



MEMORANDUM

FC 14 (01-25-23)

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Agricultural Water
Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Agricultural Water Advisory Committee
(AWAC)
January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting Summary.

DATE: April 9, 2024

This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the meeting of the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) held on Monday, January 8, 2024.

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

It was moved by Mitchell Mariani and seconded by Dhruv Khanna and unanimously carried that Peter Van Dyke would become the 2024 Chairperson; and it was moved by Erin Gil and seconded by Chairperson Peter Van Dyke that Trevor Garrod would become the 2024 Vice Chairperson.

Review and Approve 2023 Annual Accomplishments Report for Presentation to the Board (Committee Chair).

It was moved by Jan Garrod and seconded by Erin Gil and unanimously carried that the 2023 Accomplishments Report be approved for presentation to the Board with an amendment to Item #9 on page 26 of Attachment 1 to include the language that the Board approved the Committee's recommendation at its May 16, 2023 meeting to keep the agricultural rates flat for one year. The 2023 Annual Accomplishments Report was presented and accepted at the March 26, 2024 Board meeting.

Review and Provide Comment to the Board on Staff's Preliminary Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Groundwater Production Charges.

The Committee provided feedback noting interest in the inclusion of inflation consequences, potential for storm water capture, and carbon sequestration in the presentation to the Board, support for keeping water rates the same and the potential for big and small projects. Director Santos noted costs of operation went up in all areas which accounts for the charges and encouraged increasing AWAC's relations with legislators for support. Director Varela encouraged AWAC members to meet with elected officials and noted per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a current costly water issue.

It was moved by Dhruv Khanna and seconded by Erin Gil and unanimously carried that the Committee recommend to the Board to hold the agricultural groundwater rate unchanged at 36.85 per acre foot.

It was moved by Dhruv Khanna and seconded by Erin Gil for the inclusion of 3 information slides to be presented to the Board regarding ecosystem benefits of groundwater recharge, climate change, and inflation. No vote was taken.

Darin Taylor confirmed this was a preliminary analysis agenda item which will return on the April 2024 agenda for further discussion.

Receive Information and Provide Feedback on the Development of Valley Water's Water Supply Master Plan 2050.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and confirmed the contract with Semitropic Water District has an upcoming expiration to be renegotiated, past pump back programs have been successful during droughts, and Valley Water is looking into diversifying water banking outside the county. The Committee confirmed the increased cost benefits from Anderson reservoir as central to the drought emergency water supply; and staff is currently working on accelerating and streamlining the project. The Committee noted the potential for receiving an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for agricultural purposes. The Committee confirmed staff provided the pre- feasibility study for stormwater agricultural land recharge projects previously and will provide potential places once identified back to the Committee. Director Varela noted that Valley Water is involved with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) where 450 water agencies collaborate on legislation. Director Santos noted the significance of accelerated project times per cost increases and the limited funding for recycled water from the state.

One Water Plan Upper Pajaro Watershed Plan Priority Actions.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and confirmed staff is continuing to identify flood control projects while looking to enhance or restore the environment and encouraged the planting of more trees in the Stanford and Palo Alto area. The Committee noted support of the inclusion of the potential cost benefits to be received back from the cities for flood planning and utilizing working landscapes for fire suppression. The Committee confirmed that staff anticipates incorporating feedback, finalizing the plan, and presenting to the Board in around 2 to 3 months.

Review Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Work Plan, the Outcomes of Board Action of Committee Requests; and the Committee's Next Meeting Agenda.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted support to receive a future update on the One Water Plan and inclusion of water retention of grasslands versus brushlands. The Committee reconfirmed request for further discussion on the materials identified as Handout: Agenda Item 4.3 from the AWAC October 2, 2023 meeting regarding climate change and carbon sequestration at the next meeting.

The next AWAC special meeting is scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m. on April 8, 2024.

Board member comments and suggestions can be forwarded to Nicole Merritt, Assistant Deputy Clerk II at (408) 630-3262 or by email to nmerritt@valleywater.org.