

Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2022:

A meeting of the Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority was convened at 7:05 a.m. both remotely through technological means and in the Pinal County Offices in Casa Grande, Arizona.

Directors Present:

- Bill Collings, Papago Butte DWID
- Stephen Q. Miller, Pinal County
- Bryan Hartman, Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation and Drainage District
- Bob Marsh, City of Maricopa
- Derek McEachern, Central Arizona Irrigation and Drainage District
- Matt Rencher, City of Eloy
- Fred Schneider, Water utilities with a CAP water subcontract (at 7:02)

Also Present:

- Joe Singleton, PCWAA Executive Director
- Cheyenne Walsh, Compass Strategies
- Alex Mendoza, Compass Strategies
- Lonnie Frost, Pinal County
- Mitch Basefsky, Central Arizona Project

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bill Collings called the meeting to order at 7:00.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Bob Marsh moved to approve the minutes as drafted from the meeting of November 8, 2022. Stephen Miller seconded the motion, which carried 6-0. **COLLINGS, HARTMAN, MARSH, MCEACHERN, MILLER, RENCHER.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Stephen Miller said the bills were for normal expenses standard, but noted that Joe Singleton had raised several items for more explanation. He said that Singleton had ordered new checks from the bank, the fee for which was directly taken from the Authority bank account, and thus had no corresponding invoice. Singleton noted that the expense for the checks was on the spreadsheet that details the monthly expenses, but not on the list of bills as there was no check being written for the expense. Singleton added that there was a \$740.00 expense on the spreadsheet that was for an accounting expense that was paid between meetings in order to satisfy an invoice from Henry & Horn before their December 1, 2022 name change to Baker Tilly. He said that because this had already been paid, it also was not included on the current list of bills. He said that some member contributions had been made and deposited, which were reflected on the spreadsheet, but made after the first of the month and therefore not reflected on the last bank statement that was available. Bryan Hartman moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills as presented. Fred Schneider seconded the motion, which carried 7-0. **COLLINGS, HARTMAN, MARSH, MCEACHERN, MILLER, RENCHER, SCHNEIDER.**

SUMMER CLOUD SEEDING STUDY:

Bill Collings said that this issue had been raised and held from last month in order to allow members to fully consider the proposal. Collings said that the proposal from Advanced Weather Modification Solutions was thorough and addressed all the issues from the PCWAA scope of work. Bryan Hartman asked if there was pushback to cloud seeding activities, asking if cloud seeding drew moisture from other areas. Collings said that he had not heard those concerns from anyone. He added that Salt River Project's presentation on winter cloud seeding indicated that cloud seeding might enhance downwind areas. Collings said that a study on the level that was currently being considered by the Authority might more fully answer the question. Lonnie Frost of Pinal County asked if the study would target the Gila or Salt / Verde watershed. Collings said that it would target the Santa Cruz / Santa Rosa areas in order to examine the areas normally impacted by regional summer monsoon activity. Collings told the group that the equipment used for summer cloud seeding appeared to be the same as that

used for crop dusting. Bob Marsh moved to proceed with the Advanced Weather Modification Solutions proposal for a summer cloud seeding program. Bryan Hartman seconded the motion, which carried 7-0.

RESPONSES TO ADWR COMMENTS:

Stephen Miller said that there had not been a lot of new information from ADWR.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Joe Singleton told members that the Bartlett Dam Modification group had continued to meet through November and December. He said that the Bartlett Dam modification process was now its own agenda item, and would be more fully addressed when the meeting progressed to that agenda item. He said that the hydrology and climate change subcommittee meeting scheduled for November 30, 2022 had been cancelled and would presumably be rescheduled. He added that the criteria and needs assessment subcommittee would meet again on December 20, 2022.

Singleton said that the Colorado River Water Users Association's annual conference would begin tomorrow in Las Vegas. He told members that there would be several presentation from Arizona groups including several from Central Arizona Project and one from ADWR director Tom Buschatzke. Singleton said that the theme of this years' conference seemed centered around recognizing changing river conditions. He said that the conference would run through Friday morning, and would be recorded (but not livestreamed).

Singleton said that the water vetting forum hosted by the Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona and the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association had met in November. He said that they did not have many proposals to discuss and had cancelled yesterday's meeting.

Singleton said that he had been engaged in activities associated with the end of the quarter and the end of the calendar year, interacting with accountants, PCWAA partners, and doing filings required through the Secretary of State's office.

LOBBYIST REPORT:

Cheyenne Walsh introduced Alex Mendoza, her colleague with Compass Strategies. Walsh said that Mendoza would serve as PCWAA's point of contact while she was on maternity leave during the initial weeks of the upcoming legislative session. Mendoza said that she has six years of experience as a lobbyist, working mostly with public safety issues along with financial services and water.

Walsh said that there would be a new Governor in January. She said that she did not expect any of the pending legal challenges concerning the Governor's race to be successful. She said that Governor-elect Hobbs had appointed some of her high-level staff, but not policy advisors or agency directors. She said that there was a lot of conversation regarding ADWR moving forward, with some encouraging Hobbs to keep current Director Buschatzke. She said that there was not much information on water policy issues, and noting that there would be so many new legislators next year, that it may be a quiet year for water. Walsh added that events concerning the Colorado river may change that.

