

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SANTA FE COUNTY**  
**WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**April 12, 2018**

**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

I. This meeting of the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) was called to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. by Steve Rudnick, Vice Chair, on the above-cited date at the Santa Fe County Projects Complex, 901 W. Alameda, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

II. The following members present:

**Members Present:**

Steve Rudnick, District 5, Vice Chair  
JC Helms, BDD Board [Alternate]  
Bryan Romero, District 1  
Shann Stringer, Soil & Water Conservation District  
Martha Trujillo, Acequia Association

**Member(s) Excused:**

Mary Helen Follingstad, Chair  
Denise Fort, BDD Board  
Ken Kirk, District 2  
[Five vacancies]

**Staff Present:**

Jerry Schoepner, Utilities Division, Hydrogeologist

**Guest(s):**

Andrew Erdmann, City of Santa Fe Water Resources  
Bill Schneider, City of Santa Fe Water Resources  
Steve King, Eldorado Area Water & Sanitation District (EAWSD)

Lacking a quorum, no action could occur at this meeting.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Rudnick said he had a meeting with Chair Follingstad, and they discussed the difficulty of reaching a quorum with five vacant positions on the committee, and determined that changing quorum to mean a "majority of appointed members" would solve the problem. Also discussed was limiting the WPAC's agenda to items about which the WPAC can have an effect.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/16/2019

**IV. Approval of Minutes: March 8, 2018**

No action.

**V. Matters from the Public**

None were offered.

**VI. Action Items**

**A. Resolution on WPAC Membership - change wording to “a quorum is a majority of appointed members – Staff to prepare resolution after consultation with the County Attorney**

The proposed resolution change defines a quorum as a majority of the appointed members.

Three of the current vacancies are positions in the southern county, i.e., Edgewood, Stanley, Galisteo etc., and, many times the issues being discussed by WPAC do not appear to pertain to that quadrant.

Mr. Schoeppner said that, following review by the County Attorney, he'll forward the resolution to the members.

**VIII. Discussion Items**

**A. Drought Management**

1. **Approve framework for discussion of drought management trigger options**
2. **Review options for drought triggers: City of Santa Fe, Eldorado Water Utility, etc.**
3. **Develop recommendation for the BCC**
4. **Present recommendation to BCC – May 29, 2018 meeting**

Currently, the County follows the City's lead on imposing drought management. The question is whether this is appropriate, and should the County instead review its own abilities to deliver water in a drought situation.

Mr. Schoeppner said the City is revising its drought management plan. The County shares water sources with the City. Whenever the BDD is down, the County relies on whatever source the City is using. The question is, if the County is different from the City, does it need its own management strategy.

- The City provides up to 1,350 acre-feet of available backup water to the County in the event the BDD is down
- The County's year-wide demand of BDD water is approximately 1,500 acre feet.
- Aside from the BDD partnership, which provides water to the County's west sector, the County needs a drought management policy for its other sectors – actions in response to a

drought event in the City may not be appropriate for what is being experienced in the County, i.e., Pojoaque groundwater

- At some point the Pojoaque Valley Water System could serve as backup to the City
- The County boundaries extend to Española Valley – a different water basin than the City uses
- With the approaching water-related election in Pojoaque, there is an incentive to pump large quantities from wells to demonstrate irrigation use
- The City and County have worked well together regarding BDD
- EAWSD uses only groundwater; discussion continues with the County regarding an interconnection
- A subcommittee may be the most effective manner in which to explore County drought management recommendations

This item will continue on the next agenda.

**B. Regionalization**

- 1. Approve framework for discussion of various City and County resolutions and regional systems**
- 2. Review and discuss the various options and steps for regional coordination and cooperation on water and wastewater systems and policy direction between the City, County, Aamodt, Community Systems and Eldorado**
- 3. Develop recommendation for the BCC**
- 4. Present recommendation to the BCC – June 26, 2018 meeting**

The City's recent resolution indicates that they are not promoting regionalization. The County needs to define its own area within a proposed City-County regionalization plan.

Mr. Schneider said that the City has explored reuse strategies. What's the best way to beneficially reuse the water for all the stakeholders? The study was completed and alternatives were ranked. Currently, the City is conducting a preliminary engineering design on the alternative deemed most appropriate, to evaluate the capacity to move water from the wastewater treatment plant to the Rio Grande. That water could serve a multitude of purposes, i.e., it could offset the Buckman wellfield groundwater pumping offsets that both the City and County share. The water would enter the Rio Grande below the BDD. The City is studying rights-of-way, water rights, potential return flow credits, and keeping water in the Santa Fe River. The City is critiquing and valuing elements beyond economics; however, at \$20,000 per acre-foot the 2,000 to 3,000 acre-feet under review is a substantial amount of money. He stated that the City values downstream users, cultural and historical uses.

