

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 9, 2021

Santa Fe, New Mexico

I. A. This Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) meeting was called to order by Chair Shann Stringer at approximately 5:00 p.m. on the above-cited date.

In accordance with the Public Health Emergency Order issued by the State of New Mexico, this meeting was conducted via WebEx.

B. A quorum was achieved with the following members present:

Members Present:

Shann Stringer
Carl Dickens
Bryan Romero
Mary Helen Follingstad
J.J. Gonzales
Lloyd Gronning
Ken Kirk
Steve Rudnick

Member(s) Excused:

Emily Wolf

Others Present:

Anjali Bean, County Water Resources Manager
Anna Hamilton, County Commissioner
John Dupuis, County Utilities Director [joins at 6:30]

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dickens moved to approve the agenda as published and Ms. Follingstad seconded. The motion passed without opposition.

D. Approval of Minutes: November 18, 2021 WPAC Meeting

Mr. Dickens moved to approved. Mr. Kirk seconded. The motion passed without opposition and Mr. Gronning abstained.

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E. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

2. Matters from the Public - None were presented.

3. Action Items

A. Approval of the 2022 WPAC Work Plan

Mr. Dickens recommended flood control be added. He mentioned the 2018 storm event that came through the La Cienega Valley. The three main drainages out of Santa Fe are the Santa Fe River, Arroyo Hondo and Arroyo Chamiso that all end in La Cienega. Recalling the devastation of that flood, Chair Stringer agreed it should be included.

A discussion ensued regarding floodplains:

- Vicki Lucero serves as the County's floodplain administrator
- Former WPAC member Sig Silber was particularly concerned about breaching dams in the Santa Cruz Valley
- The County worked diligently to remediate issues that arose from the 2018 flood event. However, nothing has occurred since that incident
- The flood control structures in the Santa Cruz River Valley should be added on the agenda for updates
- A catastrophic situation would come downstream to Santa Fe County
- There are six flood control structures that the Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil & Water Conservation District are responsible for and have been since the early 60s
- The structures are well past their 50-year design period
- Flood control structure #1 has roughly one foot of water storage capacity left in the reservoir
- Annually a contractor moves sediment away from the risers to ensure proper discharge
- A 500-year flood event will cause the structure to fail and flow out through the emergency earthen dam spillway
- Flood inundation maps have been created that indicate damages in the multi-millions including loss of life. Houses were built right up to the dam
- Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) have a contract in place and are working through the EIS. Before Covid there were public meetings to get locals interested in developing a watershed district that will be overseen by SWCD, to be followed by a vote for a mill levy for those within the inundation area of the failed flood control structures
- Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD has an annual operating budget of approximately \$25,000. The dam reconstruction is estimated at \$15 million. There may be emergency funds from FEMA, Homeland Security etc.
- SWCD is also tasked to review development plans for new subdivisions within the County and provide feedback to Land Use. A few years back, developers stopped submitting plans to SWCD. The requirement is in the code but is being overlooked
- SWCDs around the state are compensated for the review but not in Santa Fe County

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There was agreement to keep updates regarding flood control structures on the agenda.

Commissioner Hamilton suggested adding, “and opportunities related to flood impacts, management, and potential mitigations.” Mr. Gronning noted there was a lot of overlap in project development and suggested considering flood control for ASR (aquifer storage and recovery).

Chair Stringer noted that the City has been developing stormwater mitigation projects, water gardens, etc. under a relatively new MS4 EPA permit. Discussion continues about getting WCC and WPAC together to flesh out new agenda items and subcommittees.

Ms. Follingstad recalled discussing an inventory/impact analysis regarding domestic wells that could be part of an outreach/education program.

Mr. Dickens said hydrological mapping should be tied to domestic wells. The mapping would assist in educating people. A geo-hydrological map done by Peggy Johnson was forwarded to the members by Mr. Romero.

Commissioner Hamilton recommended developing a whitepaper gathering and summarizing existing information. That could lead to the hiring of a consultant to extend the information and develop it into a useable format. If WPAC can formulate the uses for the information perhaps the County can hire a consultant. She suggested adding a box to develop information on domestic wells for education of the County and residents, as well as the decision makers that could lead to a contractor.

Mr. Romero cautioned not to get too deep into the weeds and to utilize the existing information. The USGS has monitoring wells with data online. Well monitoring could be integrated into student education. Utilizing the County’s GIS to capture the well monitoring data and assist in water monitoring would be helpful.

Mr. Gonzales said the aquifer in the Santa Fe Basin is being mined, water is being depleted and wells in the foothills are going dry. Domestic wells in La Cienega are taking water from the aquifer which is not being recharged and the springs in La Cienega have been greatly reduced. There needs to be an incentive component that encourages people to connect to the County utility when available. People need to be educated about mining the aquifer. The aquifer is not getting recharged and more imported water is necessary.

Add Domestic Wells as a topic with a broad task to develop a whitepaper of the current knowledge regarding domestic wells in Santa Fe County. The creation of a Santa Fe County well owners coalition may be useful to get agreement in monitoring water levels and then develop an RFP. It was mentioned that the domestic well study should exclude those within the Aamodt Settlement boundary.

