

Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2023:

A meeting of the Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority was convened at 7:02 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
- Bob Marsh, City of Maricopa (at 7:07)
- Jake Lenderking, Water utilities without a CAP water subcontract
- Jose Maldonado, Town of Florence
- Derek McEachern, Central Arizona Irrigation and Drainage District
- Dick Powell, City of Casa Grande
- Matt Rencher, City of Eloy
- Fred Schneider, Water utilities with a CAP water subcontract

Also Present:

- Joe Singleton, PCWAA Executive Director
- Jonathan Jennings, Advanced Weather Modification Solutions
- George Bomar, Advanced Weather Modification Solutions
- Mitch Basefsky, Central Arizona Project
- Nathan Miller, MATRIX New World Engineering
- Alex Mendoza, Compass Strategies
- Cheyenne Walsh, Compass Strategies
- Archie Ruiz, Pinal County

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CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bill Collings called the meeting to order at 7:02.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Jose Maldonado moved to approve the minutes as drafted from the meeting of January 10, 2023. Fred Schneider seconded the motion, which carried 8-0. **COLLINGS, LENDERKING, MALDONADO, MCEACHERN, MILLER, POWELL, RENCHER, SCHNEIDER.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Stephen Miller said the bills were for routine expenses, including Compass Strategies, Cooper & Rueter, GoDaddy and reimbursement to Joe Singleton. He said that the Authority was under budget on all line items. Miller suggested future discussion of putting some Authority money into an interest bearing instrument like a certificate of deposit. Jose Maldonado moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills as presented. Jake Lenderking seconded the motion, which carried 8-0.

SUMMER CLOUD SEEDING STUDY:

Jonathan Jennings, meteorologist, and co-owner of Advanced Weather Modifications Solutions (AWMS) introduced himself and his company to the Board. He said that people involved with AWMS had begun through doing research for the USDA. He said that legal constraints prohibited contracting with the USDA for execution, so they formed Advanced Weather Modification Solutions about five years ago. He told the group that they had worked in Texas, New Mexico and with the USDA. George Bomar introduced himself as a member of the AWMS team, telling the Board that he had retired from public service as the Texas Meteorologist. He said that Texas had undertaken a number of weather modification projects that covered about a third of the state. He said that his role with the study would be to summarize the research and operational work that has been done in the United States since the 1950s. He said that he had begun putting the summary together. He added that he had been part of permitting many cloud seeding projects in Texas and would be examining the statutory requirements that apply to the Pinal region.

Jennings said that they had finished much of the radar evaluation and identified a ten-year period for the county in which climate operations could have taken place. He said that during that time they noted an average of 23 operational days per year, coinciding with the summer monsoon season from July – September. He said that it was either too dry or too cold outside of that date range. He said that by comparison, they usually saw 30-35 annual operational days in Texas. He said that evaluation of Texas weather modification operations indicates an annual increase in precipitation of 15%. He said that challenges would include the

suddenness of flood warnings, and an area within the county that is restricted to flight. He said that they were investigating the possibility of waivers to the restriction. Jennings estimated that AWMS was about 25% through their work on the study.

Bill Collings asked if AWMS would have an additional update for inclusion at the PCWAA March board meeting. Jennings said that he would, adding that he thought that by that time they might have estimates for increased annual precipitation that could result from cloud seeding. Jennings asked if the Board was examining cloud seeding to mitigate a certain issue. Collings said that Pinal-area growers were no longer able to access Central Arizona project water supplies, and that the area had long-term water supply issues in general.

RESPONSES TO ADWR COMMENTS:

Nathan Miller of MATRIX New World Engineering said that there had not been a lot of new information but that there were upcoming meetings scheduled. He said that he anticipated more information next month.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Joe Singleton told members that the previous agenda item for follow up on some information concerning the PCWAA audit work was not developed in time for the February Board meeting. He said that the information would be presented at the March Board meeting.

