

Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Board Meeting

Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23, 2019

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Valley of the Moon Water District, Board Room

19039 Bay Street, Sonoma, CA 95476

www.sonomavalleygroundwater.org

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairwoman Susan Gorin called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Directors Susan Gorin, Rachel Hundley, Vicki Mulas, David Rabbitt, Ron Prushko and Mike Sangiacomo were present.

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

The Board discussed the potential PG&E Public Safety Power Shut-Off. Chairwoman Gorin described the preparation underway by the County of Sonoma. She thanked the City of Sonoma for working with the County to ensure that the Sonoma Veterans' center is available to serve as a cooling center and potential evacuation center, thanks to the addition of a new generator.

Jay Jasperse, Sonoma Water, described the agency's preparations, including development of a Continuity Operations Plan in coordination with the county. A facilities' plan has been developed and is being implemented, with the primary focus on ensuring that dedicated and mobile generators will have the fuel needed to continue operations for critical water supply and sanitation facilities. Sonoma Water is coordinating closely with water contractors, who are also preparing.

Director Prushko noted that Valley of the Moon Water District has stationary generators for six wells. The long-term goal of VOMWD is to get the system gallons-per-minute (gpm) to 700 (it's currently around 500 gpm) to provide pressure during an emergency that could shut down the Sonoma aqueduct. **Director Prushko** noted that two more wells are needed to supply water if Sonoma aqueduct isn't available. The district will be using FEMA funding to replace a water storage tank that was destroyed during the 2017 fires. SCADA was a problem during the fires, but now has solar with battery back-up that will last a week during a power shutdown. The district has also improved interconnections to ensure that water is pressurized anywhere in the system, and is improving booster pumps in Boyes Hot Springs area.

Director Mulas reported that dairies have long had generators for operations in case of shutdowns. They irrigate with recycled water, which would presumably be available.

Director Sangiacomo reported that the vineyards aren't being irrigated much right now. On the processing side, some wineries have put in back-up generators, but not sure how many.

Staff was requested to put a link to the PG&E website on the website, in case any well owners went to the site looking for information regarding well operations during a shut-down.

3. Consent Calendar

1. Approve Minutes of July 22, 2019
2. Approve Year-to-Date Financial Report
3. Approve Year-to-Date Member Agency Contributions
4. Approve Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget adjustment to recognize \$10,000 expenditure for auditing services

Board Questions/Comments

- **Director Hundley** was not present at the July 22, 2019 meeting, and abstained from vote on 3A (meeting minutes).
- **Director Prushko** asked if a roll call vote was needed for financial items.
 - Not if the vote is unanimous.

No public comment.

Director Rabitt moved to approve the consent calendar as presented, **Director Mulas** seconded. Motion passed unanimously, with **Director Hundley** abstaining from 3A.

4. Directors/Subcommittee Report

No reports.

No public comment.

5. Advisory Committee Report

Advisory Committee Chairman provided a brief update, noting that a full report is in the packet. He shared that the Advisory Committee received an in-depth briefing on Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs). He noted that the SMCs are fun, with multiple moving parts and many factors in play. The Advisory Committee will give the Board recommendations on SMCs for their decision-making. At its October meeting, the Advisory Committee will hear a panel presentation on current and future water supply issues.

Board Questions/Comments

None.

No public comments.

6. Information items

a. Permit Sonoma Update on Sonoma Valley Projects

The item was postponed until November, as Permit Sonoma staff is involved in getting the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) running, in case of a Public Safety Power Shut-off.

b. Advisory Committee Well Permit Recommendations

Advisory Committee member Greg Carr reported that an Ad Hoc of the Advisory Committee was created to look at issues regarding permitting of ministerial projects (single family homes and agricultural wells) in the 'zones of depletion' and areas of saline intrusion. Originally, the thought was that people who apply to drill wells in these areas should be required to produce a water-availability report (similar to those required for discretionary projects). However, the Ad Hoc quickly realized that this regulatory approach would be too complex, take too much time, and be politically difficult. So, the Ad Hoc asked what could be done to help develop and implement the GSP. It focused on three areas:

1. Well permitting, online drilling reports and groundwater classification maps;
2. Monitoring (using a strategic approach to identify additional monitoring opportunities). Mr. Carr noted that this recommendation would be the most difficult to implement.
3. Providing information to new well applicants regarding the GSA, the GSP, and possible problems in their areas.

Mr. Carr noted that the Advisory Committee recognizes the Permit Sonoma workflow issues. He also noted that the work has educated both the committee and Permit Sonoma to water and land use issues. He also encouraged the Board to think about sharing this work with the other basins, as the recommendations may be valuable countywide.

Board Questions/Comments

- **Chair Gorin:** Would this affect how well applications move forward? Would they have to go to Planning Commission?
 - This would only apply to ministerial permits, and it's unlikely they would have to go to the Planning Commission.
- **Director Hundley:** Procedurally, how would these recommendations move forward?
 - For the well monitoring recommendation, the Board of Supervisors approval would be needed, so there would be stakeholder outreach, technical review and other procedures. The other recommendations are more staff-generated, and could be done in-house.

- **Director Rabbitt:** Thank you for the work and the recommendations.
- **Director Prushko:** Where are the depletion areas?
 - There are two depletion areas and also some areas of saline intrusion. The depletion areas are in El Verano and in the south part of the valley, including under south Sonoma. The depletions are in the lower aquifer, which can drop several feet a year. In some areas, the groundwater level has dropped 80-100 feet, and in some areas the groundwater is below sea level.
- **Chair Gorin** noted that the Board should have a discussion about the extent of the decline and the location.
- **Director Gorin:** The recommendations should be discussed at all three basins to give everyone a heads-up. However, Sonoma Valley could be a pilot project. Staff should discuss the recommendations with Tennis Wick, Permit Sonoma, to get their thoughts about how they would proceed with the recommendations.
- **Director Mulas:** I'm concerned about a blanket policy for all GSAs. Would like that they specifically state these recommendations are applicable to the identified depletion areas. Don't want to bind property owners to onerous regulations.
 - The details of how these would be applied would need to be worked out by the technical people, as the recommendations are purposefully broad.
- **Director Mulas:** Groundwater pumpers don't have other alternatives for water supply. So, how do we make sure they are treated fairly and equitably? We need to find solutions for them.
 - To be crystal clear, we aren't talking about metering – but about monitoring twice a year. Like the current program.

7. Action Items

- a. **Advisory Committee Business Representative Appointment:** Appoint new Business Representative to fill a vacancy on the Advisory Committee

Director Sangiacomo reported that two people applied for the Advisory Committee Business Representative position. Both were qualified, but he, **Director Mulas** and Advisory Committee Chairman Allebach unanimously agreed that Steve Wolf was an excellent, and the better-qualified candidate, with strong business connections.

Board Questions/Comments

Director Mulas noted that Mr. Wolf is an excellent choice and is familiar with 8th Street East business issues.

No Public Comment.

Director Mulas moved to approve Steve Wolf as Business Representative to the Advisory Committee, **Director Sangiacomo** seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Sonoma Ecology Center Grant: Consider support of a grant application and funding match for the Sonoma Ecology Center Sonoma Creek Stream Flow Stewardship Program, Phase 2.

Ann DuBay, Administrator, briefly described the Sonoma Ecology Center request for support of its grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board and the request that grant “match” be provided for up to \$120,000 of seepage monitoring work. Steve Lee, SEC staff, described the proposed project and answered Board questions.

Board Questions/Comments

- **Chair Gorin** noted that it’s challenging for land owners to get tanks/ponds for water storage. How is this being done?
 - The proposed storage projects include 50,000 gallon water tanks. Other projects are more challenging, Morton’s Warm Springs, being an example. The Geib’s project would include restoration of an alluvial fan that’s now serving as a horse pasture.
- **Director Mulas** asked for clarification between “match” and spending.
 - Staff clarified that with a “match” the GSA would not be spending additional money, but that money it is already spending for seepage monitoring over four years, would be matched by grant funding.
- **Director Prushko** asked if seepage monitoring would end after four years.
 - Staff clarified that monitoring will continue – it’s a long-term program and fundamental to the GSP.
- **Director Mulas** asked if the people who are drawing water directly from the creek are reporting their water use and complying with their water rights.
 - Mr. Lee noted that some people are complying, and others might not be complying. SEC doesn’t look at this.
- **Director Prushko** asked whether it’s feasible to install pumping stations to divert water during very high flows.
 - Mr. Lee replied that it’s conceivable, and that high flows can be taken off a stream as long as there are no adverse effects.
- **Director Mulas** asked if this project was incorporating the “Spread it; Sink it; Store it” concepts.
 - Mr. Lee replied that yes, the project is based on these concepts.
- **Director Sangiacomo** noted that this is a great way to leverage funding, and the projects are very encouraging. He hopes the state will re-look at water rights laws to reflect the need for these types of projects. He asked whether SEC was getting an exemption from water rights permitting for some of these projects.
 - Mr. Lee replied that they aren’t getting exemptions, and some of the grant funding would be used to help landowners obtain the water rights permits they need.

No public comment.

Director Hundley moved that the GSA support the grant application and the matching funds request. **Director Rabbitt** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. Proposition 68 Grant: Consider support of a grant application from the GSA for funding through Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program.

Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager, gave an overview of the current Proposition 68 SGMA grant application period, noting the funding is targeted at completing and implementing GSPs. He discussed the grant application timeline, and that the GSA should apply for the maximum available (\$1 million). He noted that staff's philosophy is to look at proposed projects from a risk standpoint, preferring to go with a proposal that is clean and not dependent on outside forces.

Board Questions/Comments

- **Director Mulas** noted she supported the concept of not relying on permitting agencies, and was comfortable approving the grant resolution.
- **Director Hundley** noted she is comfortable with the resolution as is.
- **Director Sangiacomo** noted he would prefer passing a draft resolution if it doesn't hinder the process.
- **Director Prushko** said he was reluctant to pay for something without seeing the project.
- **Director Mulas** noted she trusted staff to develop a grant proposal that would increase the likelihood of receiving funding and that is important to the GSP.
- **Chairman Gorin** asked staff to reach out to the member agency staff to get feedback and input on proposal concepts.

Director Mulas moved to approve as presented, **Director Hundley** seconded. Motion passed 5-1, with **Director Prushko** opposing.

- d. Contracts: Authorize Administrator to execute the following contracts:
 - a. Three-year contract extension with Sonoma Ecology Center for seepage monitoring
 - b. Three-year contract extension with Sonoma Water for administrative services
 - c. One-year contract extension with Kronick, Moskowitz, Tiedemann & Girard for legal service

Ann DuBay, Administrator, provided an overview of the three contracts up for renewal: Administrative Services (Sonoma Water), Legal services (Kronick, Moskowitz, Tiedemann & Girard, and Seepage Monitoring (SEC).

Board Questions/Comments

- **Director Hundley** expressed concern the contracts were not in the packet, and noted she wouldn't be comfortable voting on the administrative contract (given its size) without the contract. Other Directors expressed similar concerns.
- **Chair Gorin** asked staff to share the Administrative contract, and to bring it back for Board consideration in November.

No public comment.

Director Rabbitt moved, and **Director Mulas** seconded a motion to approve the Legal services and Seepage Monitoring contracts. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Legal Counsel, Plan Manager and Administrator Report

The Administrator reported that she has been working on the December 11 recharge workshop, contracts, and the September 23 outreach event.

The Plan Manager discussed the Watershed Emergency Response Team tour of the valley. This post-fire tour found that water flows appeared to have returned to pre-fire conditions. This is much different than in Southern California, where it can take several years for flows to return to post-fire conditions. This information will be helpful for the Camp Fire and in other Northern California areas. The Plan Manager also reported that Sonoma Water will be holding a water supply workshop with its Board on Monday, September 30, 1 p.m. Staff will forward the final presentation to the Board.

9. Adjournment

Chair Gorin adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.