

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
SAN JUAN WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021, 4 p.m., SPECIAL MEETING

Attendance

A Special Meeting to discuss 2022 budget projections was held in person at the SJWCD office at 46 Eaton Drive, Suite #5. A Zoom link was also provided.

The following Directors were present in the office: Al Pfister, Bill Hudson, Susan Nossaman, John Porco, and Joe Tedder.

Also present in-person was Sally High, Executive Assistant.

Attending the meeting by Zoom were Jeffery Kane (Attorney), Mandy Eskelson (San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership), Mely Whiting (San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership), Terri House (Pagosa Sun), and Jessica Hanson (Pagosa Sun).

Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD) was called to order by Chairman Al Pfister at 4:01 p.m.

Revisions to Agenda

An item regarding the Growing Water Smart Technical Assistance Request was added to the agenda at Director Pfister's request.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The Board considered Declarations of Conflicts of Interest. Director Hudson disclosed that he intended to write about his opinions regarding issues discussed in this meeting for the Pagosa Daily Post.

Public Comment

Chairman Pfister opened the meeting to public comment. No comments were offered.

Consideration of Board Travel Reimbursement Procedures

Directors considered appropriate reimbursement rates per mile for travel to water-related conferences, workshops, or symposia. The standard reimbursement rate for government travel is \$.56 per mile. Directors have agreed that it is desirable for SJWCD to re-engage with other water entities and participate in networking, educational, and promotional activities.

After suggesting a reimbursement of \$.14 or \$.16 per mile, Director Hudson moved that Directors be reimbursed for “actual costs,” rather than the standard \$.56 per mile. The motion died for lack of a second.

Director Pfister moved that Directors be reimbursed at the standard \$.56 per mile rate for SJWCD travel outside Pagosa Springs. Director Nossaman seconded. The motion passed with 4 yes votes. Director Hudson voted no.

Consideration of 2022 Budget Projections ahead of Regular October Meeting

Director Hudson provided Directors a preliminary projected budget and a list of notes.

Director Pfister asks Attorney Kane to state concerns about two specific upcoming expenses. Attorney Kane makes the following two suggestions. (1) Projected costs for Engineering Studies/Surveys (Line Item 13) for Treasure Pass should be increased, because of the coming engagement with the court. (2) Projected costs for Due Diligence (Line Items 14 and 16) regarding Senior Dry Gulch Water Rights should be increased.

Directors heard a (2-part) presentation by two WEP representatives before further discussion of the 2022 budget. Director Hudson stated that Director Pfister should recuse himself. Director Pfister, and later Ms. Whiting and Ms. Eskelson, confirmed that Director Pfister derives no compensation related to the project they were describing today. Director Pfister left the room.

Ms. Whiting and Ms. Eskelson first reviewed WEP’s history through three phases of identifying and addressing water issues. Previous to the meeting, Director Hudson sent a 7-page document to WEP, SJWCD Directors, and Attorney Kane. The document detailed his objections to WEP’s funding request. Leading the list of objections was a perceived lack of a functioning Stakeholders Group that meets in person. WEP explained their contacts with ditch companies and private ag water users, an upcoming public meeting rescheduled for October, WEP’s on-line survey and willingness to hear public opinion by telephone, confidentiality, and the difficulties of convening any group for an in-person meeting during Covid.

The WEP Representatives next explained their reason for addressing the Board today. WEP requested \$2,500 for 2022 to be added to matching funds for a specific project, in partnership with ToPS, intended to improve the San Juan River upstream from the ToPS town limits and downstream at Yamaguchi South Park. WEP is requesting funds from more than one water-related group and plans to repeat their request to SJWCD in 2023 and 2024. Planning, design work, and public contacts for both San Juan River locations have begun. The project addresses recreational and environmental water uses. Significant (federal) CWCB money is available if matching funds can be secured. The process starts with the local Basin Roundtable.

Director Tedder described the need for Growing Water Smart, SJWCD, WEP, and other stakeholder groups to pull together and to send one cohesive water message to the community. WEP needs to address the perceived lack of a committed Stakeholders Group and SJWCD will revisit funding (line item 40). Directors will continue to review the proposed 2022 budget, which will be approved at the October Regular Meeting.

Discussion of Growing Water Smart Technical Assistance Request

Director Pfister distributed a copy of the GWS request for \$10,000 funding from Sonoran Institute. GWS intends to hire a third-party consultant, an expert with knowledge of water engineering, CO water law, and local water issues. The consultant will analyze existing data, including changes in community demographics, and compile a summary of water supply and demand and other relevant information. The resulting overview of local water information will lead to an action plan. The GWS consultant will interact with the professional counterparts hired by ToPS and SJWCD. GWS asked ToPS to serve as fiscal administrator for the project.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally High
Executive Assistant SJWCD
For the Board of Directors