



Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: April 23, 2020 Time: 5:30 p.m. Location: Remote Access Only

The County of Santa Cruz and the State Governor had issued shelter-in-place orders that were in effect during the time of this meeting. In accordance with these orders, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency conducted its April Board of Directors meeting in an exclusively remote-access format.

1. CONVENE MEETING

- 1.1 Call to Order and Roll Call
Chair Perri called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Directors (Alternates acting as voting Directors shown in italics):

E. Cassidy, J. Dilles, D. Engfer, L. Farris, A. Franklin, J. Leopold, B. McPherson, D. Pollock, R. Stiles, L. Henry, C. Perri

Alternates (Present as non-voting observers):

B. Ekwall, D. Lind, R. Moran

Staff:

C. Blanchard, P. Harmon, S. Hill, K. Krotcov, R. Menard, J. Ricker, R. Rogers, S. Ryan, N. Wallace

Others:

G. King, B. Maxfield, T. Rein

- 1.2 Additions/Deletions to the Agenda
None
- 1.3 Oral communications on items not on the Agenda
None

2. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes – March 26, 2020 Board Meeting
MOTION: Stiles/Leopold to approve March 26, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes.
AYES: E. Cassidy, J. Dilles, D. Engfer, L. Farris, A. Franklin, J. Leopold, B. McPherson, D. Pollock, R. Stiles, L. Henry, C. Perri
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None
- 2.2 Board Mid-Process Surveys Report

D. Ceppos presented the results of the interviews with the Board Members and Alternates. Memo (Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency – Board Meeting and Process Assessment) from California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) is appended.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

None

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 FY 2021 Proposed Budget

P. Harmon presented the proposed budget for FY 2021 and responded to questions from the Board. The Board and staff discussed the fiscal requirements for a proposed network of monitoring wells.

4.2 Informational Session – Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Elements

4.2.1 GSP Roadmap – April 23, 2020

J. Ricker presented an overview and context of the GSP Roadmap and responded to questions from the Board and staff.

4.2.2 Sustainable Management Criteria: Groundwater Levels– Georgina King (Montgomery & Associates), and Dave Ceppos (California State University, Sacramento)

- Basin Groundwater Level Conditions
- Significant and Unreasonable Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels

G. King presented information on groundwater level conditions in the individual aquifers within the Santa Margarita Basin. D. Ceppos facilitated questions and a discussion among the Board and staff.

G. King presented information on significant and unreasonable conditions as defined by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and how they apply to groundwater levels. D. Ceppos facilitated questions and a discussion among the Board and staff.

The Board provided input regarding the content of the statement of significant and unreasonable conditions for groundwater levels in the SGMWA GSP.

The Board directed staff to issue a prompt to all Board Members soliciting further input on the statement of significant and unreasonable conditions concerning groundwater levels, and to propose a draft statement for Board review at the next meeting. P. Harmon and N. Wallace were designated as coordinating staff with May 8, 2020 established as a deadline for Board Members to submit comments.

One public comment was heard.

Director B. McPherson left the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Staff reports were accepted without comments.

6. DIRECTORS REPORTS

Director’s reports were accepted without comments.

7. FUTURE ITEMS

- Fiscal Year 2021 Budget (May/June)
 - Records Retention Policy
 - Financial Controls for Borrowing Money
- Informational Sessions
- Groundwater Sustainability Plan Elements

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- None

9. EVENTS CALENDAR

- Third Annual GSA Summit – Groundwater Resources Association of California, June 10 – June 11, 2020
Sacramento, CA
- 2020 ACWA Spring Conference and Exhibition, July 28 – July 31, 2020 Monterey, CA

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Cassidy/Stiles to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

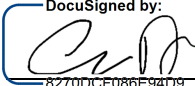
AYES: E. Cassidy, J. Dilles, D. Engfer, L. Farris, A. Franklin, J. Leopold, D. Pollock, R. Stiles, L. Henry, C. Perri

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

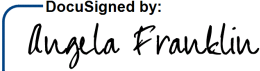
ABSENT: B. McPherson

APPROVED BY:

DocuSigned by:

8270DCF086E94D9...
Chris Perri, Chair

5/29/2020
Date

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

2CC41EEB7B70404...
Angela Franklin, Secretary

5/30/2020
Date



California State University, Sacramento
 College of Continuing Education
 Consensus and Collaboration Program
 304 S Street, 3rdrd Floor • Sacramento, CA 95811

Date: April 23, 2020
To: Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency Board of Directors and Alternates
From: Dave Ceppos, Managing Senior Mediator, Sacramento State University
Subject: Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency - -Board Meeting and Process Assessment

Between April 6 and 17, 2020, the Consensus and Collaboration Program (CCP) of Sacramento State University conducted a series of interviews with Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) Board Members and Alternates (interviewees) (see Attachment A). The purpose of these discussions was to address recent process changes in Board meeting structure due to the coronavirus health crisis and to identify ways to optimize Board and public participation in current remote, and future in-person meetings.

Dave Ceppos of CCP conducted each 30 minute interview. He started each interview with a standard purpose statement describing general public engagement requirements in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and an observation that under recent conditions (particularly in a virtual meeting context), a small number of Board members participate in meeting discussions regularly and a larger number participate infrequently. In this context, he then posed a standard set of five questions (see Attachment B). The following is a summary of outcomes from the interviews and process recommendations from interviewees and CCP.

Outcomes

Understanding of, and questions about upcoming steps, timing and milestones for Board SGMA decisions. A majority of interviewees feel they understand and are tracking the status of the SGMA process for SMGWA. All interviewees were familiar with the “Road Map” presented at each Board meeting. However, a small number of interviewees stated that they do not always understand the SGMA terms, the sequence of proposed work and the significance of upcoming milestones. Many interviewees stated that they are paying attention to the monthly presentations about the schedule but feel an expanded focus on the sequence, terms and implications of next steps would be helpful.

Ease and ability to engage in Board discussions. A small number of interviewees described themselves as having little to no inhibitions engaging in Board discussions. A significant majority described themselves or other members as feeling impacted for the following reasons (presented in a general order of commonality):

- Inhibitions about whether their lack of knowledge will lead them to pose uneducated or ineffective questions / comments.
- Volume and nature of information in presentations. It feels difficult to decipher, break down into meaningful information and then pose immediate questions about.
- Lack of conversational tone. Increased amount of dense presentations in concert with limited opportunity to speak with each other, rather than just pose questions to presenters and staff.
- Respect for and reliance on member agency staff and the consultant team and the subsequent sense of “they have this under control...I don’t need to comment”.
- Limited time to study key topics and prepare before meetings.
- Lack of comfort and relationships with other Board members and alternates and an associated lack of confidence to speak candidly. Fear of being dismissed and/or not having a “safe space” to express opinions.

- Physical setting of the City of Scotts Valley Council Chambers is less conducive to a sense of equity and togetherness as a Board and between the Board and the public.
- Discomfort with the use of video conferencing during current virtual meetings.
- Duration of meetings in terms of participant fatigue, and reticence to interject out of concern that such engagement will further increase the meeting duration.
- A belief that other members have already made up their minds on key topics and are not open to discussing and learning in meetings.
- General fear of public speaking.

Regarding the breadth, depth and, delivery method of information, a fairly even split exists between interviewees. Approximately half describe themselves as fully tracking and enjoying the amount of information being presented and perhaps even wanting additional technical information during meetings. Approximately the other half describe themselves as feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information, the ways in which information is being presented, the pace in which this information is delivered, and the lack of time during presentations for members to discuss things. Several interviewees referred to the large workshops held in winter 2019, and the series of Board Informational Sessions held in late summer and fall of 2019 as creating a “workshop” experience that fostered more conversation, problem solving, and relationship building.

Solutions

The following were ideas raised either by interviewees, or Mr. Ceppos as a suggestion to respond to.

1. To address a lack of shared knowledge, understanding and pre-meeting preparation:
 - a. Institute “Office Hours” by SMGWA member agency staff before meetings to allow members and alternates time to review technical topics, ensure a solid understanding of an upcoming topic, and “test” a question to then be raised in the public meeting.
 - b. Institute more “homework” that members must address between meetings
2. To address the intensity of technical presentations and impacts to Board and public input:
 - a. Make presentations smaller and simpler when feasible.
 - b. Break presentations into smaller sections that allow for discussion by the Board and public in-between presentation sections.
 - c. Make presentations and the associated meeting structure more “workshop” format and provide more conditions for conversations between Board members.
 - d. Use facilitation techniques (consultant facilitator and Board Chair) that more effectively prompt and promote Board and public engagement.
3. To address a lack of trust and security to speak candidly
 - a. Create opportunities (within allowable procedures under the Brown Act) for members and alternates to spend general time together before meetings, catch up, and generally enhance interpersonal relationships that can foster more open, trusting discussions during formal meetings.
4. To address general Board member inhibitions to speak
 - a. Start meetings slightly later, thus allowing members coming from other jobs time to “change gears” and get mentally prepared for the SMGWA meeting.
 - b. Related to 3a, give members time to “warm up” conversationally by engaging with each other.
 - c. Consider shorter, more frequent meetings to allow deeper focus on each topic.

ATTACHMENT A

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) Board Member and Alternates Groundwater Sustainability Plan Process Interview Participants

Board Members
Edan Cassidy
Jack Dilles
Doug Engfer
Angela Franklin
Lois Henry
John Leopold
Bruce McPherson
Chris Perri
Dale Pollock
Ruth Stiles
Lew Farris
Board Alternate
J.M. Brown
Bill Ekwall
Rick Moran
Jeff Koopman
Donna Lind

ATTACHMENT B

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Process Interview Questionnaire

1. Do you feel like you understand the upcoming steps, timing and milestones the Board must take on SMGWA decisions?

2. If not, what questions do you have about how the process is expected to unfold in the coming months?

3. What diminishes your ease and/or ability to openly engage in Board discussions?

4. What would help you be a more active participant in upcoming discussions?

5. Do you have suggestions on a different way to prepare the GSP and/or conduct these meetings so that Board member participation increases?