

Borrego Water District
CORRECTED MINUTES
Groundwater Management Standing Committee
Wednesday, July 8, 2009, 9:15 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Attendance: Directors: Mendenhall, Smiley
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
 Jerry Rolwing, Operations Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke Rudy Monica
 Marshal Brecht Paul Nordman
 Beth Hart Rebecca Falk

CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Beth Hart pointed out that she did not attend the last Committee meeting, and a comment was attributed to her. Since no one remembered who made the comment, the sentence was deleted and the Minutes were approved as amended.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion of Water Mitigation and Entitlement Policy. Rich Williamson reported that the CEQA documents were being finalized. After filing, there is a 30-day review period. The Negative Declaration will be advertised in the *Union Tribune* and the *Borrego Sun*. Allison Burns is currently reviewing it. The County has expressed concern that they could not accept all provisions of the policy, but Mr. Williamson pointed out that it is a District policy, and the County can select the portions it wishes to utilize. Since it is a policy, not an ordinance, it is easy to amend.

Director Smiley asked whether the County had any concerns regarding the calculations on the level of entitlement. Mr. Williamson replied they were concerned about the lack of documentation, and Director Smiley agreed to compile a sheet showing the calculations. Director Smiley further questioned if there were concerns regarding air quality, noting that if the fallowed crops are shredded and replaced with ground cover, they would be mitigated.

Mr. Williamson predicted that the policy would be before the Board for adoption at its September meeting.

Mr. Williamson reported that interest in mitigation credits had been expressed by Borrego Sunshine Farms (64 acres of peppers and other crops) and the former dragon fruit farm. Jim Engelke pointed out that these projects would not meet County mitigation standards, but Jerry Rolwing noted they could be used for small developments and single-family homes. Mr. Williamson added that the District might buy them for resale to these builders.

Discussion followed regarding the in-lieu fee, which will continue until adoption of the Mitigation and Entitlement Policy. In general, the mitigation will be required when the building permit is issued. Mr. Rolwing asked about a situation where a future

builder wants a meter prior to construction. Mr. Williamson suggested the meter be locked and the property owner charged a monthly fee, with mitigation delayed until the building permit is requested. If irrigation is desired in advance of construction, mitigation would be required. In questionable situations, when a request comes to staff, they will make a recommendation to the Committee, which in turn will make a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Engelke suggested a one-year window, where the Board has oversight and then it is handled by staff and/or Committee.

2. Status of Financing/Grant Requests. Mr. Williamson reported that staff is completing the final application to I-Bank for a \$5.4 million loan. The most recent cost was under four percent, amortized over 30 years. The complete submission is expected by the end of the month. In response to Marshal Brecht's inquiry, Mr. Williamson explained that it is similar to a home equity loan. The District does not pay interest until the money is actually spent.

Mr. Brecht questioned the prevailing wage requirement for District work, particularly related to the new tank. Mr. Williamson cited the need to meet earthquake standards, and Mr. Engelke suggested a retrofit. Mr. Rolwing agreed to investigate.

Mr. Rolwing reported that several letters of support from local politicians, public agencies and community groups had been submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation on behalf of the District's basin study funding application. Four recipients will be selected from six applicants, so we have a good chance. In response to Director Mendenhall's inquiry, Mr. Williamson replied that if selected, the Bureau may help the District finance construction, such as a pipeline. Beth Hart expressed concern regarding repayment of the loan, and Mr. Williamson explained there are many options, such as partial use of acquired water rights.

3. Update on Groundwater Management Study. Mr. Williamson reported that the Groundwater Management Study is continuing, and Mr. Rolwing added that the USGS portion is on hold until October.

4. Status of Sustainable Water Supply Projects. Mr. Williamson reported that staff is working with a surveyor on the design of the Wilcox reservoir and transmission mains and will coordinate with the State Park.

Mr. Brecht inquired about the status of the Clark Lake project. Mr. Williamson explained that the critical issue is whether to pay more to treat the water or address access issues and drill at the north end of the lake.

5. Discussion: Future directions and goals. Mr. Williamson pointed out that depending on the outcome of the Bureau of Reclamation project, future directions and goals may change. Rebecca Falk expressed concern regarding the perchlorate content in the Colorado River water, one of our import options.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m. The next regular Groundwater Management Committee Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2009 at 9:15 a.m.