



Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD)
Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EPCGSA)
Regular and Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Windfall Farms Conference Room, 4710 Flying Paster Lane, Paso Robles

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Hilary Graves.

Directors Roll Call:

Dana Merrill – absent
Lee Nesbitt - present
Jerry Reaugh – present
Hilary Graves – present
Ryan Scott - present

Others present: Guests (in person and by teleconference)

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was presented.

ITEM 3: CONVENE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH SHANDON-SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT

Hilary Graves explained her request for the special joint meeting with SSJWD to present an opportunity for both the EPCWD and SSJ boards, as well as members and the public, to have a significant conversation in one time and place.

a. Discuss and elicit feedback on the MILR questionnaire released December 5, 2024

Jerry Reaugh related that the discussions at the October 28 and November 13 EPCWD meetings of the MILR Program and its lack of a defined focus assisted in bringing the need for a questionnaire to the forefront. The discussion centered on the format and length of the Questionnaire with the consensus being that while it was a good opportunity to define all aspects of the program and elicit input, it was far too long to be effective. Again, fallowing was discussed as “low hanging fruit” in terms of being the easiest way to reduce extractions, but the 5-year lookback issue would need careful consideration, along with whether to pay for fallowing or not and where the funds to do so might come from; perhaps grants, perhaps the Districts themselves, perhaps from extraction fees. Jerry Reaugh pointed out the opportunity to use LandIQ to develop a fallowing program, and to perhaps look at a District(s) program separate and discreet from a County program. The question of what happens when farmers want to come back into production was discussed, along with the idea of paying farmers for longer fallowing commitments, and focusing on harder-hit areas of the Basin with incentives to fallow.

b. Discuss and develop direction of Rate Study key points

Hilary Graves opened the discussion and described that there are five scenarios currently in the Rate Study ranging in annual cost from \$1.7M to \$12M, depending on the potential projects being included

and which to include. Would the funding mechanism be based on extraction, on acres owned, or some hybrid method? The idea of asking for the maximum assessment in a Prop 218 proceeding to cover all projects, but charging less over time until the projects are more fully defined and needed was discussed. Basing fees entirely on extraction could potentially result in reduced pumping in response, but could lead to a funding deficit if extractions drop precipitously; basing fees entirely on acres owned would not encourage reduction in pumping. A hybrid funding structure could address both these issues. In terms of District direction to the PBCC regarding the Rate Study, it was discussed that including more information on per acre, per AF, and extraction models is needed.

The discussion moved to the governance structure, with a Joint Powers Authority being the primary approach currently under discussion. The question of whether the voting power should follow the percentages currently used in the MOA (or some version of that), or whether it should be “one GSA, one vote” came up. Also, whether GSA votes should be unanimous at 5-0, or super majority at 4-1, and the advantages/disadvantages of both, was discussed. Perhaps use 4-1 for all budget item votes and simple majority of 3-2 for all other items?

ITEM 4: UPCOMING PBCC SPECIAL MEETING AND PBCC TOWN HALL MEETING ON DECEMBER 16, 2024

Reminder about the upcoming meetings on December 16, 2024 at 1:00PM and 5:30PM respectively.

ITEM 5: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 8, 2024

ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Jerry Reaugh, seconded by Lee Nesbitt, voice vote, motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Reaugh, Secretary/Treasurer

Accepted:

Dana Merrill, President

Date