Singleton said that the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) had met on January 25, 2023 and heard a briefing on the Bartlett Dam Modification project from Bruce Hallin of the Salt River Project. At the meeting Hallin told WIFA that some members of the Bartlett Dam Modification group might approach WIFA concerning their shares of the project construction costs. Singleton told members that PCWAA had reached out to WIFA 8-10 years ago to discuss PCWAA's eligibility to utilize WIFA funds. Singleton said that at that time, there was no definitive answer concerning PCWAA's eligibility to do so. He said that because WIFA's statutes had been significantly modified during the last legislative session that he reached out to Chick Podolak, the WIFA director to inquire about PCWAA's ability to utilize WIFA. Singleton reminded the group that the recent legislative changes to WIFA had created new funds for WIFA to administer. He said that the bulk of the new money, 75%, was to be spent to import water into Arizona. The other 25% might be used for something like the Bartlett Dam Modification, and Singleton said that discussion with Podolak confirmed that he thought that PCWAA should be eligible to use that funding source.

Singleton added that WIFA had hired three new people. Chelsea McGuire, formerly of the Arizona Farm Bureau was hired as the Assistant Director of External Communications, Lindsey Jones was hired internally to be the Assistant Director of Water Projects, and Joe Citelli, formerly with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors will be WIFA's General Counsel. Singleton noted that WIFA will have another Board meeting tomorrow, February 15, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

and that the agenda for the meeting was on their website. He said that the meeting would be livestreamed through CAP's website.

He told the group that Bartlett Dam Modification group had held two subcommittee meetings since the last PCWAA Board meeting. He said that the Board would be further briefed on these during the agenda topic specific to the Bartlett Dam modification.

Singleton told the group that he, Alex Mendoza and Bill Collings had met with several legislators last Thursday, February 9, 2023 at the Capitol. He said that the vagaries of legislative session allowed just five of the eight scheduled meetings to take place. He said that they had met with Representatives Dunn, Griffin and De La Santos and Senators Shope and Carroll. Singleton said that Representative Griffin expressed interest in the PCWAA-commissioned Brackish Water study, which he later provided to her. He said that the meetings generally seemed to go well. Bill Collings added that it seemed helpful to have these discussions when they went into the meetings without asking to support on a piece of legislation or for an appropriation. Collings said that several expressed a willingness to help with legislation if PCWAA were to later require it.

Singleton said that the partnership funding request letters should be sent out soon. He said that he had a call scheduled for later today in order to put together the information for the PCWAA audit work that the Board was considering.

LOBBYIST REPORT:

Alex Mendoza of Compass Strategies said that some legislative matters were progressing. She said that the House had passed a baseline budget. Mendoza said that the budget reflected last years' budget priorities, and was largely a Republican budget. She said that Governor Hobbs was expected to veto it. She said that because there were so many new legislators this year that much time was being spent on ensuring that members understood the legislative and budget processes. She opined that this could be the reason that there were less bills introduced this year (about 1,500 total) than usual. She added that this week was the last week to hear bills in their chamber of origin.

Mendoza said that regarding bills that the Authority had expressed interest in supporting that the WIFA cleanup bill sponsored by Sen. Kerr had been held from committee hearing last week. She said that the bill would be heard this week. She told members that Rep. Griffin's bill allowing county Boards of Supervisors to participate in water reuse and recycling programs will go to the floor for approval. She added that Rep. Smith's bill concerning wells drilled on private property would likely go to the floor this week. She said that Rep. Martinez was running a bill to appropriate funds for a settlement of the Ak-Chin claims against the irrigation districts that PCWAA had sent in a letter supporting. Mendoza said that the bill would be heard in the Appropriations Committee on Wednesday. She added that Rep. Dunn's bill to appropriate \$30 million for on-farm efficiency had been through committee and was awaiting

caucus action. Mendoza told the group that Rep. Griffin's Concurrent Resolution regarding supporting the raising of Bartlett Dam had been paused by Rep. Griffin at the request of SRP.

Dick Powell noted that the Midwest pipeline project was supported locally by the City of Casa Grande and had been discussed in the state legislature. He asked if there was a feasibility study in the works. Mendoza said that she would check.

PINAL STAKEHOLDER PROCESS REPORT:

Stephen Miller said that the meeting that with the City of Eloy to discuss the City's Designation of Assured Water Supply application would take place tomorrow. Miller reminded members that a solid figure for Eloy's long-term pumping was needed to finish the stakeholder modelling and the lack of it was a big part of the procedural holdup with ADWR as well. Miller said that the Stakeholder group leadership had scheduled a meeting with ADWR to discuss legislative priorities. Jake Lenderking said that the meeting was scheduled for February 23, 2023 to discuss the ways in which ADWR applied regulations to discontinuous service areas and commingled water supplies. Lenderking said that the group had chose to work directly with ADWR as it felt that these were items that the Department could address through policies.

Miller added that the County Supervisor's Association was supporting the county recharge bill that Rep. Griffin was running. Bill Collings asked if there was support for allowing the county to utilize federal money, Miller said that they were able to receive an exemption for floodwater, but was unsure if there was support for a more broadly-applied amendment.

BARTLETT DAM MODIFICATION REPORT:

Joe Singleton said that the Hydrology and Climate subgroup had met on January 17th. He said that the group heard information on the hydrology of the river system and the climate and how that would be accommodated within the scope of the larger project. He said that the Needs subcommittee had a longer meeting on January 24th. He said that he felt that some participants were still trying to tie the Bartlett Dam process to their Colorado river allocations. Bill Collings said that he felt that by the end of the meeting that the group had moved a little beyond that and was hopefully ready to move beyond the guiding principles to specific needs criteria. Collings added that the most up-to-date surplus volume was 357,000 AF. He said that the climate and hydrology modelling indicated that over a 100-year period that an average of 91,000 AF would be available. Collings said that the variability of the supply was a big reason that the new supply might be best utilized through storage and recovery. Singleton added that there would be a quarterly steering committee meeting on March 1st and that the Needs subcommittee would meet again on March 7th. Fred Schneider agreed that there was some sentiment from AMWUA cities (which have CAP subcontracts) to tie the new Bartlett water more closely to themselves. Schneider agreed that they should be viewed separately. Collings asked if the attempt to regionalize the Bartlett water to the AMWUA area would be viewed favorably by the BOR when they ultimately consider the project for federal funding. Schneider

said that the BOR would likely appreciate a broader approach s they had encourage a broad base of participation.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Bill Collings told members that the Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) had released their draft water issue summary for Pinal County. He said that the steering committee, which includes Collings and Bryan Hartman, would compile comments on the draft and that a second draft will be prepared based on the comments.

CALL TO THE AUTHORITY:

There was a call to the Authority. Jake Lenderking said that he appreciated the depth of the agenda and the discussion. Bill Collings asked if a date had been firmed up for the next meeting of the Basin study group. Lenderking said that they would hold a workshop meeting both in-person and virtually on March 3rd. He said that they hoped to discuss next steps for action after the completion of the Basin study. Collings said that the results of the Basin study could be of use to PCWAA as part of the support under the Needs criteria.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There was a call to the public. Mitch Basefsky of CAP said that as of yesterday the snowpack in the Colorado River Basin was 143% pf the 30-year average. He said that if conditions held and absent the additional cuts that were being discussed, it should result in water levels in excess of the Tier 3 shortage trigger for next year.

Basefsky reminded members that the Bureau of Reclamation had set a January 31, 2023 deadline for the basin states to put forth a plan to cut 2-4 million acre-feet (MAF). He said that both California and the other six basin states each put forth a plan to do so. He said that both plans would save about 3.3 MAF when water levels at Lake Mead are at about 1,000'. He said this volume of savings includes the Drought Contingency Plan amounts as well as the savings mandated by the Tiered cuts in the 2007 Interim Guidelines. Basefsky said that the biggest differences in the plans were how much of the cut came from California and when the cuts occur. He said that the 6-state plan would begin cuts next year, with 1.5 MAF left in Lake Mead and accelerate Tier 4 cut mandates to a water level just below 1,045'. He said that the total cuts would call for Arizona to take about 1.25 MAF and California to take about 1.45 MAF. The California plan would cut 1 MAF in the near term and not impose additional cuts until the water levels at Lake Mead drop below 1,025'. He added that he was hopeful that the tribes would participate in achieving the cuts. Basefsky clarified that these plans were proposals to the BOR to include in their modelling efforts in order to assess the results within their Supplementary EIS process.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting will be held on March 14, 2023 at 7:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 a.m.

ATTEST:


William Collings, Chairman


Stephen Q. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer