

April 9, 2025
Special Meeting
5:02 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District convened in regular session on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 5:02 p.m. at the San Benito County Water District office at 30 Mansfield Road, Hollister, California. Members present were: President Doug Williams, Vice President Mark Wright and Directors Sonny Flores, John Freeman and Joe Tonascia. Also present were General Manager Dana Jacobson, District Counsel Jeremy T. Liem, Assistant General Manager Brett Miller, Office Specialist I Shannon Darnall and Executive Assistant/Board Clerk Barbara Mauro. Jeff Cattaneo participated via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

President Williams called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

President Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance.

b. Roll Call

Mrs. Mauro called roll. Members present were: President Williams, Vice President Wright and Directors Flores, Freeman and Tonascia.

c. Approval of the Agenda

President Williams stated the agenda needed to have 1 item added. Mr. Liem stated the urgency of this item is based on information that came to light after the agenda was posted and a determination of immediate action is necessary to consider commencing litigation and filing an emergency preliminary injunction. This item must be added to the agenda with a motion and second and must be passed by a 4/5 vote of the board. A motion was made by Director Tonascia, for approval of the agenda and adding a Closed Session Item: Conference with Legal Counsel-Anticipated Litigation, initiation of litigation pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9; One case and it was seconded by Director Flores. Mrs. Mauro added this will now be agenda item #4, Open Session, report out of Closed Session will be agenda item #5 and then Adjournment. The Board approved the agenda, with the one addition, by 5 affirmative votes, Williams, Wright, Flores, Freeman and Tonascia.

d. Speakers will be limited to 5 minutes to address the Board

There were no public speakers.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Discuss Public Outreach for the Accelerated Drought Response Project

Mr. Jacobson, using a PowerPoint presentation, introduced this item and stated there is a requirement from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to educate the public and hold 2-3 public meetings. The next item on this agenda, is to consider approval of the CEQA compliance for the ADRoP Project. Mr. Jacobson gave an overview of the grant funding received so far (2 grants through DWR and 1 through the USBR). He further reported the District received the final grant agreement today for the \$6.7 million grant. For reference, Mr. Jacobson stated the members of the San Benito Urban Water Master Plan are: San Benito County Water District, San Benito County,

the City of Hollister, Sunnyslope County Water District and soon the City of San Juan Bautista will be added. Each agency has 2 representatives on the Governance Committee and the manager of each agency is on the Management Committee of the SBUW Master Plan. He reviewed the accomplishments of the Master Plan, which included: Upgrade to the Lessalt WTP, the construction of the West Hills WTP, the City of Hollister's Wastewater Plant and the Ridgemark Wastewater Plant. In the 2023 Master Plan update, it was noted there is a water shortfall in critically dry years. ADROp will store water in years when there are excess water allocations, to be used during critically dry years. This project is to provide water to existing customers only. Mr. Jacobson reviewed the purpose, components and the capital costs, which are estimated to be about \$50 million. The execution of the project will be: 1) West Hills WTP expansion; 2) Install wells and a pipeline and 3) Construction to be complete by approximately March 2026.

Director Flores asked about a consultant for the public outreach. Mr. Jacobson stated this should come before the board in the next month or two. Some meetings we have had would qualify and some dedicated public meetings will still be needed. Discussion ensued about possible locations for these meetings.

2. Public Hearing regarding the Adoption and Approval of Findings for the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Accelerated Drought Response Project

a. Proof of Publication submitted for the Adoption and Approval of Findings for the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Accelerated Drought Response Project

Mrs. Mauro verified the proof of publication.

b. Presentation of the Findings

Mr. Jacobson reviewed the CEQA requirements and stated the District is the lead agency. The public review period ended approximately 1 week ago. If the Board approves, Mr. Jacobson will sign the CEQA Findings of Fact. Following approval, the CEQA document will be filed with the San Benito County Clerks office and also on-line with CEQA. He further explained that the mitigation measures are required to reduce the environmental impact. Regarding ADROp, CEQA prohibits piece-mealing of projects, so an initial analysis was made for the West Hills WTP and a new analysis was done for the wells in the project. Mr. Jacobson reviewed the findings and stated no statement of overriding impacts was needed; the Board would be authorizing him to sign this document.

c. Questions of Directors

There were no questions from the Directors.

d. Open Public Hearing

President Williams opened the Public Hearing; there were no questions or comments from the public.

e. Close Public Hearing or continue to a later date

President Williams closed the Public Hearing.

f. Consider Adoption of the Statement of Findings

With a motion by Director Flores and a second by Director Freeman, the Board of Directors adopted the Statement of Findings by 5 affirmative votes, Williams, Wright, Flores, Freeman and Tonascia.

g. Consider Resolution for Approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Accelerated Drought Response Project including the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

With a motion by Director Freeman and a second by Director Tonascia, the Board of Directors approved Resolution 2025-05 *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District Adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Accelerated Drought Response Project; Adopting California Environmental Quality Act Findings of Fact, Mitigation Measures, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and Approving the Accelerated Drought Response Project*; by 5 affirmative votes, Williams, Wright, Flores, Freeman and Tonascia.

**3. CLOSED SESSION: Conference with Legal Counsel-Pending litigation
Government Code § 54956.9(d)(1)
Kurasaki vs. Caltrans *et al*; San Benito County**

**4. CLOSED SESSION: Conference with Legal Counsel-Anticipated
litigation
Government Code §54956.9(d)(4) Initiation of litigation
1 case**

(The Board convened in Closed Session at 5:30 p.m.)

**5. OPEN SESSION:
Report any actions, if any, from Closed Session items**

(The Board reconvened in Open Session at 6:26 p.m.)

President Williams reported on Agenda item #3, regarding the pending litigation. In Closed Session, there was a motion by Director Tonascia and a second by Director Freeman, the Board of Directors agreed to deny the claim for this item by 5 affirmative votes, Williams, Wright, Flores, Freeman and Tonascia.

President Williams reported on Agenda #4, there was no action to report.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Minutes were approved at the April 30, 2025 Board meeting and signed by the presiding board member.

/s/Doug Williams
Doug Williams, President

/s/Barbara L. Mauro
Barbara L. Mauro, Executive Assistant/Board Clerk