

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021

Location: Zoom Meeting

www.santarosaplaingroundwater.org

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Schwedhelm called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. **Directors Coursey, Dutton, Harvey, Jacobs, Nagle, Salmon, and Slayter were present. Director Stafford joined 1:15 p.m. Director Hopkins was absent.** Also, in attendance at the meeting, were Andy Rodgers, Administrator; Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager; Marcus Trotta, Technical Staff; Andrea Rodriguez, Outreach staff; and Simone Peters, Administrative Aide (recording meeting minutes); Peter Martin, Elizabeth Cargay, both SRP Advisory Committee members; Colin Close, City of Santa Rosa; Sam Magill, SRP Advisory Committee Facilitator, Karen Donovan, Parastou Hooshialsadat, Shannon Cotulla, and Tawny Tesconi, all members of public.

2. Consider Emergency Resolution 005-2021

Starting in March 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued a series of Executive Orders aimed at containing the novel coronavirus. These Executive Orders (N-25-20, N-29-20, N-35-20) modified certain requirements created by the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act), the state's local agency public meetings law.

In essence, the modifications allowed public bodies to meet via teleconferencing or otherwise electronically without the burden of:

1. Providing the physical address where each public official would be located during the meeting;
2. Posting the meeting agenda where each public official would be physically located; and
3. Providing a physical location for members of the public to attend the meeting.

Other key requirements of the Brown Act continued to apply, including noticing, and posting agendas and meeting materials, providing access to all meetings by telephone or through other electronic means, and allowing members of the public the opportunity to comment.

The executive orders were slated to expire on September 30, 2021. However, legislation sponsored by the California Special District Association (CSDA), AB 361, was signed by the Governor on September 16, 2021. This legislation allows remote meetings to continue without having to comply with requirements 1-3 listed above. The legislation requires that legislative bodies must pass a resolution every 30 days to continue meeting remotely.

Andy Rodgers said staff recommends the Board approve Resolution 005-2021 which would allow today's meeting and the December 9 Board meeting/Public Hearing to occur remotely.

No public comment.

Director Salmon approved Emergency Resolution 005-2021, **Director Nagle** seconded. Motion passed **7-0-3**. **Director Harvey** (no audible response), **Director Hopkins** and **Director Stafford** absent.

Vote Roll Call

Director Harvey – no audible response, **Director Stafford** – absent, **Director Slayter** – aye, **Director Dutton** – aye, **Director Jacobs** – aye, **Director Hopkins** – absent, **Director Nagle** – aye, **Director Salmon** – aye, **Director Schwedhelm** – aye, **Director Coursey** – aye

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

No public comment.

4. Consent Calendar

- a. Approve Minutes of October 14, 2021 Board Meeting
- b. Approve Year-To-Date Financial Report

No public comment.

Director Coursey approved the consent calendar, as presented, **Director Salmon** seconded. Motion passed **6-0-4**. (**Directors Dutton and Harvey** – no audible response, and **Directors Hopkins and Stafford** absent).

Vote Roll Call

Director Harvey – no audible response, **Director Stafford** – absent, **Director Slayter** – aye, **Director Dutton** – no audible response, **Director Jacobs** – aye, **Director Hopkins** – absent, **Director Nagle** – aye, **Director Salmon** – aye, **Director Schwedhelm** – aye, **Director Coursey** – aye

5. Directors/Subcommittee Report

No report.

No public comment.

6. Advisory Committee Report

No report.

No public comment.

7. Information items

- a. Water Supply Conditions Update

Jay confirmed that despite the recent rain, we are still in a drought, reservoir levels are improved but “holes” to fill, especially Lake Mendocino. Rains have wetted the watershed, we are hopeful, we are early in the year, great start. Looks like the longer-range forecast is the establishment of Pacific ridges. Significant changes have occurred, despite us still being in a drought, the trend is moving in the right direction. The State Water Resources Control Board did an analysis of the water supply and temporarily, suspended their

curtailments of water. The 20% curtailment we were under has also been temporarily, suspended. We are increasing our diversions from the Russian River to allow our contractors to fill reservoirs, etc. No questions or comments from the Board or the public.

b. Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Public Review Comment Period Update

A public review draft of the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was released on October 1, 2021. The public comment period closed on October 31, 2021. About 50 members of the public attended a virtual community meeting on October 13, 2021 to learn about the Santa Rosa Plain subbasin GSP and for information on how to provide comments. During the comment period, 20 comment entries were received from 15 individuals or organizations

Andy Rodgers said there had been a special Board meeting on September 30, another Board meeting on October 14 and a Community meeting October 13. The comment period opened on October 1 and closed on October 31. This is a special meeting today to maximize the opportunity for the public to address the Board.

Jay Jasperse added that on Monday this week, the Advisory Committee met to discuss the GSP and recommended adoption of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan by the Board. Possible adoption will be at the Board meeting/Public hearing on December 9, 2021. The deadline for submitting the Plan to the Department of Water Resources is January 31, 2022. Jasperse highlighted the main comments received from 17 commenters; statewide and Santa Rosa specific. All comments are being read and considered.

Marcus Trotta provided an overview of specific comments received per section and the resulting edits, corrections, and updates. While the GSA is not required by SGMA to respond to comments in writing, we will include responses to these as well as previous Advisory Committee comments as an appendix to the GSP.

Questions/Comments

Director Nagle – For the comments received, will they be attached to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan as an appendix? How are they incorporated into the GSP?

Trotta – We are adding them as an appendix. The appendix (a spreadsheet listing all comments and responses) will include comments from August, the October public review period, and the Advisory Committee members.

Director Jacobs – Do we expect to see additional comments once it is submitted to DWR?

Trotta – After we submit the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, DWR will open a 75-day public comment period. Hopefully, addressing as many comments now as possible will minimize the number of comments that could be submitted to DWR.

No public comment.

c. Grant Projects Updates

Marcus Trotta – Prop 68 grant funding for RMP. We bid the project in August and only received one

response; it was way over budget. We re-did bid for two wells and a possible third one; bidding opened yesterday. We appear to have some bids that will allow us to get the wells (2-3 based on preliminary assessment of the bids) completed in springtime next year.

The other project that is part of the Prop 68 grant is seepage runs/streamflow measurements to better inform surface-water – groundwater interaction where gaining streams are losing reaches. It was kicked off last month and will continue the next nine months or so to help with the sustainable management criteria for surface water depletion.

The schedule for the electromagnetic flights has slipped a little; the helicopters that DWR is flying throughout the state, will be flying next week. Outreach has coordinated closely with DWR to get the word out to landowners.

No questions or comments from the Board or the public.

8. Action Items (covered before 7C at the meeting)

a. Letter of Support for a Sonoma Water Drought Resiliency Project Grant Application.

The California State Budget Act of 2021 allocated \$300 million to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to deliver grants for interim and immediate drought relief to urban communities and for multi-benefit projects.

Sonoma Water has three groundwater wells in the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin that were installed to provide supplemental water supply during droughts and as a backup during other emergencies such as seismic events. These wells have been inactive since 2016 due to changes in state regulations regarding disinfection contact time requirements. On May 18, 2021, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved a budget resolution providing funding from the County of Sonoma to support this effort by activating one of the wells (Todd Road well).

Given the funding requirements of this grant program and the impacts of the drought, Sonoma Water has identified an eligible project that they seek to obtain grant funding to rehabilitate two well sites to provide important drought relief for the region (in addition to seismic resiliency), and in addition includes the capacity to recharge winter/spring water into the groundwater subbasin through aquifer storage and recovery to replace extracted groundwater.

Andy Rodgers provided an introduction and background. Jay Jasperse added that a letter from the GSA is necessary to apply for funding. Staff recommends the Board consider the attached draft Letter of Support from the GSA for Sonoma Water’s DWR grant application for the rehabilitation of two well sites to provide important drought relief for the region.

Questions

Director Slayter – What GPM are these wells in terms of extraction?

Jasperse – Both about 1.8 million gallons a day, recharge would be about half that.

No public comment.

Director Harvey moved to approve the attached draft Letter of Support from the GSA for Sonoma Water's DWR grant application for the rehabilitation of two well sites to provide important drought relief for the region (in addition to seismic resiliency), and in addition include the capacity to recharge winter/spring water into the groundwater subbasin through aquifer storage and recovery to replace extracted groundwater, **Director Slayter** seconded. Motion passed **9-0-1**. **Director Hopkins** absent.

