committee, then present as an action item at the September Board meeting. Jasperse gave a quick overview of Sustainability Indicators and SMC development to date. He explained that seawater intrusion is rather complicated in the Sonoma Valley. A natural interface exists between saline water associated to the south of San Pablo Bay and the fresh groundwater aquifer, that interfaces occurred throughout history. It has fluctuated over time due to various environmental and other conditions. Also, there is limited data on seawater intrusion in this basin and there are significant data gaps. It has been a challenge to develop this SMC. Jasperse verified with DWR that impacts of sea water intrusion due to sea level rise are not required to be addressed in Sustainable Management Criteria. Wetlands restoration and other land use activities in the Baylands could affect the occurrence and distribution of saline groundwater in the future. Jay Jasperse continued by saying there are four key elements to Sustainable Management Criteria.

- Definition of Significant and Unreasonable Conditions (qualitative)
- Measurable Objectives (MO) (quantitative)
- Minimum Threshold (MT) (quantitative)
- Undesirable Results (quantitative)

Measurable Objectives still require some work with the Advisory Committee before finalizing the SMC for bringing to the Board as an action item in September.

Marcus Trotta covered the adaptive approach for Minimum Threshold and the proposed approach for Undesirable Results that occurs when two conditions are met:

- The Minimum Threshold is triggered because the monitoring data indicates that the current extent of the 250 mg/l chloride isocontour encroaches inland relative to the Minimum Threshold Reference contour; and
- The Minimum Threshold exceedance is caused by groundwater pumping.

Mr. Trotta said several options were discussed in detail with the Advisory Committee at the May, June and July meetings. The Advisory Committee unanimously agreed with the staff recommendation that the proposed option is the only viable alternative at this point, given the lack of a robust dataset. He then turned the presentation over to Ken Johnson.

Ken Johnson, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee member – The Advisory Committee has been talking about this for some time. We often look at the maps with contour lines but what isn't well conveyed by the maps is the depth component. Seawater is heavier than groundwater, sometimes it shows up in deeper wells before it shows up in shallow ones. This is an element where future monitoring will be needed. The contour is based on data from wells, and we are drawing the contour between wells, there is a fair amount of interpretation that is needed in order to do that. It isn't a straight-forward issue. Having time to evaluate transgressions and look at what the causes might be are critical to understanding whether the problem exists. Mr. Johnson looks forward to bringing a recommendation from the Advisory Committee for a decision by the Board at a future meeting.

**Director Mulas** – Thank you for the presentation. I am pleased to see that you have recognized that seawater intrusion is potentially there because of the reclaiming of the Baylands that might be exacerbating things. I am glad to see it isn't part of the GSA's criteria to bring under control.

**Director Hundley** – Very informative, I appreciate the presentation.

**Director Sangiacomo** – Thank you for the presentation. It sounds like there is more to be done and that you have good scientific data to start the process and it could be refined as you go along.

**Director Prushko** – The presentation was informative. I would like to thank staff for their work.

## 7. Action Items:

- a. **Draft Sustainable Management Criteria - Land Subsidence:** Provide feedback to staff and take possible action on proposed draft Sustainable Management Criteria for Land Subsidence

This item requests Board direction regarding the proposed draft Sustainable Management Criteria for land subsidence developed by staff with input and concurrence from the Advisory Committee. The proposed SMC consists of a technical methodology to evaluate minimum thresholds and measurable objectives, a description of significant and unreasonable conditions, and definition of

Undesirable Results. The item presents three options for Board consideration regarding how to define an Undesirable Result with a recommendation from the Advisory Committee.

Jay Jasperse said he was bringing a proposal on Land Subsidence SMC to the Board today including options for what constitutes undesirable results. He said they still consider the sustainable management criteria as draft because they will be looking at them in total in 50-year projections with the model to test how they do in the future projections. Land Subsidence has been discussed with the Advisory Committee in May, June and July. The GSAs are only responsible for managing inelastic (unrecoverable) subsidence caused by groundwater pumping. The recommendation for Significant and Unreasonable Conditions is:

*Any inelastic subsidence caused by groundwater pumping is a significant and unreasonable condition, everywhere in the subbasin and regardless of the beneficial uses and users.*

The recommendation for Measurable Objective is:

*The Measurable Objective for land subsidence is 0.1 feet (0.1 feet per year accounts for estimated error of InSAR technology) per year total subsidence - elastic & inelastic - measured by InSAR for each 100-meter x 100-meter grid.*

The recommendation for Minimum Threshold is:

*The Minimum Threshold for land subsidence is 0.1 feet per year of total subsidence (elastic and inelastic) measured by InSAR for each 100-meter by 100-meter grid.*

Marcus Trotta explained three Undesirable Results options. All options require:

1. An exceedance of the Minimum Threshold (0.1 feet per year of total subsidence); and
2. Subsidence must be determined to be correlated to groundwater level declines due to groundwater pumping.

**Option variables:**

- Timeframe of subsidence (Option 1)
- Cumulative magnitude of subsidence (Option 2)
- Geographic extent of subsidence (Option 3)

Jay Jasperse then walked through the staff comparison of the options and said staff is most comfortable with Option 2.

Ken Johnson summarized his perspective of the Advisory Committee – For this criterium, we spent a lot of time defining the issue of elastic versus inelastic and what causes it. I think the risks here are not as significant as in other areas where the problem has occurred and been significant. We spent a lot of time talking about how to measure it with the different approaches, how to evaluate an area of impact, and what sorts of impact could happen. How much is too much is where we are at with setting the criteria. We arrived with Options 2 and 3 being acceptable, we are comfortable with where things have ended up.

### *Questions/Comments*

**Director Sangiacomo** – Is option 3 less detailed/expensive than Option 2? We are going to be spending lots of money addressing other concerns.

