

Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2026:

A meeting of the Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority was convened at 7:01 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 7:06 a.m.)
- Stephen Miller, Pinal County
- Bryan Hartman, Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage District
- Keith Eaton, Town of Florence
- Jake Lenderking, Water utilities without a CAP water subcontract
- Bob Marsh, City of Maricopa
- Derek McEachern, Central Arizona Irrigation and Drainage District
- Craig McFarland, City of Casa Grande (at 7:07 a.m.)
- Fred Schneider, Water utilities with a CAP water subcontract

Also Present:

- Joe Singleton, PCWAA Executive Director
- Cheyenne Walsh, Compass Strategies (at 7:08 a.m.)
- Mitch Basefsky, Central Arizona Project
- Lonnie Frost
- Nathan Miller, MATRIX New World Engineering
- Brianna McClure, MATRIX New World Engineering

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CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bill Collings called the meeting to order at 7:01.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Bob Marsh moved to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2026 Board meeting. Fred Schneider seconded the motion, which carried 8-0. **COLLINGS, EATON, HARTMAN, LENDERKING, MARSH, McEACHERN, MILLER, SCHNEIDER.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Stephen Miller noted the expenses on the List of Bills for the month, citing payments to Salt River Project (SRP) and MATRIX New World Engineering. Miller asked if there would be additional payments required to SRP. Chairman Collings said there would be one more. Miller asked if there were more invoices for the work that MATRIX was doing. Executive Director Joe Singleton said he did not have additional invoices from MATRIX, noting that the current invoice would account for most of the outstanding expense authorization, and that additional work would require a change order or another contract. Miller noted the bank statement, with a bank balance of \$746,209.83 as of the end of March 2026. Fred Schneider moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills as presented. Keith Eaton seconded the motion, which carried 8-0.

PINAL MODELLING UPDATE:

Bill Collings asked Nathan Miller of MATRIX New World Engineering to discuss the latest update to the Pinal modelling work. Miller reviewed a brief timeline of Pinal AMA modelling noting the important milestone dates. He noted that from the time that ADWR had released the 2019 model update for the Pinal AMA, the Department's position had been that new growth in the AMA would not occur based on groundwater. Miller noted that following the model update, MATRIX was hired to study the model and the assumptions being used to draw conclusions about Assured Water Supplies (AWS) in the Pinal AMA. He said that the biggest reason causing demands in excess of supplies in the 2019 model was the well locations in the model, which were placed at the location of the Certificates of Assured Water Supply or Analysis of Assured Water Supply, and not necessarily the location from which the water provider would be withdrawing water. Miller noted that between April 2022 and now that MATRIX, on behalf of the Pinal Stakeholders Group or PCWAA had proposed revisions to the model and responded to comments from ADWR technical staff, including two submittals to update the information in the modelling to reflect contemporary pump data.

Miller told the group that the update had included adding in pumping and recharge data through 2024, and extended the 100-year predictive period of the work from 2026-2125. He

showed a side-by-side comparison of the original depth-to-water of the ADWR 2019 model next to the 2026 version that used revised assumptions to meet the unmet demands of the 2019 model. He indicated that the red area of both models represents places where the predicted groundwater pumping over a 100-year period would exceed 1,100 feet below land surface, which is the maximum depth to useable groundwater under the Pinal AWS Rules. He noted the larger red area in the revised modelling, which relocated some pumping and met the previous unmet demands from the modelling, but caused additional drawdown, particularly in the Eloy area.

Miller also noted that MATRIX had been asked to reanalyze the modelling with an eye towards the recent Ag-to-Urban legislation. He said that the Ag-to-Urban program would allow for an Irrigation Grandfathered Rights (IGFRs) to be relinquished in exchange for credit towards the physical availability requirement of the Assured Water Supply program, even if the hydrologic modelling did not support it. Miller told the group that the IGFR had to have been actively used during three of the previous five years and still be able to meet the 1,100' below land surface (bls) requirement within the AWS program. He added that the lands appurtenant to the IGFR could not already have a Certificate of AWS associated with them. He showed on his slides that the larger area in the PCWAA-updated modelling that groundwater pumping exceeds the 1,100' over the 100-year AWS period could also create problems with Ag-to-Urban program availability. He showed theoretically eligible IGFR lands on another slide, noting that ADWR had estimated in excess of 200,000 acres could be eligible. Miller noted that permitting requirements for siting recovery wells outside the area of hydrologic impact of the water storage had drawdown requirements similar to the AWS program in that simulated pumping over 100 years could not cause a drawdown that would exceed 1,100' bls.

Stephen Miller noted that there could be another 100' of aquifer allowed to the Pinal AMA in the future. He asked Nathan Miller how that might affect the modelling. Nathan Miller said that it would be relatively easy to model, positing that it would diminish the area of the updated modelling that exceeds the 1,100' barrier, but still likely exceed the same area in ADWR's 2019 model. Fred Schneider complemented Miller's work. He noted that ADWR still has not accepted that modelling updates and asked Miller's advice on convincing ADWR to adopt at least part of the update work. Miller said that they had had good dialog with ADWR hydrology staff that could be built upon. He said that they had not received much feedback after the April submittal of the stakeholder package. He offered to follow up with hydrology staff to see if they would respond. Schneider noted that they had achieved some legislative successes in amending policies, and said that maybe it was a good time to try to reengage ADWR directly, noting that the PCWAA updates consisted of more contemporary data.

Jake Lenderking agreed that the group had made legislative and policy progress, but wondered if there should be more discussion on pushing the updated modelling in light of the possible negative consequences, as those touched upon in the AWS program and recovery well permitting (with a larger area exceeding 1,100' bls). Bryan Hartman asked if the area on the west side of the MSIDD service area where the dry cells show on the modelling were currently being farmed. Nathan Miller said that there appeared to be little overlap between the dry cells and the IGFRS, so he guessed the area with the dry cells were likely not being farmed. He noted

this would not be unusual for areas at the edge of models, where there was often limited saturated thickness to withdraw water from.

Stephen Miller said he was troubled that ADWR had not chosen to move forward with the stakeholder submittal concerning the AWS program, including the modelling. Miller said that it felt like the lack of progress was political rather than one that involved outstanding technical issues. Bill Collings agreed. Craig McFarland asked if the Certificates of Assured Water Supply were handled correctly in the ADWR modelling. Nathan Miller said that ADWR had done a reasonable analysis of CAWS that were used. He said that ADWR generally accounted for AWS 100-year demands on “day 1” when using in their analyses. He added said that he had not accounted for Arizona Water Company’s DAWS in the modelling, which would have a slight effect. Bill Collings asked Joe Singleton to schedule a study session meeting for the Board to discuss the modelling in more depth. Fred Schneider asked that Terri Sue Rossi of Arizona Water Company be included in the study session.

LOBBYIST REPORT:

Cheyenne Walsh of Compass Strategies said that HB 2098, the PCWAA bonding bill, had been signed by Gov. Hobbs yesterday. Walsh said that immediately after signing a tranche of bills yesterday, that the Governor had placed a moratorium on approving further legislation (except for two bills dealing with public safety) without the release of a Republican budget proposal. Walsh told members that she felt the legislative session might go through June, so that the effective date of the PCWAA legislation would be in September. She said that the commingling bill was vetoed yesterday. Walsh said that although the legislature was currently waiting on the budget process to move forward, that the state primary elections had been moved up to earlier calendar dates this year. She said that early ballots would come out on June 24, 2026.

Jake Lenderking thanked Walsh for her work in seeing the bonding bill get passed. Craig McFarland agreed. Bill Collings asked if Bryan Hartman had comments on SB 1335, which Collings noted that Maricopa-Stanfield IDD was supporting. Hartman said he would check into the specifics, noting that MSIDD’s general manager and lobbyist worked closely together. Walsh said that the legislation had some broad support, with the Sierra Club opposing. Collings thanked Walsh for her work on the bonding legislation.

