

Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2026:

A special meeting of the Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority was convened at 11:02 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 Miller, Pinal County (at 11:07)
- Jake Lenderking, Water utilities without a CAP water subcontract (until 12:00)
- Mackenzie Letcher, City of Eloy
- Bob Marsh, City of Maricopa
- Craig McFarland, City of Casa Grande
- Fred Schneider, Water utilities with a CAP water subcontract

Also Present:

- Joe Singleton, PCWAA Executive Director
- Terri Sue Rossi, Arizona Water Company
- Nathan Miller, MATRIX New World Engineering

P.O. Box 12684, Casa Grande, Arizona, 85130-2684

Office: 520-518-1726

Web: www.pcwaa-az.org

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bill Collings called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

PINAL MODELLING AND THE REGULATORY ENVIROMENT:

Chairman Bill Collings noted that the meeting was for discussion purposes and that no action would be taken. He said that the group would talk about the updated Pinal AMA modelling work that PCWAA had contracted with MATRIX New World Engineering to do. Collings noted that Jake Lenderking had asked for the meeting, and asked him to begin the discussion.

Jake Lenderking said that local interests, including PCWAA, had driven substantive and meaningful changes and updates to the Arizona Department of Water Resources 2019 groundwater model for the Pinal AMA. Lenderking noted that the original policy need for the work resulted from ADWR's decision that the groundwater modelling for the Pinal AMA would not support new applications for Assured Water Supplies (AWS). He said that initially the view may have been to fix and amend the model and associated work and convince ADWR to accept new AWS determinations as a result of those changes. Lenderking noted that ADWR had yet to act on those updates, and was skeptical that they would do so. He added that the group may want to rethink how they approach the updated modelling moving forward.

Bill Collings said that he felt that the updates were a planning tool for local interests. He said that he had heard interest in further discussing the modelling, particularly concerning the Eloy area. He said that beyond the depth-to-water concerns that the 100-year modelling showed, it appeared that the same area was indicated in the brackish water study that PCWAA had done several years ago. Craig McFarland said that his group had questioned several aspects of the modelling.

Nathan Miller of MATRIX New World Engineering said that they had made a lot of changes and corrected many errors. He added that one of the more significant results of the changes was that the area that exceeds the Pinal AMA's AWS depth to groundwater limit of 1,100' below land surface (BLS) was enlarged, mostly due to ADWR using a much lower figure for physical availability for the City of Eloy's Designation of AWS (DAWS). Miller said that during discussions with ADWR regarding the Ag-to-Urban legislation that the Department had indicated that it would use its 2019 Pinal model to make eligibility decisions. He said that ADWR hydrology staff had previously indicated to him that they were not working on an ADWR update to the 2019 Pinal model. Miller indicated that the Analyses of AWS that the 2019 model accounts for, will expire and cease to affect the model when they do. Miller said that in the latest update work that MATRIX had removed the Analyses of AWS that had expired. He additionally noted that the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona was suing ADWR for issues concerning unmet demands and depth-to-water. He said that right now, it was unknown if or how ADWR might react. Fred Schneider noted that the lawsuit only addressed the Phoenix AMA. Joe Singleton said that as ADWR's reaction was still unknown they might take it upon

themselves to institute policy changes that do address the Pinal AMA as a result of court pressure regarding the Phoenix AMA lawsuits. Singleton said that Arizona Water Company's DAWS for their Pinal Valley system as a result of the Alternative Pathway to Designation of Assured Water Supply legislation might have lessened the importance of some of the problems that the modelling results were causing. Terri Sue Rossi said that Arizona Water Company's DAWS took in some of the existing Certificates of AWS (CAWS) demands, and that the results of updated modelling might not be that different. She said that the updated modelling work strove to be more realistic and conservative than the 2019 model. She noted that CAP deliveries were not modelled at full allocations in the newer modelling effort. Miller agreed that the updated modelling work did account for CAWS demands. McFarland asked if urbanization was accounted for with respect to agricultural land. Rossi said that it was accounted for within the irrigation districts. Fred Schneider noted that this was not based on the Ag-to-Urban legislation, but the natural progression of agricultural property converting to housing through time. The group discussed the urbanization rate, but the consensus was that the updated work did not change the urbanization schedule from the 2019 modelling.

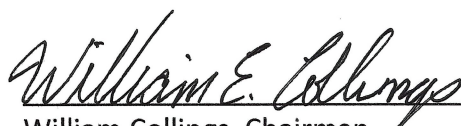
Jake Lenderking said that while a DAWS provider did not need a model for a recovery well, that Global had systems in the Pinal AMA that were not DAWS. He noted that Arizona Water Company had similar systems that the model could be of benefit for. He said that it could also serve as a regional planning tool. He said that the smaller area that exceeds 1,100' BLS in the 100-year pumping projections in the 2019 model might present more opportunities for future uses than the bigger spot might allow for. Lenderking indicated that using the newer version of the model might not benefit those attempting to use Ag-to-Urban regulatory provisions. Mackenzie Letcher expressed concerns that the larger red spot on the newer modelling would give the impression to most of the public that the City of Eloy was doing something wrong. Joe Singleton explained that ADWR's 2019 modelling had used Eloy's much smaller physical availability request from their reapplication for DAWS than the figure from the City's current DAWS, and that Eloy had changed their mind several times about which figure to proceed with. Singleton added that ADWR had not moved forward with the application for years, and that legislation passed since the initial reapplication date would allow Eloy to use the larger number in their DAWS even if the hydrology did not support that volume of water. Terri Sue Rossi said that she thought the modelling should be as accurate as possible, and use that version to show different ramifications. She cited an example of removing the Analyses of AWS (which are generally presumed to not be moving forward) or applying Ag-to-Urban provision to agricultural lands around the City of Eloy to see how that effects the area where drawdowns exceed 1,100' BLS (i.e. the red spot). Rossi said that she thought keeping the model up-to-date and utilizing defensible assumptions would bolster the case that regional water management was being done responsibly. She added that she thought it was of good service to the community. Singleton said that if ADWR would not accept the newer model for their regulatory purposes, like AWS, then maybe the model should just be fully adjusted to public purpose, and reflect things like more practical well locations and removal of the Analyses of AWS. Rossi thought it was possible that more contemporary modelling might help demonstrate that the 1,100' BLS was not a good criterion for Ag-to-Urban qualification. Stephen Miller thought that it could serve, along with the Brackish Water study that the Authority had commissioned several years ago, as a good tool for providing information to the public. Nathan Miller pointed out

that the most current modelling work that MATRIX had done was based on Element 5 of earlier scope of work, which incorporated all of the changes, corrections, and redistribution of pumping to resolve unmet demands from the other 4 elements of that scope of work. He said that the modelling used to support recovery well permits was not the most-current PCWAA-sponsored work, but a version of the 2019 ADWR model with updated pumping information included—not the relocated pumping that was included in the PCWAA scope of work. Fred Schneider said that changes should be documented so they could be distinguished and understood in the future. He wondered if it would be a good idea to keep a regulatory version of an update model for use moving forward along with the fuller version that reflects the collective believe in the water picture of the region (i.e. the newer modelling work that MATRIX had just completed). Bill Collings said that it seemed that the topic could use additional discussion.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

ATTEST:


William Collings, Chairman


Stephen Q. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer