

February 18, 2014  
Special Meeting  
6:05 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District convened in special session on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 6:05 p.m. at the San Benito County Water District office at 30 Mansfield Road, Hollister, California. Members present were: President John Tobias, Vice President Joe Tonascia, and Directors Frank Bettencourt, Sonny Flores and Joe Torquato. Also present were District Manager/Engineer Jeff Cattaneo, District Counsel David E. Pipal, Assistant Manager Sara Singleton, and Office Specialist III Barbara Mauro.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

President Tobias called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Tobias led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **AGENDA ITEMS:**

#### **1. Public Hearing declaring an emergency water shortage condition for the 2014-2015 Water Year**

##### **a. Proof of Publication submitted for Notice of Public Hearing**

Mrs. Mauro verified the proof of publication.

##### **b. Presentation of conditions that caused the water shortage**

Mr. Cattaneo stated this item is a continuation from the January 29, 2014 Board meeting. Since that meeting, we did have one rain storm but it only amounted to small amount of rainfall. Currently, Mr. Cattaneo reported the federal allocation for Ag is still -0- and the M & I is still 50% of historical use. Mr. Cattaneo stated we are experiencing a severe water shortage. Last year, the District only received a 20% allocation. The groundwater level shows a decline of 20' near Lucy Brown and Bixby Road in the San Juan Valley. Around the Hollister area, the groundwater levels have also dropped approximately 20'. If the drought continues, the groundwater level could drop to a low similar to that of 1977.

The Board action tonight would be to declare a water supply emergency. One of the measures in the resolution for the water supply emergency is to declare a Stage I drought which asks for voluntary water conservation of 15%. The District will continue to monitor the groundwater levels over the next several months and it may lead to declaring a Stage II.

The District's local reservoirs, Hernandez and Paicines, historically release water but due to the drought this year, there will be no releases. It will be the same next year, per Mr. Cattaneo, unless there is a significant rainfall in the coming months.

Also included in the resolution is an overuse fee for the blue valve water. In the past, the District has imposed this fee in order to cover the amount needed to

purchase additional water. Mr. Cattaneo is estimating the District may need an additional 500-600 AF of water. The current market rate to purchase water due to the lack of supply is \$1200/AF, which is what the proposed overuse charge is. The overuse fee is not intended as punitive but to give the District the ability to purchase water on the open market. Mr. Cattaneo stated customers should view the overuse charge as an incentive to be vigilant about watching their water usage.

Mr. Cattaneo stated the District will monitor water usage closely. Letters will be sent to customers when they reach 75% of their allocation. When customers are very close to running out of their water allocation, the District will monitor them more closely and close their valves immediately if they go over.

At the last Board meeting, Mr. Cattaneo showed the 8 station index, which is where the majority of our water comes from. At that time, it showed only 3.5". Since the last storm, it now shows 12.9". While this is an improvement, the average for that index annually is about 50".

Vice President Tonascia asked if the resolution is approved, will it be effective immediately. Mr. Cattaneo stated yes.

**c. Open Public Hearing**

President Tobias opened the Public Hearing.

Scott Rossi, a member of the audience, asked about the water the District may purchase for overuse; will that water be available for purchase. Mr. Cattaneo stated no, as there will be very little water available. There may be some water from the North Delta, but that has not been confirmed.

**d. Close Public Hearing or continue to a later date**

With no other questions, President Tobias closed the Public Hearing.

**e. Consider Resolution Declaring an Emergency Water Shortage Condition for the 2014-2015 Water Year and Establishing Interim Policies and Procedures during the period of such shortage**

With a motion by Vice President Tonascia and a second by Director Torquato, Resolution #2014-02, *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District Declaring a Water Shortage Emergency and Implementing the District's Water Shortage Contingency Plans* was unanimously approved.

**2. Consider continuing operation of Zone 104, Fairview Road Water System, until final dissolution of said zone of benefit**

Mr. Cattaneo stated the homeowners of Zone 104, Fairview Road Water System asked the District to continue operation of their water system. If the District decides to continue operation, it will require a successful Prop 218 both for the rates as well as for the capital improvements needed.

The Board's action, per Mr. Cattaneo, will be to direct staff to continue operation and then to consider the mailing of the Prop 218 notice.

District Counsel stated the Board should also direct the effective date to continue through April 30, 2014.

Vice President Tonascia asked if they needed to rescind the previous action. Mr. Cattaneo stated no, just to continue operation as the water system has sufficient funds to run through April.

Director Torquato asked if the Prop 218 notice will be ready soon. Mrs. Singleton stated the notice could be ready, possibly by tomorrow. Vice President Tonascia asked if staff needs direction to mail the Prop 218 notice and Mr. Cattaneo stated yes.

President Tobias asked if a decision would be made by the April Board meeting. Mr. Cattaneo replied, yes, either way.

Mr. Pipal stated, the effective date on the approved resolution, was January 31, 2014, so a new date would need to be stated.

With a motion by Vice President Tonascia and a second by Director Flores, the Board of Directors unanimously approved continued operation of Zone 104, Fairview Road Water System, through April 30, 2014, until final dissolution of said zone of benefit.

**3. Review Prop 218 Notification and Authorize Staff to Mail Proposed Zone 104, Fairview Road Water System Water Rates**

With a motion by Director Flores and a second by Director Bettencourt, the Board of Directors authorized staff to mail the proposed Zone 104, Fairview Road Water System Water Rates Prop 218 notice.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

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Minutes were approved at the February 26, 2014 Board Meeting and signed by the presiding board member.

*/s/John Tobias*  
John Tobias, President

*/s/Barbara L. Mauro*  
Barbara L. Mauro, Recording Secretary