Vote Roll Call

Director Harvey – aye, **Director Stafford** – aye (nodding), **Director Slayter** – aye, **Director Dutton** – aye, **Director Jacobs** – aye, **Director Hopkins** – absent, **Director Nagle** – aye, **Director Salmon** – aye, **Director Schwedhelm** – aye, **Director Coursey** – aye

b. Letter of Support for a Sonoma Water Drought Resiliency Project Grant Application.

The California State Budget Act of 2021 allocated \$300 million to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to deliver grants for interim and immediate drought relief to urban communities and for multi-benefit projects.

Given the funding requirements of this grant program and the impacts of the drought, the Town of Windsor has identified two eligible projects that they seek to obtain grant funding to bring their off-river groundwater supply back online for droughts or other emergencies.

An Esposti Municipal Well was installed in 2010 to replace a nearby well that had naturally occurring arsenic above the California Maximum Contaminant Level (C-MCL) allowed in drinking water. The arsenic level increased after the well was installed, rendering the well inoperable due to the arsenic level. This project would include a Well Head Treatment System to remove the arsenic to below drinking water limits.

A second, North Windsor Supply Well Project would consist of replacing a second Town well that had arsenic levels above the C-MCL by constructing a new drinking water supply well, and treatment system if one is required.

Staff recommends the Board consider a Letter of Support from the GSA to Town of Windsor for the DWR grant application for an arsenic treatment plant and well with a possible treatment system project.

Questions/Comments

Director Jacobs – Are the wells within the Santa Rosa Plain?

Director Salmon – Yes, they are in the basin. We will be looking for recharge from one of the wells. Elizabeth Cargay, Town of Windsor – Yes, they are in the Santa Rosa Plain. We are looking to restore one of our wells that has arsenic in it. Remainder of reply inaudible because of technical difficulties.

Director Nagle – What is the size of the casing and size of pump on the system to get 1,250 gallons/minute?

Cargay – 350 gallons, casing size is probably a 10 or 12 inch, that is what the other wells are.

Director Nagle – Jay Jasperse said 1.8 million gallons a day, are we talking about two separate wells?

Cargay – We are talking about treating one well that exists.... Remainder of reply inaudible because of technical difficulties.

Director Jacobs moved to approve a Letter of Support from the GSA to Town of Windsor for the DWR grant application for an arsenic treatment plant and well with a possible treatment system project, **Director Harvey** seconded. Motion passed **9-0-1**. **Director Hopkins** absent.

No public comment.

Vote Roll Call

Director Harvey – aye, **Director Stafford** – aye (nodding), **Director Slayter** – aye, **Director Dutton** – aye, **Director Jacobs** – aye, **Director Hopkins** – absent, **Director Nagle** – aye, **Director Salmon** – aye, **Director Schwedhelm** – aye, **Director Coursey** – aye

9. Administrator and Plan Manager Report

No report from Legal Counsel.

Andy Rodgers said the Advisory Committee met on Monday and heard the comment summaries from Jay Jasperse and Marcus Trotta. On a scale of 1-5 (1 needs improvement, 5 the GSP addresses SRP's needs under SGMA) poll results include (eight scores of a 5 rating, one score of 4, two scores of 3 and some didn't provide a score. Fourteen members recommended the Plan for adoption by the Board, we haven't heard from four members yet.

Director Schwedhelm – Does DWR have a timeline to respond?

Rodgers – Two years.

Andy Rodgers confirmed that SCI Consulting Group is conducting rate and fee studies for the three Sonoma County GSAs. Database preparation and information gathering is under way.

Jay Jasperse said that DWR is finalizing their guidance on grant funding for SGMA, which is key to our financing. About 150 million dollars is available for critically over-drafted basins early in next year, and at least 205 million dollars for the medium and high priority basins – most likely towards the end of 2022 or early 2023. We will be proactive to get as much funding as possible.

No public comment.

10. Adjournment

Chair Schwedhelm thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 2:12 p.m. The next Board meeting/public hearing will be a virtual meeting on December 9, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.