



**MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 PM
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022**

In response to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Soquel Creek Water District's January 18, 2022 Board Meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Recorded Meetings: Recorded meetings are available on the District's website:
<https://www.soquelcreekwater.org/AgendaCenter>

President LaHue called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

0. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

Dr. Thomas LaHue, President
Carla Christensen, Vice-President
Dr. Bruce Daniels
Dr. Bruce Jaffe
Rachél Lather

District Counsel

Joshua Nelson, District Counsel

Staff Members Present:

Ron Duncan, General Manager
Shelley Flock, Conservation and Customer Service Field Manager
Taj Dufour, Engineering Manager
Leslie Strohm, Finance Manager
Traci Hart, Human Resources Manager
Christine Mead, Operations & Maintenance Manager
Melanie Mow Schumacher, Special Projects-Communications Manager
Emma Olin, Executive Assistant/Board Clerk
Rebecca Rubin, Public Outreach Coordinator
Douglas Martin, Construction Inspector/Cross Connection Control Specialist
Amanda Bunte, Engineering Technician

Others Present:

2 members of the public

1. CLOSED SESSION

1.1 Conference with Labor Negotiators

Agency designated representatives: Traci Hart / Ron Duncan
Employee organization: All Employee Groups

1.2 Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section §54956.9(d)(1)
Steinbruner vs. Soquel Creek Water District et al., Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case Nos. 19AP00031 19AP00030 19CV00181; CA Sixth District Court of Appeals Case No. H047733

Steinbruner vs. California Coastal Commission, et al., San Francisco County Superior Court Case No. CPF-20517119; CA First District Court of Appeals Case Nos. A163079, A163199
Steinbruner vs. Soquel Creek Water District et al., Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case No. 21CV00537
Steinbruner v. Soquel Creek Water District, et al. Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case No. 21CV01517
Steinbruner v. Soquel Creek Water District, et al. Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case No. 21CV02699

- 1.3 Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: 1 case

At 6:01 pm, President LaHue announced that the Board will meet in closed session to discuss Items 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

CONVENE TO CLOSED SESSION – 6:01 pm

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION – 7:07 pm

President LaHue adjourned the closed session and returned to open session at 7:07 pm.

President LaHue reported that the Board discussed Items 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 in closed session. No reportable action was taken.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING** – *None*

3. **BOARD MEMBERS' OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE ITEMS FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

None removed.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

President LaHue commented on the following consent items:

- Consent Item 4.4: Update completion dates for several items.
- Consent Item 4.6: Consider highlighting new information/changes in the monthly Management Update.
- Consent Item 4.8: Electric vehicles may be a practical option for the District to consider in the future.

MOTION: Director Daniels; Second: Director Lather; To approve Consent Agenda Items 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.
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- 4.1 Approval of Minutes – *None*

4.1.1 December 7, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes

4.1.2 December 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Action: Approved

- 4.2 Extend Resolution 21-21 and Re-Authorize Virtual Public Meetings in Accordance with AB 361

Action: Approved

- 4.3 Board Planning Calendar

Action: Approved

- 4.4 Special Board Assignments Status Report
Action: Approved
- 4.5 Productions Reports
Action: Approved
- 4.6 Management Update
Action: Approved
- 4.7 Finance Status Report
Action: Approved
- 4.8 Approve Purchase of a Utility Truck and Allocation from Operating Contingency Reserves, and Ratify the General Manager's Decision to Depart from Purchasing Policy
Action: Approved

5. **ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** (*items not on the Agenda*)

Written communications addressed to the Board are available on the District's website:
<https://www.soquelcreekwater.org/AgendaCenter>

6. **REPORTS**

6.1 District Counsel – Oral Report

District Counsel Nelson provided the following updates:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 361, allowing teleconference public meetings, is in effect through the declaration of a statewide emergency. The COVID-19 emergency is set to expire in March 2022, but it is likely to be extended.
- The water shut-off moratorium in Senate Bill (SB) 155 sunsetted on January 1, 2022.

7. **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS** m

7.1 Conditional and Unconditional Will Serve Letters – *None*

7.2 Year in Review Slideshow – *No Memo, Presentation Only*

Ms. Mow Schumacher shared the District's, "Year in Review Slideshow." She thanked Rebecca Rubin, the District's Public Outreach Coordinator, for preparing the presentation.

Ms. Mow Schumacher stated that this presentation will be shared on the District's website and other outreach platforms.

Directors expressed appreciation for the presentation and acknowledged the vast amount of work the District accomplished in 2021. Mr. Duncan agreed, and he recognized the huge effort of the Board and District staff.

Vice-President Christensen suggested a slightly longer presentation – to provide the viewer more time on each slide. Director Lather agreed.

INFORMATION ITEM ONLY.

7.3 Variance Request - David and Elizabeth Posner at 415 Seaview Drive – *Postponed*

7.4 Discussion and Consideration of District Policy – Mandatory Staff COVID-19 Vaccination

General Counsel Nelson stated that the Board met in closed session for labor negotiations to receive direction on negotiating a potential mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for District staff. After consideration and given the rapidly changing scientific and regulatory environment, the Board indicated that it is not pursuing a vaccination mandate at this time. However, the Board expressed support for other safety measures, such as masking, to help prevent the spread of the virus and keep the District's workforce as safe as possible.

Board discussion ensued. Directors recognized that the COVID-19 vaccine is the safest way to prevent the spread of the virus and that other safety measures have a direct impact on reducing transmission. Directors provided a variety of perspectives and insights.

Board direction was given, which included the following:

- At this time, do not implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for staff; the Board retained the option to revisit a vaccination mandate in the future.
- Continue ongoing COVID-19 prevention measures, which include mandatory masking (N95 or KN95 masks), distancing, symptom checking, and testing (when appropriate); note that the Board supports the District funding these safety measures.
- Remain informed of current COVID-19 data and science.
- Remain up to date and in compliance with State and federal regulations.
- Return at a future Board Meeting to re-evaluate COVID-19 conditions and the District's COVID-19 vaccination policy.

Directors emphasized the importance of the health and safety of District staff and the community.

DIRECTION WAS PROVIDED.

7.5 Discussion on Strategic Planning

Mr. Duncan reviewed Item 7.5, which initiates the development of the District's revised Strategic Plan. This item seeks to obtain Board feedback on the proposed planning horizon and process.

Mr. Duncan responded to several Board questions, included below:

- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a method used to obtain information using strengths-based, positive approach to envision an organization's future.
- The process outlined in the memo is not in a chronological order; many of the items will be conducted concurrently throughout the process.

Board discussion ensued, and there was consensus to move forward with the proposed process. Directors highlighted the following and made several recommendations:

- Recognize the importance of rates and budgeting in the strategic planning process.
- Utilize the strategic plan as a helpful tool for prioritization of the District's upcoming projects, including upgrades and repairs on existing infrastructure.
- Provide updates to the Board throughout the process, especially for consideration of the District's goals.
- Hold a public workshop on a weekend to encourage participation and discussion.

Several District managers provided input to consider.

Mr. Duncan thanked the Board and staff for their input on the strategic planning process.

DIRECTION WAS PROVIDED.

8. ADJOURNMENT

President LaHue adjourned the meeting at 8:09 pm.

SUBMITTED:



Emma Olin, Board Clerk

APPROVED:



Dr. Tom LaHue, President