

# ***Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority***

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 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
- Melissa Campbell, City of Coolidge (at 7:13)
- Stephen Q. Miller, Pinal County
- Bob Marsh, City of Maricopa
- Dick Powell, City of Casa Grande
- Bryan Hartman, Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation and Drainage District
- Derek McEachern, Central Arizona Irrigation and Drainage District

### Also Present:

- Joe Singleton, PCWAA Executive Director
- Cheyenne Walsh, Compass Strategies
- Jan Gould, Responsive Drip Irrigation
- Brianna McClure, MATRIX New World Engineering
- Pat Holbrook
- Mitch Basefsky, Central Arizona Project

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#### CALL TO ORDER:

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

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Dick Powell moved to approve the minutes as drafted from the meeting of July 11, 2023. Bob Marsh seconded the motion, which carried 6-0. **COLLINGS, HARTMAN, MARSH, McEACHERN, MILLER, POWELL.**

#### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Stephen Miller noted the monthly bills presented were for regularly occurring expenses, which included Compass Strategies and Matrix New World Engineering. He asked if the billing from Matrix was under the amended contract. Joe Singleton explained that it was. Miller noted that items highlighted in yellow showed some items that belonged to the recently-completed fiscal year. Bill Collings asked if there was any further contact from ADWR concerning the PCWAA funding request from FY23. Singleton said that he had received the check from ADWR this morning. Dick Powell moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills as presented. Bob Marsh seconded the motion, which carried 6-0.

#### CLOUD SEEDING -- ACTION GROUP:

Bill Collings told members that he did not want to lose momentum in working towards a regional Cloud Seeding program. He said that he wanted to put together a subcommittee of the Board to pursue the program and the possibility of outside funding for cloud seeding. Collings said that he asked Joe Singleton to follow up with Melissa Campbell, Derek McEachern and Bryan Hartman to work towards eliciting support from the agricultural community. Joe Singleton added that the group would, on its own or in conjunction with a consultant, oversee the cloud seeding permitting process.

#### RESPONSIVE DRIP IRRIGATION:

Jan Gould, owner of Responsive Drip Irrigation (RDI) told the group that she had made her technology public in 2019. She said that they had done work in the Middle East, and that their technology was now being used in 40 countries. After a delay in order to get the presentation technology working, during which Brianna McClure updated the Board on MATRIX efforts, Gould showed images of some of the overseas projects that used RDI technology.

Gould described her system as a subsurface irrigation system based on organic chemistry. She said that the system, unlike many others, did not utilize timers or emitters but

instead responded directly to chemical signals from the plants. The system only releases water in very low flow rates to the root zone of the plants when the plants need it, she said. Gould added that the system was low-maintenance, as it has no valves, emitters to clog, need for electricity or smart controllers and uses less fertilizer. She said that the system could save 30% if the water use from a well-managed drip system. Gould noted that the system works with a variety of crops, including trees and turf and on different landscapes.

Stephen Miller noted that hay and cotton were prominent regional crops and asked if the RDI system had been used on either of those crops. Gould said that it had been used on hay and only tested with cotton. She said that she would be happy to run a pilot project on a cotton crop. Bill Collings asked if RDI had any current projects in the United States. Gould said that they were doing a turf project with Texas A&M and that they had done a project for Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles to compare their technology with drip tape. She said that project showed a 64% reduction in water use and 40% less fertilizers and pesticides.

Bill Collings asked how deep the systems were installed. Gould said that for crops it was usually 4-6 inches and 8-12 inches for orchard trees. Stephen Miller asked about installation costs. Gould said that the installation costs of the RDI tubing were more than the costs of installing typical drip tubing. She added that considering the reduced maintenance and operating costs and increased crop yields that the system paid for itself in 18 months. She said that actual costs were dependent on the linear feet of tubing needed, the feet of PVC header rows, and the row spacing, but noted that the tubing would last for 10 years. Gould said that she would email contact information for her product representative to the PCWAA. Bill Collings asked about doing a demonstration project with a municipality for their streetscaping. Gould said that she was willing, noting that it would work with treated wastewater as well.

#### RESPONSES TO ADWR COMMENTS:

While waiting on the presentation technology, Brianna McClure of MATRIX New World Engineering told the group that MATRIX was close to finishing their report. She said that they hoped to present the results to the group before submittal to ADWR. McClure said that she thought that the report would be completed before the next PCWAA Board meeting.

#### BARTLETT DAM MODIFICATION:

Bill Collings said that the Bartlett Dam Modification Group's Needs subcommittee had met in mid-July to continue discussions regarding the allocation scenarios. He said that the process was ongoing. Joe Singleton said that they had worked through to the point that the individual members needs were being mathematically expressed in relation to their water supply portfolios. Singleton said that the PCWAA numbers indicated water supply needs far in excess of what the Authority had originally asked for at the onset of the process. He told the group that some of the steering committee members had maneuvered to revisit the request



figures so that they might ask for more than they had initially. Collings added that a proposal for de minimis use at 1,000 acre-feet had been suggested at the last meeting.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Joe Singleton said that the Governor's Water Policy Council Assured Water Supply subgroup had met shortly after the last PCWAA Board meeting. He said that the discussion at that meeting mostly concerned the original proposals that ADWR had put forward. Singleton told the group that the presentation from the meeting and the meeting notes have since been posted to the ADWR website. Singleton said that the development community was against the ADWR proposal regarding accounting for commingled water delivery systems, which essentially would require a developer to obtain twice the amount of renewable water supplies that their own project called for in order to gift the aquifer an amount of water equal to the project's demand, despite those demands being met with renewable water supplies. He said that the group would meet again the following week, with the larger group meeting again after Labor Day.

Singleton told members that he had been engaged with Baker Tilly concerning the PCWAA audit. He said that Baker Tilly was going to try to accommodate the PCWAA schedule in getting the audit done before the submittal deadline to the state Auditor General's office.

Singleton said that he and Cheyenne Walsh had spoken regarding what PCWAA might need from the next legislative session. He told members that the timing usually involved working backwards from the date that the legislative session would start in early January, so that policy development would begin now.

Stephen Miller asked about the filing deadline for the audit. Singleton said that it was the end of September.

#### LOBBYIST REPORT:

Cheyenne Walsh of Compass Strategies reminded the group that the state legislature adjourned sine die on July 31, 2023. She said that as such the general effective date of legislation passed during the session would be October 30, 2023. She told members that the 2024 legislative session would begin on January 8, 2024. Walsh said that under more normal circumstances, where the legislature adjourns earlier in the year, that the beginning of legislative efforts commenced shortly after Labor Day. She said that because the 2023 legislature adjourned late, that the next years' work could be delayed until later in the fall. She told the group that the closer that it gets to January, the harder it is to begin the process of trying to implement policy objectives. She advised beginning those discussions soon, as water as a policy area is still largely a consensus-driven topic with the legislature.

Walsh said that the policy goals of other groups for 2024 were still unclear. She said that the Governor's Water Policy Council had set a goal to have legislative proposals concerning assured water supplies and rural water issues for the upcoming legislative session. Walsh added that the Joint Water Security Ad Hoc committee was meeting, so far covering informational items, she said.

Walsh told the Board that funding could be tighter this upcoming year. She said that the most-recent legislature had passed a nearly \$18 billion budget while allowing for just \$8 million cash balance. She noted that there had been about \$2 billion in one-time funds for legislature last session and deemed it highly unlikely that there would be anywhere near that level of money available next year. She told members that this could make it more likely that the \$333 million that had been previously earmarked for the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority would be again raided in order to pay for other priorities, as it was during the 2023 legislative session. Walsh added that it was likely that the "build-to-rent" issue would again be before the legislature next year, as it had been last year.

Bill Collings asked if PCWAA could run into problems running their legislative agenda with Governor Hobbs so focused on her agenda through the Governor's Water Policy Council. Walsh said it was worth bearing in mind, but opined that between a Democratic Governor's office and a Republican-controlled legislature that the Governor's proposals were unlikely to be the only water proposals in process next year.

#### PINAL STAKEHOLDER PROCESS REPORT:

Stephen Miller said that Matrix's work was proceeding and that Nathan Miller may be able to share some results soon. He said that he would keep everyone posted on the timeframe for a presentation.

#### CHAIR'S REPORT:

There was no report from the Chair.

#### CALL TO THE AUTHORITY:

There was a call to the Authority. There was no response.

#### CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There was a call to the public. Mitch Basefsky of Central Arizona Project (CAP) said that water levels at Lake Mead continue to increase. He said that the Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) 24-month study would soon put out their August results. He said that current expectations

were for a Tier 1 shortage being declared for the upcoming water year. Basefsky reminded members that the lower basin states plan calls for 3 million acre-feet (MAF) of mostly-voluntary conservation over the next several years, and half will take place by next year. He said that many users were being compensated for reductions, and it was currently uncertain how much water that CAP would have available for actual deliveries next year. Basefsky told members that CAP continued to work on the System Users Agreement and was still awaiting a decision from the BOR regarding water quality standards. He said that Phoenix has been exchanging water with Tucson for several years, and that Glendale and Peoria may soon do the same with Tucson. Basefsky said that during a shortage, Tucson could forgo some of its CAP water in favor of Phoenix, Glendale or Peoria and recover the water previously stored in Tucson by those cities as part of an exchange agreement.

Bill Collings asked about the status of the Salt River Project's (SRP) interconnect with the CAP canal. Basefsky said that the SRP-to-CAP canal interconnect was still in the early design phase.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

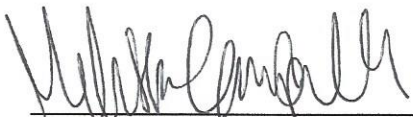
The next meeting will be held on September 12, 2023 at 7:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

ATTEST:

  
William Collings, Chairman

  
Stephen Q. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer  