Mr. Schoeppner said the County participated in the original regionalization study when it was thought that the County's Quill Plant – State Penitentiary wastewater treatment – would be used. One of the criticisms of the City's study was that it had not considered downstream uses. That was not the target: the target that the Santa Fe Basin Study identified was a gap, and the study was based on how to fill the gap. The feasibility study developed the alternative.

Mr. Schoeppner said staff recalls that the BCC passed a resolution in support of downstream users which has not been located. This is City water, purposely San Juan-Chama water rather than native (water that originates from that basin) water rights. The County's perspective is that it will not affect the County. The City has said 2 million gallons will be released during the peak irrigation season. The feasibility study is a defensible document.

Mr. Schneider said the feasibility study had seven alternatives that reviewed energy efficiency, water quality, stormwater, flow events, pumping to the BDD wellfield/ASR, all the technologies available, use of the BDD, etc. The study looked at all of them, with pros, cons, cost, environmental impact, cultural impact, and the favored alternative was the simplest, least expensive and most achievable, which takes a portion of the water to the Rio Grande with a focus on the San Juan-Chama water. The City is not proposing to use native water.

Ms. Trujillo asked about the Top of the World water rights and what they would be used for. Mr. Schoeppner said those rights were purchased years ago and there was a portion of it which was leased back to a farm. Those water rights will be used for the Pojoaque regional water system.

The City representatives excused themselves from the remainder of the meeting.

**IX. Matters from the Committee**

**X. Matters from County Staff**

**A. Update on Pojoaque Regional Water System**

The 60 percent design was reviewed this week and all of the entities have been involved in a series of workshops. Cost overruns are being reviewed. BOR will incorporate comments from the workshops which will serve as a roadmap for dealing with cost overruns.

**B. Update on Community Systems**

Hyde Park Estates – the County wants to have the same rate across the utility and is considering a surcharge for the Estates. Staff revised the agreement and included the surcharge; the Estate's Board is reviewing the document. If the Estates reject the surcharge the agreement is void. The County currently serves the Estate. The issue of fire protection was mentioned.

Chupadero – specs for pilot wells are being prepared. Once a well is drilled, a pump test will follow and, if proven adequate, the private supply well being used will be rested.

Cañoncito – Mr. King said the concept is the County would connect to the EAWSD on the northwest quadrant to service Cañoncito. A memo of agreement is being drafted. This is just moving surface water. Mr. Rudnick recommended communicating with the EAWSD membership

Mr. Schoeppner said he would investigate the issue occurring in the East Mountains within the San Pedro Creek Estates allowing a proposed large development to extract from an aquifer.

C. Status of member vacancies – discussed earlier

D. County water/wastewater Master Plan Rate Study update

Mr. Schoeppner said that he and Utilities Director John Dupuis have met with three of the five County Commissioners and shared the study results. In general, there is a recommendation for a 57 percent increase over a five-year period for water and something more substantial for wastewater. Wastewater will run \$40 a month, while an average water bill will increase by \$30 to \$80 monthly. Staff is looking at different options to reduce the financial impact on the customer. The increases will help, but the utility will not be self-sufficient. This has been a difficult issue because, at this point, the taxpayers are subsidizing the utility to which they may not have access – the deadline is the end of the fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Trujillo said that in Pojoaque there are many elderly residents who have not used their surface water rights and the community is investigating whether there are ways to lease that water – perhaps the County could lease the rights. Mr. Schoeppner said that if the demand increased it may make sense for the County but, because leases lack permanency, the County has shied away from them. Ms. Trujillo said a lease may allow for the banking of water rights.

**XI Adjournment**

Having completed the agenda and with no further business to come before this Committee, this meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20p.m.

Approved by:

*Mary Helen Follingstad*  
Mary Helen Follingstad, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Farrell, Wordswork

COUNTY OF SANTA FE ) WATER POLICY ADVISORY  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO ) ss PAGES: 5

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for  
Record On The 16TH Day Of July, 2019 at 01:34:50 PM  
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1891353  
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office  
Geraldine Salazar  
Deputy *Estrella Martinez* County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/16/2019