



**MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 PM
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

In response to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Soquel Creek Water District's February 16, 2021 Board Meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Recorded Meetings: Recorded meetings can be viewed anytime on the District's [website](#).

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

0. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

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

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

Others Present:

2 members of the public

1. CLOSED SESSION

- 1.1 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. H048738
Steinbruner v. California Coastal Commission, et al., San Francisco County Superior Court Case No. CPF- 20517119
- 1.2 Conference With Real Property Negotiators
Property: Right-of-way easement for 2505 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062
Agency negotiator(s): Ron Duncan and Taj Dufour
Negotiating parties: Kimberly Finley, Santa Cruz County
Under negotiation: Price and Terms of Payment

At 6:00 pm, President Lather announced that the Board will meet in closed session to discuss Items 1.1 and 1.2.

One public comment was heard prior to the start of closed session.

CONVENE TO CLOSED SESSION – 6:02 pm

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION – 6:38 pm

President Lather adjourned the closed session and returned to open session at 6:38 pm.

President Lather reported that the Board discussed Items 1.1 and 1.2 in closed session. No action was taken.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING** - *None*

3. **ANNOUNCEMENT BY BOARD MEMBERS OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

Director LaHue requested that Item 4.5 be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Director Jaffe requested that Item 4.11 be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

President Lather removed Consent Agenda Items 4.5 and 4.11.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

One public comment was heard.

MOTION: Director Daniels; Second: Vice-President LaHue; To approve Consent Agenda Items 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

4.1 Approval of Minutes
4.1.1 February 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes
Action: Approved

4.2 Finance Status Report
Action: Approved

4.3 Production Reports
Action: Approved

4.4 Management Update
Action: Approved

4.5 Approve Allocation from Operating Contingency Reserves (OCR) for Emergency T. Hopkins Well Repairs and Ratify the General Manager’s Decision to Depart from Purchasing Policy
Action: Removed from Consent; Discussed at the end of Administrative Business

4.6 Consider Ratification of Memorandum of Understanding between Soquel Creek Water District & Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 521, Representing the Field & Office Employees Bargaining Unit
Action: Approved

- 4.7 Public Outreach Committee Meeting Summary
Action: Approved
- 4.8 Water Resources Management and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Summary
Action: Approved
- 4.9 Authorize Letter of Support to Congress for Coronavirus Public Employer Tax Relief
Action: Approved
- 4.10 Approve Attendance at the Annual Water Reuse Symposium and the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Spring Virtual Conference
Action: Approved
- 4.11 Informational – Santa Cruz County Water Resources Management Status Report for 2020
Action: Removed from Consent; Discussed at the end of Administrative Business

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

Written communications addressed to the Board are available [online](#).

One public comment was heard.

Director Daniels reported that rainfall totals are currently 42% below normal. Director Jaffe added that rainfall and recharge are not directly correlated, so even if there is additional rainfall this season, then that does not mean the aquifer will recharge proportionally.

Director Christensen reported that two congresswomen from Michigan are working on a Covid-19 relief fund that specifically addresses national water insecurity.

6. **REPORTS**

6.1 District Counsel – Oral Report

District Counsel Nelson stated that California’s new legislative cycle began in January 2021, and there may be a new bill regarding the Brown Act and the modifications made in response to COVID-19.

7. **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

7.1 Conditional and Unconditional Will Serve Letters – *None*

7.2 Consider Additions to the Finance Status Report

Ms. Strohm reviewed Item 7.2, explaining that this item is presented for the Board to discuss and consider what data and analysis to include (or not include) in the monthly Finance Status Report. She explained that the Finance Status Report includes both legally mandated and optional reports. Ms. Strohm stated that the required reports will continue to be presented monthly; however, she requested that the Board provide input on the optional reports to ensure effective and efficient monthly financial reporting.

Ms. Strohm noted that a customer requested that the financial reporting provided in 2017 be included in the Finance Status Report. She requested that the Board direct staff whether to add this information back to the monthly report or not.

One public comment was heard.

Director Daniels recognized the work and staff time that goes into producing the monthly Finance Status Report, and he suggested that the optional reports be presented quarterly or semiannually. Director Christensen agreed, and she suggested that the optional reports be presented semiannually to reflect the seasonality of water use (e.g. summer and winter). Board members agreed.

Vice-President LaHue questioned if it is possible to present an analysis (e.g. a histogram) showing the percentage of customers in each tier, and the percentage of customers experiencing different levels of rate increases in Tier 2. He noted that this information may help the rate study.

Board and staff discussion ensued. Ms. Strohm responded to a variety of questions.

There was consensus among the Board to direct staff to make the following changes/additions to the monthly Finance Status Report:

- Reflect the total number of customers consuming water only in Tier 1 in the analysis, "Number of Customers Consuming Water in Each Tier," on Page 150;
- Add analysis (e.g. a histogram) showing the percentage of customers in each tier, and the percentage of customers experiencing different levels of rate increases in Tier 2;
- Provide staff the discretion to provide additional information/reports as deemed necessary, such as COVID-19 impacts;
- Include the 2017 financial report type information in the semiannual financial reporting;
- Present the optional financial reports semiannually (summer and winter), and direct staff to increase the reporting frequency in the future, if desired.

Director Jaffe added that detailed financial reporting will also be presented during the next rate study.

The Board expressed appreciation for the finance department and thanked Ms. Strohm for her hard work.

7.3 Property Negotiations with County of Santa Cruz, APN 029-013-54, 2505 Chanticleer Ave., Santa Cruz, California

Mr. Dufour stated that staff is working with the County of Santa Cruz on negotiations regarding the bicycle-pedestrian overcrossing at 2505 Chanticleer Avenue. He stated that negotiations are nearing completion, but an agreement is not yet finalized. Due to time sensitive nature of the agreement, staff is requesting that the Board delegate authority to the Board President and Vice-President to work with staff to finalize and execute the agreement.

One public comment was heard.

In response to a question posed by Director Jaffe, District Counsel Nelson confirmed that staff (and the Board President and Vice-President, if authorized), may execute the agreement with the County, and the agreement can then be presented as an informational item at a future meeting.

Mr. Duncan stated that the negotiations are time sensitive with the County, and that is why staff is requesting that the Board delegate authority to Board President and Vice-President.

MOTION: Director Daniels; Second: Director Jaffe; To appoint the Board President and Vice-President to work with staff on the property negotiations with the County of Santa Cruz regarding APN 029-013-54, 2505 Chanticleer Ave., Santa Cruz, California; and if either the Board President or Vice-President is uncomfortable with the agreement, then return with this item to be considered by the full Board of Directors at a future special or regular public meeting. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA - ITEMS REMOVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.5 Approve Allocation from Operating Contingency Reserves (OCR) for Emergency T. Hopkins Well Repairs and Ratify the General Manager's Decision to Depart from Purchasing Policy

Ms. Mead stated that the T. Hopkins Well is currently offline and requires emergency chemical and physical rehabilitation. This work is unanticipated and not included in the 2020-21 budget.

Ms. Mead stated that Maggiora Bros. had not yet submitted a final proposal and cost estimate for the rehabilitation and repair work at the time the memo was written. She stated that the proposal came in higher than staff's estimate, and the revised requested allocation from the Operating Contingency Reserve (OCR) is \$212,000.

One public comment was heard.

MOTION: Director Christensen; Second: Vice-President LaHue; To authorize the allocation of \$212,000 from Operating Contingency Reserves to fund the T. Hopkins Well Repairs Project, CWO 21-5081. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Director Christensen; Second: Vice-President LaHue; To ratify the General Manager's decision to depart from the District's normal purchasing policy due to the emergency need for well repair, and award the contracts to Maggiora Bros. Drilling, Inc. for the T. Hopkins Well Repairs Project, CWO 21-5081. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

- 4.11 Informational – Santa Cruz County Water Resources Management Status Report for 2020

Mr. Duncan shared the Santa Cruz County Water Resources Management Status Report. He highlighted the analysis on Pages 140 and 143, which show the overall water production for all municipal water suppliers and coastal groundwater levels.

One public comment was heard.

Directors and staff responded to public comment.

Director Jaffe discussed the graph on Page 143, emphasizing that low groundwater elevations increase seawater intrusion to the aquifer.

INFORMATION ONLY

8. ADJOURNMENT

President Lather adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

SUBMITTED:



Emma Olin, Board Clerk

APPROVED:



Rachél Lather, President