ACTION: Mr. Dickens moved to approve the 2022 work plan consisting of the following items: Educational Outreach, City-County Partnership, Floodplain Management, and Domestic Wells with a series of tasks attached to each. Ms. Follingstad seconded and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

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B. Approval of 2022 WPAC Calendar

ACTION: Mr. Dickens moved to approve the calendar as presented. Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Kirk seconded and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The calendar depicted that WPAC will meet at 5 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

4. Discussion of Drought Guidance Next Steps

Ms. Bean said Mr. Dupuis will present the BCC with a recommendation to work with the City to revise Chapter 25 in terms of triggers. This aligns with what the City wants to do and is on the WCC's work plan.

Chair Stringer said the joint committee will be briefed on the trigger index. He recommended that WPAC members attend the joint committee meeting noting it will be quite technical.

Ms. Follingstad pointed out that the educational outreach component is County-centric and has little to do with the City.

Other than Commissioner Hansen's questions about wastewater at the WPAC presentation to the BCC, there appeared to be no follow up.

Mr. Dickens supported staff recommendation to work with the City on Chapter 25.

Mr. Romero said he hoped the Commissioners would review the guidance document and offer input. He highlighted the concept of a Drought Management Group which would be very valuable to establish.

Mr. Kirk said ultimately the City and County have to work together on a drought management plan.

Ms. Bean said the Chapter 25 items related to drought are abysmally out-of-date. BDD did not exist when Chapter 25 was written.

There was a request that Mr. Dupuis develop a bullet point list of what he will be bringing forward to the BCC.

Ms. Follingstad reminded the participants that a great deal of work went into the guidance document.

Regarding Chapter 25, Chair Stringer suggested rather than "the County will follow the City's lead," rewrite it to state that the County and City are collaboratively working on drought management issues/document. Ms. Bean said the language is contained in the Amended and Restated Water Resources Agreement – when the City declares a drought emergency the County follows. The City serves as the County's backup supply and if they are requiring customers to respond to an emergency, the County should follow.

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B. Discussion of Education and Outreach to Domestic Well Users

Mr. Dickens said this was discussed under the work plan as outreach to well users. He noted there were a number of well users in the City and this would be another opportunity to work jointly. In the past, NM ED held water fairs and he suggested that the fairs would provide an opportunity for the County to piggyback. Involving the schools is very important and he understood 5th graders throughout Santa Fe receive water-related information. Water testing could be included in this. He highlighted the importance of educating people on the limitations of water in Santa Fe County.

Chair Stringer said City water specialist Chavez is eager to work with the County on domestic well education. He recommended Mr. Dickens and Ms. Wolf participate in the next joint meeting. The Santa Fe Basin Water Association may also be a good partner to include. There are a number of meetings that would be beneficial for WPAC to participate in.

Ms. Chavez will be scheduling a subcommittee meeting to develop a joint work plan. Ms. Bean will email information. For those interested in the technical index that focuses on City and County utility area customers, City Water Director Roach will be giving a presentation.

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5. Matters from the Committee

A. Update from County Soil and Water Conservation Districts [See page 2]

6. Matters from County Staff

A. Update on SJCP (San Juan Chama Project) Return Flow Pipeline and Planning Process

Ms. Bean said the County is a partner with the City in what is referred to as the SJCP Return Flow Pipeline which will take the City's unused SJCP effluent and pipe it from the treatment plant to just below the BDD. The County is a 7 percent partner. The County will be participating in a robust lower Santa Fe River planning process to address potential impacts from the project. The County recognizes there has been a lack of river planning in the lower Santa Fe River. At this point, there have been two public meetings conducted by a professional facilitator to assist in developing issues and scoping out an RFP for the entire two-year planning process.

Mr. Dickens complimented Ms. Bean and Mr. Dupuis and added that the coalition is hopeful about the direction the process is taking.

Mr. Dupuis joined the meeting at this point and said he was pleased to be going to the BCC with recommendations regarding the drought management document. He expressed appreciation to WPAC for producing the document.

B. 40- 80-Year Water Planning Process

Ms. Bean said the County continues to participate on the supply and demand modeling for the process.

Chair Stringer mentioned he was down near the bottom of the Santa Fe River by Tent Rocks which piqued his curiosity to check Google Earth Probe. The aerial imagery goes back 30 or 40 years and shows standing water at the bottom of La Bajada. He struggles to understand why the State Engineer would not entertain the idea that those flows should be included within a return flow credit.

Mr. Dickens said both the Pipeline Coalition and the Collaborative are pushing for that inclusion. A presentation by a NM Tech professor and a representative from the NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources agree there is a flow from the Santa Fe River to the Rio Grande River – the question is how much and at what rate. A study is necessary to have a definitive number and then ask for the return flow credits. The test flows will require a gauge on Cochiti land.

Chair Stringer mentioned a professor at Highlands who conducted tracer dye studies for LANL and stormwater flows from Pajarito Plateau into the Rio Grande who would be a valuable contributor resource.

C. Status of Member Vacancies - No update provided.

7. Adjournment

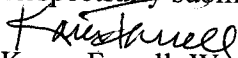
Holiday cheers were shared and having completed the agenda, Chair Stringer declared the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Approved by:



Shann Stringer, Chair


Respectfully submitted by:


Karen Farrell, Wordswork

COUNTY OF SANTA FE) WATER POLICY ADVISORY
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss PAGES: 6

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 21ST Day Of July, 2022 at 10:46:13 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1993426
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark
Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

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