

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS  
OF SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #3  
OF THE RIO GRANDE WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
January 17, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.  
8805 Independence Way, Alamosa, CO 81101  
And By Zoom/Teleconference**

**Present:** LeRoy Salazar, President; Nathan Coombs, Vice-President/Secretary/Treasurer; Doug Bagwell, Manager; Ruben Sandoval, Manager; Sam Vance, Manager; Warren Crowther, Manager; and, Elliott Salazar, Ex-Officio Member.

**Staff and Consultants:** Pete Ampe, Hill & Robbins, P.C; Angelo Bellah, Program Manager; Rose Vanderpool, Program Assistant; Wylie Keller, Water Resource Specialist; Clinton Phillips, Davis Engineering; Taylor Chick, Program Manager; Crystal Benevidez, HCP Coordinator; Michael Carson, Database Administrator; and, April Mondragon, Administrative Assistant.

**Guests:** David Hofmann, Jason Lorenz, Deb Sarason, Jack Gilleland, Ryan Gilleland, Sally Wier, Mike Saylor, Dwight Martin, Kevin Jones, and Pamela Jones.

**Meeting Called to Order**

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. A quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Warren Crowther led the opening prayer.

**Approval of the Agenda**

President Salazar asked to add a report on the well purchase program, a report on model run seven (7) and a report from Jason Lorenz and Sally Wier to the agenda. A motion was not made.

**Public Comment**

President Salazar asked for public comment. There was none.

**Discuss Potential Measures to Achieve Aquifer Sustainability**

President Salazar asked for a discussion on potential measures to achieve aquifer sustainability. Wylie Keller updated the Board on the well purchase program. He reported on the number of applications received, the acre foot amount of water taken out of production and the cost to the Subdistrict. Pete Ampe highlighted that the Republican River Conservation District believes they will have exhaust all of their funds. Jason Lorenz reported on the ratio of diversion to stream flow vs the change in aquifer. He provided the forecast on the Conejos, San Antonio and the Los Pinos. Mr. Lorenz explained in order to maintain the aquifer the Subdistrict would need to limit pumping in the basin to about 18,500-acre feet. He presented the groundwater diversions vs change in composite water head at the forecasted streamflow and highlighted the estimated drop in the aquifer this year. Mike Saylor provided an update on phase 7 of the model run. He provided the time period being looked at, the average depletions per year, the percentage of increase and the acre foot amount of increase. Discussion was held on how the increase occurred and whether the formula is correct within the model. They also discussed possibly having a discussion with the State regarding the end results in order to get a better idea on what caused the changes in the model.

**Alpha Hay Land-Review Bids to Source and Install a VFD**

President Salazar asked for a review of Alpha Hay land bids and bids to source and install a VFD. Angelo Bellah reported receiving zero (0) bids for the land sale and three (3) bids for the VFD project. He presented the estimates and explained the differences in price. Discussion was held on how the gallons per minutes would be set to pump and the electric costs.

A motion was made by Elliott Salazar to approve the bid from Water Works Irrigation. The motion was seconded by Nathan Coombs and unanimously approved.

**Forbearance Agreements-Securing 10 Year Agreements**

President Salazar asked for a discussion on securing ten (10) year forbearance agreements. Angelo Bellah presented a spreadsheet used to track the forbearance agreements. He highlighted the agreements that are set to expire and the ditch companies without an agreement. Discussion was held on the ditch companies desire to have one document to cover multiple ditch companies with all payments in line with each other with the same bonus amount. Direction was given to Mr. Bellah to work on a master forbearance agreement and work toward a process in which all payments are sent out at the same time.

**Colorado Open Lands Update**

President Salazar asked for an update from Colorado Open Lands. Sally Wier updated the Board on the funding available to assist landowners working to reduce groundwater withdrawals. She highlighted the application process and qualifications.

**Amend Temporary Fallow Resolution**

President Salazar asked for a discussion concerning amending the temporary fallow resolution. He reminded the Board of the of the resolutions passed at a prior meeting and explained why they may need to amend it. Angelo Bellah presented the Subdistrict No. 3 diversion history and sustainability incentive data. Discussion was held on the amount of the budget the program could use up and how to structure the program. Nathan Coombs suggested setting a goal on the amount of pumping reduction they would like to see. Jack Gilleland suggested a 10% cut back without payment for everyone. Other suggestions included a 5% cutback with incentives for those that do above and possibly offering a credit program with mandatory cutback. Pete Ampe described the CREP program and the potential to get it expanded into the Conejos area. He also explained how the buy/sell credits works in Subdistrict No. 1 and the penalties used in Subdistrict No. 5. Clinton Phillips explained how Subdistrict No. 5 sets their allocation each year. Mr. Ampe explained the process involved to incorporate an allocation program similar to Subdistrict No. 5. He reported Subdistrict No. 3 would need to adopt rules and regulations at a special meeting, get approved by the Board of Directors and provide notice. Discussion was held on allowing exceptions on a case-by-case basis, the seriousness of the situation, accruing credits based on the amount of cutback and options for this year. President Salazar directed staff to complete an analysis according to farm unit based on the last five (5) years to demonstrate a 10% cutback which would be shared with the public at the work session.

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to rescind the motion made at the last meeting on the incentive program. The motion was seconded by Elliott Salazar and unanimously approved.

#### **Additional Discussion on Potential Incentive Programs**

President Salazar asked for an additional discussion on potential incentive programs. Angelo Bellah described a potential program to incentivize the Colorado Open Lands groundwater conservation easements once the Senate Bill program ends. Sally Wier reported on the situation with the appraisal process and how the Senate Bill program set a price point on water in the Valley.

#### **Executive Session to Receive Legal Advice Concerning the Purchase of Real Property**

President Salazar asked for an executive session to receive legal advice concerning the purchase of real property. A motion was made at 9:54 a.m. by Nathan Coombs to enter into executive session. The motion was seconded by Doug Bagwell and unanimously approved.

Mr. Ampe stated the Board was entering into executive session pursuant to section 24-6-402(4)(a) to receive legal advice concerning the purchase of real property. The Board would take no formal action or position during the executive session.

#### **Possible Action from Executive Session**

President Salazar asked for possible action from the executive session. He asked what can be done they do if they do not agree with the depletion numbers in the model. Mike Saylor provided an update on the PRT meeting. He explained where the numbers came from and suggested the Board attend a PRT meeting and have a discussion with the group on the attributions which lead to the increased depletions in Subdistrict No. 3, 6 and the Trinchera.

#### **Next Meeting**

A work session was scheduled for February 13, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.

The next quarterly meeting was scheduled for March 7, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

  
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President

  
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Vice-President/Secretary/Treasurer