

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency – October 19, 2021

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A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency was held via teleconference at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. A copy of the Agenda is inserted in the Minute Book of the Agency preceding these minutes.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Kathy Armitage, B. J. Atkins, Beth Braunstein, Ed Colley, William Cooper, Jeff Ford, Jerry Gladbach, R. J. Kelly, Gary Martin, Dan Mortensen, Piotr Orzechowski and Lynne Plambeck via teleconference.

DIRECTORS ABSENT: None.

Also present via teleconference: General Manager Matthew Stone, General Counsel Tom Bunn, Board Secretary April Jacobs, Assistant General Manager Steve Cole, Chief Engineer Courtney Mael, Chief Operating Officer Keith Abercrombie, Director of Finance and Administration Rochelle Patterson, Director of Operations and Maintenance Mike Alvord, Director of Technology Services Cris Perez, Director of Water Resources Dirk Marks, Controller Amy Aguer, Customer Service Manager Kathleen Willson, Senior Engineer Shadi Bader, Senior Management Analyst Kim Grass, Sustainability GIS Manager Jose Huerta, Engineer Yoganathan Thierumaran, Associate Engineer Elizabeth Sobczak, Financial Analyst Darine Conner, Management Analyst II Cheryl Fowler, Administrative Technician Terri Bell, Accounting Tech II Kyle Arnold, Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority Executive Director Graham Bradner and Chief of Staff Claudia Rodriguez, DWR Environmental Manager Carrie Buckman, and members of the public.

President Martin called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present.

Upon motion of Director Atkins, seconded by Vice President Gladbach and carried, noting that there was no need to go into Closed Session, the Board approved the Agenda by the following roll call votes (Item 4):

Director Armitage	Yes	Director Atkins	Yes
Director Braunstein	Yes	Director Colley	Yes
Director Cooper	Yes	Director Ford	Yes
Vice President Gladbach	Yes	Director Kelly	Yes
President Martin	Yes	Vice President Mortensen	Yes
Director Orzechowski	Yes	Director Plambeck	Yes

SCV Director of Water Resources Dirk Marks, Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority Executive Director Graham Bradner and DWR Environmental Manager Carrie Buckman gave a presentation on the Delta Conveyance Project (Item 5.1).

Upon motion of Vice President Mortensen, seconded by Director Atkins and carried, the Board approved the Consent Calendar, excluding Item 6.3 which was pulled for further discussion, by the following roll call votes (Item 6):

Director Armitage	Yes	Director Atkins	Yes
Director Braunstein	Abstained	Director Colley	Yes
Director Cooper	Yes	Director Ford	Yes

Vice President Gladbach	Yes	Director Kelly	Yes
President Martin	Yes	Vice President Mortensen	Yes
Director Orzechowski	Yes	Director Plambeck	Yes

Upon motion of Director Cooper, seconded by Vice President Gladbach and carried, the Board approved Resolution No. SCV-236 determining Metro Builders & Engineers Group, Ltd. (Metro) construction bid as non-responsive and therefore rejected Metro's bid and awarded a construction contract to NoHo Constructors in an amount not to exceed \$463,000 for the Earl Schmidt Filtration Plant Standby Generator Project by the following roll call votes (Item 6.3):

Director Armitage	Yes	Director Atkins	Yes
Director Braunstein	Yes	Director Colley	No
Director Cooper	Yes	Director Ford	Yes
Vice President Gladbach	Yes	Director Kelly	Yes
President Martin	Yes	Vice President Mortensen	No
Director Orzechowski	Yes	Director Plambeck	Yes

**RESOLUTION NO. SCV-236**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY WATER AGENCY  
AWARDING A CONTRACT TO NOHO CONSTRUCTORS FOR THE  
EARL SCHMIDT FILTRATION PLANT STANDBY GENERATOR PROJECT**

**[HTTPS://YOURSCVWATER.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2021/10/SCV-WATER-APPROVED-RESOLUTION-101921-RESOLUTION-SCV-236.PDF](https://yourscvwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SCV-WATER-APPROVED-RESOLUTION-101921-RESOLUTION-SCV-236.PDF)**

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Upon motion of Director Cooper, seconded by Director Atkins and carried, the Board reaffirmed Resolution No. SCV-235 and found that a state of emergency related to COVID-19 is currently in effect and Los Angeles County officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing but did not find that meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health and safety of attendees by the following roll call votes (Item 7.1):

Director Armitage	Yes	Director Atkins	Yes
Director Braunstein	Yes	Director Colley	Yes
Director Cooper	Yes	Director Ford	Yes
Vice President Gladbach	Yes	Director Kelly	Yes
President Martin	Yes	Vice President Mortensen	Yes
Director Orzechowski	Yes	Director Plambeck	Yes

No action was taken on Item 7.2 at this time.

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**General Manager's Report on Activities, Projects and Programs (Item 8).**

The General Manager reported that the Agency held 14 small group Safety Tailgate meetings over a period of 3 days during the week of October 11, 2021. The purpose of these meetings were to update staff on several items related to COVID. The following items were covered:

- Staff was thanked for their efforts over the last 18 (nearly 19) months.
- A review of the Agency's COVID-19 safety worksite plan, preventative measures, as well as contact tracing and quarantine requirements that apply in the case of close contact.
- Potential/upcoming OSHA rulemaking relating to employers with more than 100 employees.
- Presentation of "milestone" awards for staff completing 5 to 25 years of service with the Agency (and its predecessors).
- A review of the recently enacted Flexible Workplace Policy. (Which eligible staff are very supportive of and excited about.)
  - Fun facts: On average one-way commute distance for eligible employees is just under 14 miles, and the median is 6 miles. The minimum is just over a mile, and the maximum is 47 miles (one way). Up to 147,000 miles of annual commuting, 6,100 gallons of gas, and 59,000 kilograms of greenhouse gasses would be reduced. Assuming 30 miles per hour average commute speed, that is also 4,900 hours of time saved.

He then updated the Board on a recent meeting that he and the Director of Finance and Administration Rochelle Patterson had with Andy Sells from the ACWA JPIA regarding the Agency's upcoming Liability Policy renewal. He mentioned the Agency's premium will increase by just under \$400,000 this year due to the Agency's recent E-MOD rate for claims, and the number of claims exceeding \$100,000 in the past 3 years. This and other insurance cost increases will cause us to exceed our Budget for 2021-22. Mrs. Patterson can provide more information on overall budget impacts at an upcoming Finance and Administration Committee.

In addition, he stated they also used the opportunity to discuss the proactive PVC pipeline replacement projects the Agency has completed or has in design, mentioning they hope this will reduce the frequency of larger claims.

Further, he wanted to mention to Vice President Gladbach that he appreciated Mr. Sells taking the time to call the Agency about the premium increase and background rather than simply sending an invoice with no communication.

On a another note, he acknowledged that many of the Directors may have received an email and video (emceed by Mayor Miranda) inviting them to an event at "The Main" to hear about "water harvesting". He mentioned that he received several inquiries this week about that email asking if "This is an SCV Water project or a City project"? He identified that it is neither the City or the Agency's project.

He explained that a few years ago he had the opportunity to meet a local resident, Mr. John Pramik, who has a passion for an idea that he saw on a trip to Tempe, Arizona. There is a section of the Salt River that was converted to a recreational impoundment using rubber dams and lining. Mr. Pramik built a "table top" model of our local river/creek channels in his dining room. On that model he laid out a vision for what that Arizona concept might look like here in Santa Clarita. Over the last few years, he has invited many local leaders (and a number of SCV water resources and management staff) over to discuss the model and get reactions to it.

He informed the Board that he had reached out to Mr. Pramik and was told that the event is intended to let more people see the concept (as refined over a few years) and gauge the level of interest in it.

In conclusion, the General Manager described that implementing something like this would have its challenges. If the creek is lined, the recharge value of the creek bottom would be lost. If the river has rubber dams to create an impoundment, a water source and evaporation makeup water would be needed to maintain it, as well as water quality considerations. Species and watershed management issues would be significant as well. Seasonal operation of the rubber dams would bring challenges. While we (and as he understands – the City) are not proponents of this concept, there is something engaging with the way the model puts the local river and creek beds into context, and provokes thinking about alternative approaches. He said he thinks that the Board would find the experience interesting.

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### **Committee Meeting Recap Report for Informational Purposes Only (Item 9).**

There were no comments on the recap report.

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### **President's Report (Item 10).**

President Martin recognized Director Gladbach's recent CALAFCO Lifetime Achievement Award that was received on October 7, 2021. He informed the Board that this award, which CALAFCO has bestowed on less than a dozen individuals in its 50-year history, is the organization's highest honor. He then updated the Board on upcoming meetings, events and Board reminders.

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### **AB 1234 Written and Verbal Reports (Item 11).**

A written report was submitted by Vice President Gladbach which was included in the Board packet.

Director Orzechowski reported that he attended the CSDA 2021 Special District Leadership Academy - Comprehensive Governance Conference Leadership for Elected and Appointed Directors/Trustees held in Lake Tahoe on September 26-29,2021.

Director Armitage reported that she attended virtually the first meeting of the Board of the local chapter of the Santa Clarita Valley and Antelope Valley California Special District Association held on October 11, 2021.

Director Atkins reported that he attended virtually the United Water Conservation District's Water Sustainability Summit held on October 14, 2021.

There were no other AB 1234 Reports.

### **Director Reports (Item 12).**

Director Orzechowski reported that he, Vice President Gladbach and Directors Armitage, Cooper and Plambeck, along with staff attended the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Board Technology and Remote Public Participation meeting that was held at the SCV Water Summit Circle location. He stated that some of the Board and staff participated in person and some virtually, those in person practiced social distancing and wore masks.

He informed the Board that the main purpose of the meeting was to explore and test the virtual/in-person setup capabilities at the SCV Water Summit Circle's Training Room. The Committee discussed the following items:

- A first draft of a Policy Considerations Matrix to help aid in the decision making process. The Matrix was prepared by the General Manager.
- Agency's General Counsel Tom Bunn briefed the Ad Hoc Committee on all State legislation out of Sacramento that may force SCV Water to adapt a permanent virtual option for the public. At the time of the meeting, no such legislation was imminent.
- Agency's IT staff provided an update on what other similar-sized water agencies are offering to the public in terms of virtual participation, recordings, and post-meeting availability of recorded sessions.
- Agency's IT staff also provided a thorough review of what is available at Agency's facilities and what needs to be added (in terms of software and hardware). Initial implementation cost was also presented.

Director Orzechowski stated that the Ad Hoc Committee is not ready at this time to bring any final recommendations to the Board but will be meeting again to cover the following:

- Go over all costs associated with implementing a virtual option (i.e. labor, maintenance, annual service fees, etc.).
- Expand and discuss the Policy Decision Matrix. We will elaborate on the benefit to the public, Directors and staff.
- IT will review progress/mistakes/successes/lesson-learned made by similar-sized water agencies, special districts, city councils, and school boards that have decided to invest early in the virtual-attendance technology.

Director Armitage wanted to recognize and welcome the students from College of the Canyons who attended tonight's Board meeting. She hopes they continue to attend SCV Water meetings and make comments. She also wanted them to consider attending SCV Water Committee meetings, where they can get more details on items that the Board considers. She encouraged them to reach out should they have questions. Lastly, she wanted to make sure they knew that College of the Canyons has a great Water Systems Technology program.

Next, she thanked the Public Relations and Outreach team for the information being distributed on programs available for utility assistance. She is grateful to see that this is happening.

She ended with congratulating all of the staff that received milestone awards.

There were no other Director reports.

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There was no need for the Board to go into Closed Session (Items 13 and 14).

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There were no Director requests for event attendance. (Item 15)

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**Director Requests for Future Agenda Items (Item 16).**

Director Kelly inquired about Director Colley's request for review of the Directors policy on Director remote attendance. He was wondering when that would be coming to the Board.

Director Orzechowski informed the Board that at the October 13, 2021 Water Resources and Watershed Committee meeting there was discussion on mitigation, option impacts and stress tests. He requested that the Board receive a similar or more thorough report regarding the water supply portfolio, stress tests, mitigation option impacts from 2022 to 2023 and the current status of those options at the next Board meeting.

Director Orzechowski also requested that the Agency provide the Board with a plan regarding AB 1346, specifically on facilities and operations and how the Agency plans to transition from fossil small engines to some other alternatives or if we could get an exception for our facilities.

Director Coley wanted to follow-up on his request that the Board reviews the Directors policy on Director remote attendance at Board and Committee meetings. He wanted to make sure it comes to the Board sooner than later for discussion.

There were no other requests for future Agenda items.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM (Item 17).

  
April Jacobs, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

  
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President of the Board