BARTLETT DAM MODIFICATION / SCIF:

Joe Singleton said that the SRP-CAP Interconnection Facility (SCIF) group had met on March 30, 2026. He said that the group spent most of that meeting discussing the previous joint meeting with CAP that focused on water quality, which had been previously discussed with the PCWAA Board. Singleton said that using PCWAA long-term storage credits to offset PCWAA’s share of SCIF construction costs still remained a possibility, but that the collective group of partners for the project were still well short of the contribution level of credits or

water supplies that the federal government was seeking in order to use the "Bucket 2" monies for such an offset. Singleton said that the latest estimates of the construction costs indicated a PCWAA cost share of more than \$3.1 million. He told the group that some partners (like PCWAA) hoped for more clarity on the Verde River Sediment Mitigation (i.e. "Bartlett Dam Modification") before committing more resources to SCIF. Singleton noted that the timing and issues involved with the two projects were causing conflict.

Bill Collings said that the City of Peoria had withdrawn from the SCIF project. Collings said that it would bear watching to see if others dropped out, which would change the structure of the costs to be paid by the remaining partners.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Joe Singleton told members that he had sent out the partnership funding letters. He said that some of the funds had already been returned, noting that he had received checks from Pinal County and the two irrigation districts. Singleton said that he was currently working on an FY27 draft budget and report filings.

PCWAA FUNDING:

Jake Lenderking said that the group had met with bond counsel to receive advice and insight. He said that at yesterday's meeting the group discussed ways in which the expanded bonding authority might be used. Stephen Miller said that he hoped to talk to Kirk McCarville to see how participation in acquiring Harquahala water might work. Bill Collings said that he was happy that the statutory amendment to the bonding language was approved, but a more solid funding source was still outstanding, and would be necessary to pay off bonds. Miller said that he thought it would require a commitment by the users, who would ultimately utilize the water. He added that the cost of participating in Harquahala had already risen. Collings noted that there were grant and loan programs that would require some measure of self-funding that did not necessarily have an end user to immediately bear the costs.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

There was no report from the Chair.

CALL TO THE AUTHORITY:

There was a call to the Authority. Stephen Miller said that he had been appointed to the Board of the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority. He said that his first in-person meeting was tomorrow.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There was a call to the public. Mitch Basefsky of Central Arizona Project told the group that the snow melt was nearly gone, and that snowpack was at 22% of average. He said that it appeared that this year would surpass 2002 as the worse runoff year since CAP construction. He said that the Bureau of Reclamation was working on how much water to release from the Upper Basin reservoirs as part of the Drought Response Operation Agreement (part of the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan) to protect critical water elevations at Lake Powell. Basefsky said that the BOR may release their plan later this month. He noted that April was commonly the time of year that the BOR made mid-year adjustments to their current plan, and that he expected them to reduce the planned releases from Lake Powell to Lake Mead to 6 million acre-feet (the minimum amount under current regulations). Basefsky told the group that such an action would likely lead to a Tier 3 shortage by next year. Basefsky said that there would be a CAP University session from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on April 28, 2026. Basefsky said the topic would be CAP 101. He said that those who want to participate could register on the CAP website.

Bryan Hartman asked if the smaller release from Lake Powell to Lake Mead would impact the Ak-Chin Indian Community. Basefsky said that most users on the CAP system had Priority 4 allocations, but noted that the Ak-Chin have a higher, Priority 3 allocation that was unlikely to suffer cuts for now. Basefsky noted that CAP staff was now studying recovery of Arizona Water banking Authority credits. Jake Lenderking asked if BOR had ever released only 6 million acre-feet to Lake Mead before. Basefsky said he thought that the lowest previous delivery was 7 million acre-feet.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting will be held on May 12, 2026 at 7:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 a.m.

ATTEST:


William Collings, Chairman


Stephen Q. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer