

October 4, 2023
Special Meeting
5:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District convened in special session on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the San Benito County Water District office at 30 Mansfield Road, Hollister, California. Members present were: President Sonny Flores, Vice President Andrew Shelton and Directors Joe Tonascia, Doug Williams and Mark Wright. Also present were General Manager Steve Wittry, District Counsel Jeremy T. Liem, Manager of Administration, Finance and Business Services Joyce Machado, Senior Engineer David Macdonald and Executive Assistant/Board Clerk Barbara Mauro.

CALL TO ORDER

President Flores called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
President Flores led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- b. Roll Call**
Mrs. Mauro called roll; members present were: President Flores, Vice President Shelton and Directors Tonascia, Williams and Wright.
- c. Speakers will be limited to 5 minutes to address the Board**
- d. Approval of the Agenda**
With a motion by Director Tonascia and a second by Vice President Shelton, the Agenda was approved by 5 affirmative votes, Flores, Shelton, Tonascia, Williams and Wright.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1. Approve Resolution to Award a Construction Contract in the Amount of \$166,000 to Eaton Drilling Co., LLC. for the Hollister Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Exploratory Borehole Study (Categorically Exempt from CEQA per California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 15306)**
Mr. Wittry thanked the Board for attending the special meeting. He stated at the August 30, 2023 Board meeting, the Board rejected the original bids for this project. At that meeting, it was asked if the District had permission from the County to use this property, so Mr. Wittry has provided the Board with a copy of an agreement between the District and San Benito County allowing the District permission to proceed. Mr. Wittry added Holly Kennedy from HDR, and Lidia Gutierrez from Gutierrez Consulting are participating in the meeting via Zoom. Mr. Wittry addressed two issues for this project. The first issue is, would the grant requirements be met. After review, all deliverables will be met per the grant parameters. The second issue concerned storing water near the high school and the potential of having it resurface in/near the San Juan Valley. Mr. Wittry reported the District asked Todd Groundwater to run groundwater modeling for water injection/storage in the vicinity of the high school. The modeling identified that water majority of water injected is likely to stay in the area, any migration of injected would actually travel toward the north at a fairly slow pace.

There were two bidders, and both came within budget. Mr. Wittry stated the grant terminates on December 31, 2023 with reporting due by March 31, 2024, so staff has asked DWR for an extension, just in case. Discussion ensued about timing once the contract was awarded and whether the drilling contractor could complete the project on time.

Director Tonascia asked if agenda #3 should be taken ahead of #1. Mr. Wittry stated that item 3, the update to the Authorizing Resolution for IRWM grant, has been previously approved and the only change to the resolution is that it is now for implementation and that the District is now the Administrator for ourselves as well as the other two participating agencies.

Further discussion ensued on which site was approved. Ms. Kennedy stated models were run with preliminary results on future conditions and that water would not leave the basin. Ms. Kennedy further explained about the different levels of the aquifers. Director Tonascia further asked about monitoring wells near Hospital Road and Highway 156. Ms. Kennedy stated there are a number of wells in that area, but more monitoring wells will be needed for project operation. An additional task is to look at the water quality and the interaction between the injected water and the groundwater. Ms. Kennedy added, Todd Groundwater is currently working on a model for this.

Mr. Macdonald stated that is why the District is doing an exploratory borehole project. Director Tonascia asked about the background for the project near the high school. Ms. Kennedy stated several areas were modeled with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan with a heavy emphasis on fire flows on the northside of the City of Hollister. Initial efforts were focused on the well field north of Hollister, however, there were hydraulic concerns regarding the movement of water from West Hill Water Treatment Plant to through the City's water distribution system to the northern well field. During the May/June timeline, the decision was to move the project to the southside of town.

Director Wright asked, regarding the movement of water, how do we know where the water is going? Mr. Wittry stated that is what the modeling Gus Yates, at Todd Groundwater, is working to show. Ms. Kennedy shared her screen which was a map of a model developed by Mr. Yates of water flows. She and Mr. Wittry reviewed the map for the Board.

Lidia Gutierrez added the water testing and water modeling had occurred in the initial phases of the grant. As there was a funding surplus in the grant, additional scope, including the completion of a borehole, was approved in the August 22nd 2022 grant amendment.

Vice President Shelton asked where the borehole will be located. Mr. Macdonald stated it will be in an open area near the high school in the future Riverside Park. Discussion ensued about the depth of the borehole and whether the City of Hollister and Sunnyslope County Water District would have access to water injected into the ground. Mr. Wittry also discussed the reasoning behind the previous project the District completed, which consisted of a group of monitoring wells, both shallow and deep. Mr. Liem also discussed access agreements that grant benefit from landowners to the District, which he

has reviewed. Discussion was had about whether these agreements required Board approval or simply legal review.

Richard Bettencourt, a member of the public, mentioned a neighbor pumping a lot of water and another neighbor having an orchard, also having a well, which had a boron issue. He expressed concern over the difference in the water between the two neighbors. Director Tonascia discussed how an exploratory borehole would determine the best area for the project to go forward and how the aquifer storage and recovery program would work.

With a motion by Director Williams and a second by Vice President Shelton, the Board of Directors approved Resolution #2023-20 *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District to Award a Construction Contract in the Amount of \$166,000 to Eaton Drilling Co., LLC. for the Hollister Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Exploratory Borehole Study (Categorically Exempt from CEQA per California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 15306)* by 5 affirmative votes, Flores, Shelton, Tonascia, Williams and Wright.

2. Consider Approval of a Professional Services Contract with Gutierrez Consulting for the Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Administration and Authorize the General Manager to sign the contract (NTE \$275,427)

Mr. Wittry stated this is for the next phase of grant funding. The District has had a long history with Ms. Gutierrez, and she has been a key player in the grant funds the District has been able to qualify for over the years. The next phase for \$4.78 million, for which the District is receiving \$1.8 million, the District will be the Grant Administrator. Mr. Wittry stated the program management for this grant is for approximately 4.5 years and would be for \$275,000. This contract has gone to the Administration Committee. Previously, Mr. Wittry stated the insurance clause was stricken from the standard contract template for this consultant. President Flores asked for how long? Ms. Gutierrez stated this actually started with John Gregg. The IRWM Grant is a specialized grant and can be a challenge for staff to manage. DWR only wants to have contact with one entity which is why they prefer to have an administrator. Vice President Shelton thanked Ms. Gutierrez for answering their questions. Ms. Gutierrez added she does not carry this type of insurance and she has never had the need to have it for SBCWD or any of her other clients.

With a motion by Director Tonascia and a second by Director Williams, the Board of Directors Approved of a Professional Services Contract with Gutierrez Consulting for the Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Administration and Authorized the General Manager to sign the contract (NTE \$275,427) by 5 affirmative votes, Flores, Shelton, Tonascia, Williams and Wright.

3. Consider Resolution Authorizing an Application be made to the California Department of Water Resources for an Integrated Regional Water Management Grant pursuant to the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Water Code Section 79700 et. seq.), enter into an agreement and granting General Manager Authorization to Execute Documents in relation thereto

Mr. Wittry stated when the grant was initially submitted the resolution did not list the District as the administrator and this one does. Also, the previous resolution was for planning and this one is now for implementation. Director Tonascia asked if this one should rescind the previous one? President Flores said no, we are simply replacing some of the language.

With a motion by Vice President Shelton and a second by Director Williams, the Board of Directors approved Resolution #2023-21 *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District Authorizing an Application be made to the California Department of Water Resources for an Integrated Regional Water Management Grant pursuant to the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Water Code Section 79700 et. seq.), enter into an agreement and granting General Manager Authorization to Execute Documents in relation thereto* by 5 affirmative votes, Flores, Shelton, Tonascia, Williams and Wright.

Ms. Gutierrez congratulated the District on securing the grant funding.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Minutes approved at the October 25, 2023 Board meeting and signed by the presiding board member.

/s/Sonny Flores
Sonny Flores, President

/s/Barbara L. Mauro
Barbara L. Mauro, Executive Assistant/Board Clerk