

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

February 25, 2021

Meetings Minutes

PRESENT:

Kelly, Brenton – Chair
DeBranch, Brad – Vice Chair
Draucker, Louise
Furstenfeld, Jake
Haslett, Joe
Jaffe, Roberta
Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel

ABSENT:

None

1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Brenton Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and Hallmark Group Project Manager Taylor Blakslee provided direction on the meeting protocols to facilitate a remote-only meeting.

2. Roll Call

Hallmark Group Project Manager Taylor Blakslee called roll of the Committee (shown above).

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Kelly led the pledge of allegiance.

4. Annual Appointment of Committee Members

Mr. Blakslee provided a background of the establishment of the SAC Guidelines in May 2018 that established 3-year Committee terms following the submittal of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 31, 2020. He noted that the SAC established staggered, 1-, 2- and 3-year terms and Committee Member Louise Draucker was up for reappointment.

Chair Kelly let the SAC know he had spoke with Committee Member Draucker and she was willing to continue serving.

MOTION

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to extend Committee Member Draucker's term for another 3 years. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: DeBranch, Draucker, Haslett, Furstenfeld, Jaffe, Kelly

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

5. Election of Officers

Chair Kelly announced the need to appoint Chair and Vice Chair positions and let the SAC know he was willing to continue serving as the Chair.

MOTION

Committee Member Furstenfeld made a motion to appoint Committee Member Kelly as Chair. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jaffe, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: DeBranch, Draucker, Haslett, Furstenfeld, Jaffe, Kelly
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Chair Kelly asked if Committee Member DeBranch was willing to continue serving as Vice Chair and Committee Member DeBranch said he was unless another Committee Member wanted an opportunity to serve as Vice Chair.

MOTION

Committee Member Furstenfeld made a motion to appoint Committee Member DeBranch as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: DeBranch, Draucker, Haslett, Furstenfeld, Jaffe, Kelly
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

6. Update on SAC Membership

Chair Kelly reported that he has been in talks with Cuyama resident Jean Gaillard and is likely willing to serve on the SAC. He said we need to get a SAC application to Mr. Gaillard ahead of the next SAC meeting. Mr. Gaillard said he is very happy to join the SAC because of the critically important issues the SAC is advising on in the basin.

7. Update on SAC Role Ad hoc

Chair Kelly reported that the SAC Role ad hoc met on January 21, 2021 to discuss ways to coordinate and ensure proper support and guidance is being provided to the SAC. He reported it was a good meeting, and while there were no specific actions, it was a helpful meeting. He let the SAC know the Board ad hoc expressed appreciation for all the hard work the SAC has been doing.

8. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the January 7, 2021 CBGSA SAC meeting minutes. No changes were suggested.

MOTION

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to adopt the January 7, 2021 CBGSA SAC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Kelly, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

- AYES: DeBranch, Draucker, Haslett, Furstenfeld, Jaffe, Kelly
- NOES: None
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: None

9. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities

Woodard & Curran’s Technical Project Manager Brian Van Lienden provided an update on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) activities and the overall project schedule which are included in the SAC packet.

b. Approval of the 2021 Annual Report

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the 2021 Annual Report which is included in the SAC packet. He commented that land use, precipitation and evapotranspiration data were updated in the model for the 2020 update. He noted that the fall 2020 groundwater contours provide much better data since there are more wells being monitored from the previous year.

Executive Director Jim Beck suggested including the previous year change in groundwater level map in the 2022 annual report.

Committee Member Jaffe asked if key landmarks could be included to the various maps (streams, canyons, and Foothill and Bell Road). Staff said they would look into accommodating this request.

Committee Member Jaffe thanked the team for putting together the 2021 Annual Report, but said it was disconcerting to see the same trend of water depletion. She noted that the Annual Report (specifically table 2-2) does not consistently reference the far-northwestern region and asked staff to consider including this reference where appropriate. Mr. Van Lienden said we can consider making this change.

She also asked if staff was concerned with subsidence, but staff reported that subsidence is primarily an issue under SGMA as it impacts structures and infrastructure; however, even though there is minimal infrastructure in Cuyama, the reported subsidence is estimated to be minimal.

MOTION

Committee Member Jaffe made a motion to adopt the 2021 Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Committee Member DeBranch, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

- AYES: DeBranch, Draucker, Furstenfeld, Jaffe, Kelly
- NOES: None
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: Haslett

c. Adopt Model Refinement Technical Memo

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the model refinement plan which is summarized in the SAC packet. He reported that he grouped items in the memo by recommendation of completion if grant funding is received or not.

Committee Member Jaffe said she appreciated seeing the information broken into two sections but is concerned with high cost of the items and asked about the costs for piezometers. Mr. Beck reminded the SAC that staff is looking for a general approval of the Technical memo and the financial considerations are the purview of the Board and we need to stay on point in our review of the memo.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Steve Slack commented that the "CDFW appreciates the piezometers to evaluate the GDE's and Interconnected surface water. Understanding these two factors is critical in achieving sustainability."

Chair Kelly asked if the Committee was willing to make a recommendation on the memo and no recommendation was made.

d. Options for CBGSA Administration of New Development and Changes in Water Use

Mr. Beck reported that we received a presentation from cannabis industry representative Amy Steinfeld and their plans to mitigate their proposed development in the Cuyama Basin. He reported that the Board requested staff discuss the GSA's role in administration of new developed land and potential changes of water in current development. He let the SAC know legal counsel Alex Dominguez will present a legal framework for what the GSA's authority is on this matter.

Key points from his presentation included:

- Nothing in SGMA or a GSP adopted under SGMA supersedes a city or county's land use authority.
- County planning agencies must consider GSPs and anticipated effects of proposed actions during general plan development.
- SGMA requires that a GSA consider, among other things, the interests of local land use planning agencies.
- SGMA provides GSAs with broad powers including establishing groundwater allocations, impose spacing requirements on new groundwater well construction and regulate, limit or suspend extractions from individual groundwater wells, and construction or enlargement of new groundwater wells.

Committee Member Jaffe thanked staff for putting this material together and asked Mr. Dominguez to expand on the GSA's ability to regulate, limit or suspend well permits. Mr. Dominguez said the authority to approve permits is with the counties but the collaboration with the GSA and County has not been defined yet.

Mr. Gaillard says temporary transfers sounds like a water offset and asked if this will be a contradiction of the hydrogeologic model. Mr. Beck said potential transfers would have to be approved by the GSA and many GSAs in the State are wrestling with this issue, if they should allow transfer and what the technical conditions are to allow this.

e. Update on Monitoring Network Implementation

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on monitoring network implementation activities which is summarized in the SAC packet. He noted that 6 of the 10 transducers have been installed and these

should be finalized by the end of March 2021.

Mr. Blakslee reported that staff has been in coordination with USGS on the joint funding agreement and once this is drafted work can start on the two stream gauges.

f. Update on Monthly Groundwater Conditions Report

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the groundwater level monitoring network and levels for January 2021 which are included in the SAC packet.

g. Update on Modifications to the Groundwater Level Monitoring Network

Mr. Van Lienden reminded the SAC that the SAC and Board voted to reduce the groundwater level monitoring network from 101 wells to 58 and to move from monthly monitoring to quarterly monitoring. He said staff has been in communication with DWR on the proposed changes and while they were favorable to the reduction of wells, they recommended monitoring occur monthly through June 30, 2021 before reducing to quarterly.

Mr. Van Lienden also reported that due to the reduction in the network staff considered potential impacts to thresholds and trigger percentages. He noted that changing the adaptive management trigger (currently set in the GSP as 30 percent of representative wells below their minimum thresholds for two consecutive years) would likely require a GSP amendment. However, he said with the reduction of the network and the onboarding of three DWR TSS wells and considering the two existing multi completion wells, the representative network would actually increase from 60 to 65 and staff recommends keeping thresholds as they are set.

10. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Director

Nothing to report.

b. Coordination between the GSA and Counties

Committee Member Jaffe reported that Santa Barbara County has set up an advisory committee to develop voluntary guidelines that cannabis permittees can include in their permit applications. She said there is a potential to include six Cuyama valley residents and five cannabis industry representatives on the committee. She noted that the GSA will need to be connected into this at some point. She reported that the advisory committee held their first orientation meeting this week and there are currently five Cuyama Basin participants.

c. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the March 3, 2021 CBGSA Board of Directors meeting agenda which is provided in the SAC packet.

d. Report of the General Counsel

Nothing to report.

11. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Nothing to report.

12. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

13. Public comment for items not on the Agenda

Nothing to report.

14. Correspondence

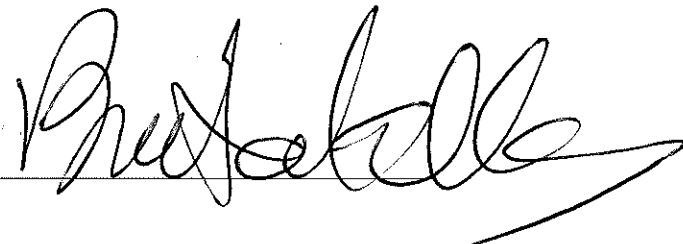
Nothing to report.

15. Adjourn

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 29th day of April 2021.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: 

ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch: 