Johnson – From my perspective, there should be no cost implications, we are using the same dataset. It is just a matter of how you look at it, we already have the same data.

**Director Sangiacomo** – Because it is more precise, would it waste more staff time?

Johnson – That is a good point, you do want to look for broad areas of impact.

Trotta – The annual work that is going to be needed will be minimal. The data sets are made available by DWR. Should we see any exceedances, that is where the additional work in determining if there is a correlation with groundwater would come in. The differences between Options 2 and 3, would be that for Option 3 it doesn't get triggered as often as if there is a geographic extent to it.

**Director Prushko** -What impact does an earthquake have on these measurements?

Trotta – Tectonic and seismic events move the land surface. Some of the other technologies available to monitor for subsidence including continuous GPS stations have been installed to look at movement along fault zones. It is something that we would have to account for as well. The procedure for correlating future subsidence with groundwater levels will be important and will include an assessment of seismic movements that could come into play.

Johnson – Development or construction activities that change the surface of the land and need to be factored in as well.

**Director Hundley** – I have a question about Option 3 – the language the committee expressed concerns about “the inclusion of developed land or infrastructure – could you explain the practical effect of keeping or removing that language?

Trotta – Some of the concerns were “how do you define developed land or infrastructure, so that would have to be worked out. If we did not include “developed land or infrastructure” then the methodology would apply basin-wide; for Option 3 it would just be based on the acreage.

DuBay – The Ag community raised the question about what happens if you do lots of earthmoving things and it raises the land and settles back over time, if done over a 25-acre area and not developed and you saw that kind of subsidence, it would trigger further investigation. I guess it would be more sensitive if you removed the language.

Trotta – As Mr. Johnson alluded to, this technology relies on the ability for the satellites to have reflectors bouncing back. The actual data, the pixels, are focused on lands that are more developed. Land that doesn't have infrastructure nearby are not included in the data sets. We likely wouldn't see the change in big open fields.

No public comment.

No decision was taken. **Director Sangiacomo** made a recommendation to postpone the vote until the next meeting as two directors were missing. **Director Hundley** supported his suggestion.

- b. **Rural Community Engagement Outreach Contract:** Authorize the Administrator to negotiate a contract with SCI Consulting to provide outreach services for an amount not-to-exceed \$47,000.

Ann DuBay mentioned this is a follow up to an item discussed in the past. The GSA received Proposition 68 grant funding for \$1 million in Sonoma Valley. \$47,000 of that is for a rural community engagement program for research, engagement, and recommendations on future funding in all three basins. Five consulting teams responded to Request for Proposals. A panel reviewed the written applications and four teams were selected for interviews. The interview panel included **Director Wasem** as the representative from Sonoma Valley. The panel unanimously selected SCI Consulting Group. This item would authorize staff to negotiate on behalf of the Agency for community engagement consulting services.

Ann DuBay explained there are three components to the project:

- 1) research - focus group and mailed survey to all potential well owners in basin;
- 2) written funding options analysis; and
- 3) development and execution of an engagement plan.

The consultant would be engaged by all three basins; non-direct costs would be shared equally among the basins and direct costs would be basin specific.

John Bliss, Executive Director SCI, thanked the group for their consideration, and said he looks forward to working with the GSA. **Director Mulas** said she was very pleased with SCI and their presentation and feels comfortable they will do a good job.

#### *Questions/Comments*

**Director Mulas** - I have a question about surveys. I get concerned when questions are posed in such a way that you direct how you want the results of a survey. I am hopeful that the survey will be more informative and question the knowledge of the rural residents.

John Bliss, Executive Director SCI – there are internet-based surveys that are really geared towards getting results, we are not in that realm. We feel that is a misuse of the process, and we live or die by the results of our survey. We have a high rate of success with our measures based largely on our surveys. You will get to review the work before the surveys go out. Our firm is quite conservative, we are onboard with you.

Andrea Rodriguez, Sonoma Water, has been working with Valery Flores from SCI to finalize the contract, there still are a few minor things to work out before presenting to the Board.

No public comment.

**Director Hundley** moved to authorize the Administrator to negotiate a contract with SCI Consulting not to exceed \$47,000 to provide outreach services as presented, **Director Mulas** seconded. Motion passed unanimously 4-0-2. **Director Gorin** and **Director Rabbitt** were absent.

#### *Roll call Vote:*

**Director Hundley** – aye

**Director Mulas** – aye

**Director Prushko** – aye

**Director Sangiacomo** – aye

## 8. Legal Counsel, Plan Manager and Administrator Report

Ann DuBay – A written report is in the packet. In addition to that, DuBay mentioned the Community Meeting covering Basin Conditions and Sustainable Management Criteria; the meeting included an overview presentation followed by breakout rooms. Advisory Committee members helped with the breakout rooms. Overall, it was a positive experience, and despite the fact the meeting was virtual, staff received good feedback.

Jay Jasperse – Our written report is in the packet and explains what is happening on the technical front. Jasperse said staff is starting to work with experts on climate change projections. They are also starting to gather thoughts on potential management projects and look at what they would entail should they need to use them to meet the Sustainable Management Criteria.

No report from Legal Counsel.

### *Questions/Comments*

Fred Allebach, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee Chairman – I just want to add that Vicki Hill, Sonoma Valley Advisory Committee member, and I have done four community outreach meetings with our own groups of stakeholders. We received good feedback and had contact with some more well owners on Castle road who are very interested in the groundwater sustainability agency. Mr. Allebach is hoping they will get more interested people.

## 9. Adjournment

**Director Sangiacomo** thanked everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on September 28 at 4:00 p.m., but as the date clashes with Yom Kippur, Ann DuBay will reach out to everyone to see if it poses a conflict.