**NORTH BAY WATER DISTRICT**

**22950 BROADWAY, SONOMA, CA  95476**

Board of Directors

Mike Mulas, President, and Chair (Sonoma Valley); Craig Jacobsen, Vice-President (Petaluma Valley); Carolyn Wasem, Secretary (Petaluma Valley); Matthew Stornetta, Treasurer (Sonoma Valley); and Mike Sangiacomo (Sonoma Valley).

PVGSA Advisor: Eugene Camozzi SVGSA Advisor:  Jim Bundschu

SGMA Compliance Advisor: Mike Martini

Technical Advisor: GinaLisa Tamayo

Legal Counsel: Richard Idell

Date: September 12, 2023

Time:  4:00 pm

Location:   22950 Broadway, Schell-Vista Station #1 Sonoma, Ca

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chair Mike Mulas called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm.Chair Mike Mulas and Directors Craig Jacobson, Mike Sangiacomo and Carolyn Wasem were present.

1. **CLOSED SESSION**

There were no closed session items.

1. **PUBLIC COMMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Director Sangiacomo made a motion to approve the August 2023 Minutes. Director Jacobsen seconded the motion. The August 2023 Minutes were unanimously approved.

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Chair Mulas reported that NBWD has $48,952.15 in the bank. Director Jacobson made a motion to approve the August Financials. Director Wasem seconded the motion. The August 2023 Financials were unanimously approved.

1. **GUEST SPEAKER**

Bill Keene, Administrator of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVGSA), shared that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) made its awards final, and Sonoma Valley was awarded over $3 million for monitoring, water use efficiency plans/implementation, and pilot programs detailed in the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SCGSP). Additionally, those dollars will go to support policy option assessments and monitoring and outreach. The Sonoma Valley GSA was one of the few basins that were granted the award as part of the second-round process. It appears that the Petaluma Valley GSA and Santa Rosa Plain GSA received all the dollars that they asked for in the grant process.

Many of you are aware that Sonoma Water with North Bay Salt Marsh project is nearing completion. As part of the future of that project, there may be more grant funding for use of recycled water. This is something we should collaborate on together. Sending water to agriculture users is a priority.

Advisor Mike Martini asked, “What is the schedule for sending out invoices to the GSA participating members?” Guest Keene responded that the member agencies will not receive a bill. The fees are currently covering costs. Additionally, the County Administrator is introducing a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to continue to fund the GSA. That would allow us to keep the rates in the Sonoma and Petaluma Valley similar to the rates on the Santa Rosa Plain. We are asking that the subsidy remain in place. Many of the Board members are interested in creating equity amongst the three basins, in terms of what will be charged for groundwater extraction. And, as all of you know, the difference between the three basins’ fees, are substantial. We would like to find a way, to long term, equalize those fees across the basins.

In terms of future funding, ultimately, the GSAs (or one GSA, if that is the decision) will need to seek more grant funding from the State. There are also a couple of bonds that were proposed related to water that we need to further explore. If they pass the legislature in 2024, we should be able to receive those bonds, assuming those funding mechanisms are approved by the voter. Without each medium/high priority basin getting to sustainability, and if basins are not able to demonstrate progress, the State will focus on ensuring sustainability is achieved. That would likely mean that the State would issue additional mandates and regulations. Of course, funding for those mechanisms will have to be placed upon the local groundwater users. As it stands, the SVGSA is probably the basin that will require most of the effort as they have salinity and groundwater level issues. The Petaluma and Santa Rosa groundwater basins are in better health.

To address the long-term administration and funding of three county GSAs, an ad hoc committee to explore combining all the GSAs was formed Initially the thought was to let that issue resurface at a later date. I expect that time will come sooner as there is some concerns about the County’s continued support to equalize groundwater pumping rates across the three basins. One of the biggest challenges: how do local jurisdictions have a voice that is consistent with their interests. Local control is a big concern. In the meantime, there are however things that we (as Administrators of the GSAs) are doing to achieve efficiencies – having one consultant has helped with that achievement. Regardless of consolidation of basins, you will have basin specific costs related to monitoring as needs substantially vary amongst the basins.

Director Craig Jacobsen asked: “What do you anticipate the fees will be?” Guest Keene responded that the municipal pumpers are paying this year as part of the GSA funding requirements. Currently, and hopefully for the foreseeable future, the Board of Supervisors are, and will continue, to cover the cost of rural users.

Advisor Jim Bundschu asked: “Specific to recycled water in the Sonoma Valley – are those efforts going forward? Guest Keene responded that Marcus Trotta from Sonoma Water (and technical advisor to the three Sonoma County GSAs) is conducting outreach with potential users. The Sanitation District will be at the next week Sonoma Valley Advisory meeting to discuss recycled water availability.

In closing, Guest Keene suggested that it would be great to have agriculture community support at the October 17th Sonoma County Board of Supervisor hearing where the issue of continued support to subsidize equalization of GSA groundwater pumping fees will be discussed. The timeline for continued subsidization is a year extension.

1. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Item 1. Report by Counselor Idell**

Counselor Idell shared that he would need to gather more information for the election petitions. He will have that information for the next meetings. Philip Williams (another lawyer) has forms that I can review related to the elections. The elections are required as NBWD adopted bylaws that require elections occur on even years.

**Item 2: Report of Director Mike Sangiacomo**

The Sonoma Valley GSA has not had a meeting since this Board last convened. Therefore, I have nothing to report. The next meeting for the GSA is scheduled for October 30th.

**Item 3: Report of Director Carolyn Wasem**

The Petaluma Valley GSA has not had a meeting since this Board last convened. Therefore, I have nothing to report. The next meeting for the GSA will be October 26th.

**Item 4. Report by Advisor Jim Bundschu**

Advisor Bundschu reported that he was personally concerned with all the agencies engaged in overseeing local groundwater issues. Every agency is piling on: at least as detailed in the Press Democrat article. My concern is that we will have duplicative programs. Not only will that create more restrictions, but I am also concerned about permit timing associated with numerous agencies engagement and perhaps my biggest concern is how to guard against duplicative fees.

The Directors expressed similar concerns. Director Wasem shared that in the July Petaluma Valley GSA meeting, Permit Sonoma, specific to well permits, discussed the process and how the GSAs would engage. The system that Permit Sonoma developed as part of the Well Ordinance allowed for input from the GSAs, however, did not make a response from them mandatory to proceed with well permitting. In terms of the other agencies – resource agencies specifically, unless a new well is being proposed in an area identified as a public trust area (identified in the well ordinance), no input from other agencies will be needed prior to issuance of a permit.

**Item 5. Report by Advisor Eugene Camozzi**

Advisor Camozzi was not present.

**Item 6. Report by Advisor Mike Martini**

Advisor Martini shared that the majority of his time is being spent on the Alexander Valley Water District formation. A lot of farmers in this County do not have a voice in public policy development. Case in point, the Santa Rosa Plain (no seat at the GSA table for ag, other than the RCD) and now Alexander Valley. The lack of representation in Alexander Valley became glaringly apparent as the Potter Valley discussions got underway.

The farmers in the Alexander Valley are opening their eyes to the fact that water availability related to the outcomes of the Potter Valley project will have material impact on their ability to farm. The diversion related to the historic project is a significant contributor to the upper Russian River flows. Sonoma Water, The Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission and the Round Valley Indian Tribe put forth a proposal to PGE to operate the diversion from the Eel. The outcomes of that partnership would potentially allow for a more reliable future water supply. There are so many questions related to the decommissioning process. But, due to the lack of a quasi-government agriculture entity, Sonoma County ag does not have the ability to participate in the conversations.

Based upon that need, and many other needs to manage water in the Alexander Valley, a group of ag interests in the northern portion of the Russian River have applied for District formation to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO. LAFCO staff has not shown a great deal of interest in supporting NBWD and or the Alexander Valley District formation to fill that agriculture representation gap. We have been in contact with LAFCO staff and the policies for moving forward will be discussed at the November 2023 meeting. I will report back after that meeting. I will also share their thoughts on expansion of the NBWD to fill that need in Alexander Valley.

**Item 7: Report of Technical Advisor Tamayo**

Advisor Tamayo was not present.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business to discuss, Director Wasem made a motion to adjourn at 5:40. Director Sangiacomo seconded.

The next meeting will be held November 7th, 2023, at the Shell-Vista Fire Station.

*Board meeting documents are available to review prior to the meeting at the Shell-Vista Station, 22950 Broadway, Sonoma California. Please call or contact Mike Mulas for an appointment to obtain a copy.*