Walsh told members that committee makeups had been set. She said that the Senate Natural Resources, Energy and Water (NREW) committee would meet on Thursday mornings with Senators Kerr and Shope remaining the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee respectively. She said that the House NREW committee would meet on Tuesday afternoons, with Rep. Griffin continuing as the Chair. She said that with so many new members elected to serve during the upcoming session, that PCWAA leadership had discussed doing meet and greet meetings with some of the new NREW members after session begins. Walsh said that she was hearing a lot more questions about water than she usually does.

PINAL STAKEHOLDER PROCESS REPORT:

Stephen Miller said that Clint Chandler, ADWR Deputy Director, had emailed committee co-chair Jake Lenderking. According to Miller the email indicated that ADWR would not be taking further action on the Stakeholder proposal until it received further instruction to do so. Miller said that he was considering writing a report for the Stakeholder group to update them on the current condition of the Stakeholder proposal to ADWR, noting that the Stakeholder group had not met in a while.

BASIN STUDY REPORT:

Bill Collings said that Valerie Swick from the Bureau of Reclamation had sent out an email indicating that the report was being drafted, which they hoped to have out in January, 2023. Collings said that Swick had noted that the report may lead to opportunities for Water SMART grants.

BARTLETT DAM MODIFICATION REPORT:

Bill Collings said that the Bartlett Dam Modification group's Steering Committee and Needs subcommittee had met last month. He said that a draft version of the guiding principles and the needs criteria had been distributed to Board members, in order to afford them an idea of the group's discussions. Collings said that PCWAA and its member entities do check the box for several the criteria as currently drafted. Joe Singleton said that some of the group's discussion had touched on using new water from the modified Bartlett Dam for existing

demands rather than new ones. He said that although the principle had been drafted to apparently favor existing demands that group discussion had consisted of distinguishing the difference between a new and an existing demand. Collings told members that discussion from some study members indicated a desire to favor existing Salt River Project (SRP) users, which Collings said was not part of the understanding when PCWAA was considering joining the study. Fred Schneider echoed those sentiments, saying that he did not believe that SRP itself believed that the new water should be limited to existing users.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Bill Collings said that he had been approached by the Water Resources Research Center (WRRRC) who told him that they were compiling water issue summaries for each county. Collings said that the group hoped to do one for each county, having already completed four of them. Collings told members that the WRRRC was putting together an advisory group for the Pinal County factsheet, and that several PCWAA members were on the contact list in order to put the group together. He added that the factsheets are being designed to appeal to the general public.

CALL TO THE AUTHORITY:

There was a call to the Authority. Bryan Hartman said that MSIDD and CAIDD had reached a settlement agreement with the Ak-Chin Indian Community over the Community's water quality claims. Hartman said that their lobbyists were working with state officials in order to encourage Gov. Ducey to release funding that would allow for the districts to decouple wells from the Santa Rosa. Hartman said that he felt that the settlement would benefit the region and asked that anyone having contact with the Governor's office support the settlement agreement. Stephen Miller suggested contacting Buchanan Davis regarding the matter.

Bill Collings said that he had received notice from the University of Arizona that they were proceeding with water conservation grants that were authorized by the state. He asked Bryan Hartman if he had contacted the districts regarding the grants. Hartman said that he had been told about the grants while at homecoming in Tucson and was asked to help spread the word about their availability. Derek McEachern said that he had not heard about the grant availability.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There was a call to the public. Mitch Basefsky of CAP said that the state would be in a Tier 2A Colorado river shortage next year, with CAP taking a 592,000 AF short. He said that CAP was able to supply about 450,000 AF during 2022 as part of the 500+ Plan. He said that CAP had raised their incentive price to forgo water to match that being offered by the federal government, between \$330-400/AF. He said that while some are interested in participating,

there are also concerns that they federal government could mandate cuts later, and those participating in voluntary reductions now might have to reduce more then. Basefsky said that he was unsure if additional information would be announced at the Colorado River Water Users Association annual conference that would begin in Las Vegas later in the week.

Basefsky said that next year's release from Lake Powel to Lake Mead would likely be 7 million acre-feet. He said that current information made it seem likely that the Colorado River would be in Tier 3 shortage conditions a year from now. In better news, he added that current snowpack in the Rocky Mountains was 107% of normal and that some basins soils already have more moisture than last year. Basefsky told members that it appeared that La Niña conditions, which lead to drier, warmer winters for the southwest, may be leaving. He said that neutral conditions could lead to additional precipitation. Basefsky said that the federal government was proceeding with their supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, which could be done by spring. He said that there was particular interest in accounting for losses and evaporation in the Lower Colorado River basin, which is not currently accounted for.

Basefsky said that the CAP Board had selected Brenda Burman as the next CAP General Manager. Basefsky said that there would be an informal meet and greet for Burman organized in February.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

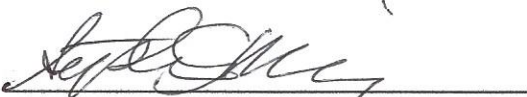
The next meeting will be held on January 10, 2023 at 7:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 a.m.

ATTEST:


William Collings, Chairman


Stephen Q. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer