

Borrego Water District
CORRECTED MINUTES
Groundwater Management Standing Committee
Wednesday, May 12, 2010, 9:15 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Attendance: Directors: Mendenhall, Smiley
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke, Lundberg Clark Shimeall
Lane Sharman, BWX Marshal Brecht
Lucy Larson Ray Delahay
Abby King, BSCSG

CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lane Sharman requested elaboration on the statement by solar consultant Chris Gadomski that solar providers typically donate one percent of their annual revenue to the community. He had been involved in the solar energy business and was unaware of this practice. Rich Williamson agreed to provide examples. Discussion followed regarding the appropriate term for the contribution: donation, mitigation or royalty. Jim Engelke pointed out that a mitigation fee requires a direct relationship between the solar provider and the environmental impact being mitigated. Mr. Williamson stated that Eurus, a solar provider, used the term "donation." Mr. Sharman suggested that the solar provider be requested to buy mitigation credits rather than make a donation, thereby encouraging following and increasing the demand for credits. Mr. Williamson explained that the District's role is to represent the community and encourage some benefit in the absence of property tax revenue. Solar providers are exempt from property tax.

Director Mendenhall inquired about the paragraph at the top of page two of the April Minutes, referring to scenarios and the model. Director Smiley requested that the paragraph be moved to page 1, immediately following the second paragraph of Item 1, which described the USGS scenarios and model in greater detail. The Minutes of April 14, 2010 were approved as corrected.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Overview/Discussion of Water Supply/Groundwater Management Direction for next 50 years

- Current Status
- Mid-Years

Process:

Planning/Design
Financing
Implementation

Integration of Activities

IRWMP

BOR Basin Plan

GW Management Plan

USGS GW Study

Mr. Williamson distributed an outline of Groundwater Management Scenarios, an aid to assessing our current status and focusing on objectives. He summarized existing accomplishments, including adoption of the Groundwater Management Plan, Mitigation Policy, tiered rates, conservation incentives, Water Resource Management Study and Water Credit Program. Other milestones were the first agricultural fallowing through BWD, initiation of the USGS/DWR Groundwater Study, STAG grant appropriation, approval of the Anza Borrego Desert Integrated Water Management Program Area by DWR, completion of survey and design for the Southeast and Clark Lake Transmission Lines, and partnership with Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District and the San Diego County Water Authority to apply for a Bureau of Reclamation Basin Plan Study.

A response from the BOR is anticipated this summer, and could lead to a long-term solution to the overdraft including conjunctive use, water banking and provision of underground storage in Borrego Springs. Mr. Engelke expressed concern that there may be local opposition to importing Colorado River water, but Mr. Williamson assured him that treatment facilities would be included. Marshal Brecht inquired about the time frame for implementation, and Mr. Williamson predicted approximately 20 years to completion.

Mr. Williamson went on to outline ongoing activities such as the IRWMP, BOR Basin Plan, potential land acquisition for fallowing and eventual recharge, cooperation with the Community Sponsor Group to negotiate with the County on common issues and reduction of unaccounted for water through monitoring and repairs of the District's infrastructure.

Discussion followed regarding the CSG/BWD negotiations with the County relative to the inability to develop some areas of Borrego Springs due to lack of fire protection. Mr. Williamson explained that BWD has latent fire protection powers, which could be activated through LAFCO. We could then form a Community Facilities District and issue bonds to fund a new fire station, with the County providing operation and maintenance.

Mr. Williamson explained the mezzanine/bridge projects and strategies. These are plans to identify other sources of domestic water pending the ultimate solution which hopefully will come out of the BOR study. Options include importation from Clark Lake or Ocotillo Wells, continued fallowing, conservation, project funding through the IRWMP, completion of BOR study and development of partnerships for financing and implementation, developing rates which distribute the cost among current users and future developers, and integration of the IRWMP, BOR and Groundwater Management Plan.

Discussion followed regarding issues relative to the Clark Lake importation option, including access (has been negotiated with the State Park) and water quality (good quality found at North side; continuing to test). In response to Marshal Brecht, Mr. Williamson estimated the cost for the pipeline and two wells at \$8 million. Work continues on environmental and financing aspects.

Mr. Williamson concluded his report with a list of long-term objectives. They are to develop a sustainable, renewable water supply; reestablish historic water levels for the benefit of local flora and fauna; and accomplish these objectives at the lowest possible cost for the ratepayers.

Ray Delahay asked whether BWD had the power to tax non-resident landowners, and Mr. Williamson replied that it does, provided they are within the District.

Mr. Engelke inquired about future reclamation. Mr. Williamson explained that even with a population of 10,000, we would probably only generate enough sewage to serve one golf course.

2. Status of applications for water credits. Mr. Williamson announced that the District is close to issuing its first certificate for water credits. A form has been developed for tracking status, and all transactions must go through the District.

Mr. Williamson expressed hope that BWD can eventually assume all responsibility for mitigation and simply provide a letter of approval to the County. Mr. Engelke brought up CEQA issues and the need for police power, and Mr. Williamson agreed to investigate. Director Smiley predicted the Legislature would need to be involved. Mr. Williamson suggested discussing the issue at the next Board meeting.

3. Financing/Grants request status. Mr. Williamson reported he was awaiting response from our application to the Bureau of Reclamation, and our I-Bank application is on their Board agenda for May 25. The proposed loan would be at 3.21 percent interest for 30 years. He hoped to present the terms to the BWD Board at its May 26 meeting.

4. Report on ACWA Groundwater Committee meeting (Monterey, CA). Mr. Williamson will put the draft ACWA Groundwater Policy on the BWD website and have hard copies available for the next BWD GWM Committee meeting. ACWA is trying to demonstrate that local agencies have a good handle on groundwater issues and hopes to minimize the State's role in groundwater management.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next regular Groundwater Management Committee Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 2010 at 9:15 a.m.