

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

July 26, 2018

Meetings Minutes

Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center, 4689 CA-166, New Cuyama, CA 93254

PRESENT:

Jaffe, Roberta – Chair
Kelly, Brenton – Vice Chair
Alvarado, Claudia
DeBranch, Brad
Draucker, Louise
Furstenfeld, Jake
Haslett, Joe
Post, Mike
Valenzuela, Hilda Leticia
Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Hughes, Joe – Legal Counsel

ABSENT:

None

1. Call to order

Chair Roberta Jaffe called the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 4:05 pm.

2. Roll call

Hallmark Group Project Coordinator Taylor Blakslee called roll of the Committee (shown above).

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Jaffe.

4. Approval of minutes

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Executive Director Jim Beck presented the May 31, 2018 SAC minutes. Minor editorial changes were suggested, and a motion was made by Vice Chair Brenton Kelly to approve the minutes and seconded by Committee Member Louise Draucker. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Report of the General Counsel

Nothing to report.

6. Discussion of Study Group Options

Chair Jaffe discussed the concept of forming a study group to review the Groundwater Sustainability Plan sections that are being developed by GSP technical consultant Woodard & Curran.

Mr. Beck reminded the SAC that they are a public entity and thus have to comply with the Brown Act and cautioned that holding an informal review meeting may violate the Brown Act. He stated that the administration of an additional monthly meeting was not budgeted. Mr. Beck suggested the SAC to approach the Board of Directors for approval on the addition of study groups or expand the monthly SAC meeting and handle the document review there.

Legal Counsel Joe Hughes commented that it is a question of risk and what the CBGSA is overall comfortable with. Mr. Hughes said what commonly occurs is a committee will get off topic and then eventually the committee is attempting to get something done outside of the context of a public meeting, and one purpose of having the Hallmark Group and Klein present at meetings is to provide a sideboard to keep the Committee on topic. Mr. Hughes said that the implementation of study groups would ultimately be the Board's decision and that it is a matter of doing the study groups appropriately and that no one inadvertently violates the Brown Act.

Committee member Joe Haslett said that he believes that study groups are a good idea and recommended at the next workshop there be a breakout workshop to review specific elements of the GSP. Chair Jaffe said that is where the idea of the study groups came from with the intention of needing to review a number of critical documents being released pertaining to the GSP.

Committee member Jake Furstenfeld said he can see the pros and cons of having study groups but could occasionally use help in understanding certain sections of the GSP. He mentioned that the Committee members do obtain some additional information with the presentation of the SAC educational topics at the SAC meetings.

Committee member Claudia Alvarado said she thinks it would be very helpful to have the study groups to assist in providing accurate translation of the GSP sections.

Committee member Draucker mentioned that a short break between long sessions could be a good idea to allow time for committee members to ask for clarification on the GSP documents in a more relaxed environment.

Vice Chair Kelly said having a separate meeting structured in a way that is quite clear that no action is taking place would be ideal in order to discuss some of these critical GSP items at a lower level. Vice Chair Kelly mentioned that the Brown Act is incredibly important for public transparency and should allow for the facilitation of another discussion to further the educational aspect.

Local resident Sue Blackshear said the Brown Act was not intended to muzzle people and as long as the Committee is following certain agenda items and the public is informed, it should not be a problem. Ms. Blackshear stated that expanding the length of workshops might provide clarity on GSP sections, however that additional time will be billed by the consultants.

Family Resource Center Executive Director Lynn Carlisle said study groups would be a good idea because it is very important to understand the GSP documents that are coming out and she feels like the additional outreach will strengthen the GSP by allowing stakeholders and committee members time to ask questions.

Landowner Ann Myhre said that she can see the value of reviewing the documents in a group setting, particularly because most of the residents are novices regarding technical topics.

Committee member Hilda Leticia Valenzuela said the implementation of study groups would be a good idea to help the Hispanic community in understanding the GSP concepts. She also believes study groups would be a great thing to bring back to the community.

Committee member Haslett mentioned that the committee members that do not live in the area full time may be at a disadvantage because it would require an additional trip and some members would not be able to attend. Mr. Haslett noted that it would be better to have an item on the SAC agenda where questions regarding GSP sections can be addressed.

Ms. Blackshear asked what the anticipated length of the study group time is because it might be problematic to extend the SAC meeting.

Committee member Mike Post asked Mr. Hughes to set the minimum parameters for forming a study group. Mr. Post mentioned that people meeting and forming consensus was the reason for the initiation of the Brown Act. He asked how the study groups avoid breaching Brown Act violations. Mr. Hughes replied that it is not a matter of getting around the Brown Act, it is a matter of migrating off the topic and reaching some consensus offline. He stated that the SAC would have to agendaize the meeting and address it as it would be an additional SAC meeting. Mr. Hughes mentioned that the agenda item would need to be specific.

Ms. Wooster mentioned that the idea of study groups is a result of how meetings have been agendaized. She stated that the agendas have allotted times per topic, and there needs to be enough time to hold these discussions so the SAC and Board do not feel as though they have to be rushed through consensus.

Chair Jaffe said the SAC will table this item for now but is personally an advocate for the study groups. She asked if the SAC could form an Ad hoc committee to develop a proposal. Mr. Hughes confirmed this approach, and Chair Jaffe appointed SAC committee members Louise Draucker, Jake Furstenfeld, Claudia Alvarado, and Vice Chair Brenton Kelly to an Ad hoc to explore the idea of study groups and report back at the next SAC meeting on August 30, 2018.

7. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Director

Nothing to report.

b. SGMA Educational Items: Calculating a Water Budget and How a Model Works – Historical Calibration

Mr. Beck applauded the level of interest Cuyama residents have taken in Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) issues, especially regarding educational topics. He mentioned that he has worked on water issues for over 32 years and reported that this group is more engaged than many he has encountered. He did clarify, however, that the goal of the educational topics is not to make the committee members and stakeholders experts, but for the committee members to receive sufficient information to make informed decisions.

GSP Consultant Woodard & Curran Project Manager Brian Van Lienden provided an update on the educational items entitled “Calculating a Water Budget” and “How a Model Works – Historical Calibration.”

Chair Jaffe asked if the water budget informs the model or vice versa. Mr. Van Lienden replied that the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model (HCM) is a qualitative representation of what the water

budget looks like for the Cuyama Basin and accounts for how water moves in the Basin. The information obtained from the water budget is utilized to develop the model, and the model is what produces the water reporting for SGMA.

Committee Member Hilda Leticia Valenzuela left at 4:53 p.m.

Ms. Carlisle asked where the water budgets for the ten recent years will be coming from and when will they will be available. Mr. Van Lienden said the water budgets will be developed by the numerical model and the initial results are anticipated to be available at the September 5, 2018 Workshop meeting. Ms. Carlisle asked if the budget must take climate change into account for SGMA regulations, and Mr. Van Lienden confirmed that it will.

Committee member Haslett asked if the last ten years considers the different precipitation amounts from various part of the region and Mr. Van Lienden confirmed that they will.

Chair Jaffe asked if there will be a separation of the budgets being shown, and Mr. Van Lienden confirmed that there will be. Mr. Van Lienden noted that they will report for different parts of the basin.

Vice Chair Kelly asked how a yearly water budget will be presented. Mr. Van Lienden replied the yearly water budget will report groundwater, surface water, and land surface elements to provide a mass balance.

Ms. Wooster asked how big of an area will be reported on. Mr. Van Lienden said they will report potentially on four areas. Mr. Beck reminded the SAC that the Board will determine this number.

CBGSA Board Director Byron Albano asked if each grid in the model has a water balance and Mr. Van Lienden confirmed that they do.

Ms. Carlisle asked what the typical range on the regional scale is based on. Mr. Van Lienden said it is based on an irrigation efficiency. Chair Jaffe asked if this is a standard range, or specific to Cuyama Valley. Mr. Van Lienden stated that it is a generic range, but the number will be updated in the model to be specific for Cuyama. CBGSA Board Director George Cappello said the newer farming equipment has a higher efficiency in the 90th percentile.

Mr. Albano asked if the key number will be irrigation demand or consumption of water. Mr. Van Lienden said consumption will be key and Woodard & Curran staff Ali Taghavi mentioned that the consumption of applied water is the numerator in the equation that is calculated, but eventually the demand will be critical in determining pumping.

Resident Karen Adams asked if there will ever be a number on all the wells detailing what is being pumped or will it be estimates. Mr. Beck said that decision will be made as the implementation plan is developed. There are several ways to calculate future use, one way being satellite imagery like evapotranspiration (ET). The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) said that they will accept pump meters and satellite imagery that can calibrate appropriately. If pumping meters are used, they will need to be installed during the implementation period starting in 2020.

Vice Chair Kelly asked in regards to irrigation efficiency factors during the calibration period, can you truth these components, and will these factors have a range or will you come out and check. Mr. Van Lienden said they will mostly rely on communication with the people who manage the systems but will check some of these components.

Committee member Haslett asked how permanent crops are accounted for if they only require irrigation for a short period of time in the calendar year. Mr. Van Lienden replied that W&C has representation from each of the individual crops and land use data for the irrigation calendar to be set appropriately. Mr. Taghavi said satellite imagery and ET are used for values to train the model and then they can use the model to simulate any kind of changes to future conditions.

Ms. Carlisle asked if in five years from now, if the GSP is not being achieved, how precise is the data to point out where we are missing the mark, and can it be pinpointed to the 40-acre grid. Mr. Taghavi said the actual ET modeling is on a 30 meter by 30-meter pixel, therefore the cropping pattern should be fairly visible and accurate.

CBGSA Board Director Albano asked if the satellite imagery will distinguish between a full canopy apple tree versus a dwarfing under-irrigated tree in terms of transpiration. Mr. Taghavi said the satellite imagery does have certain contrasts in terms of ET values in the different irrigation methods, but these ET values do not tie-in to the specific irrigation practices or crop age. Mr. Cappello confirmed that the satellite imagery will not disclose the irrigation system or crop age. Mr. Van Lienden stated that ET will be further explained at the September 5th workshop.

Ms. Carlisle asked if the urban demand will estimate factors in the efficiency and age of the system and Mr. Van Lienden replied that it will.

Vice Chair Kelly asked about septic return and Mr. Van Lienden replied that W&C will need to account for this in the model and water budget.

CBGSA Board Alternate John Coates said the Cuyama Community Services District treated water used to percolate into the ground, but now they are using evaporation ponds unless it is used by Sunridge. He mentioned that they started this process this year. Additionally, he stated that water cannot go on food crops per the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

Committee member Post said occasionally his well-off highway 166 is used by firefighters to pump thousands of gallons of water to supply fire suppression systems. However, if the firefighters could not pump from the well, it would impact public safety. Mr. Post asked how does this factor into the model. Mr. Van Lienden said they would need to model this for material impacts to the basin, and this is a good example of the need for setting a minimum threshold. Mr. Post said this well is monitored quarterly by Santa Barbara County. Ms. Myhre commented that the firefighters are tapping water for fire suppression in areas that have abundant water. Mr. Van Lienden said that he will contact local fire fighters for more information on this.

Ms. Myhre said she has reviewed a calibration graph similar to the 1980-2013 model at her residency. She mentioned that while her groundwater level varies up to 55 feet, the cumulative deviation actually is 10 feet in the sustainable model.

Committee member Haslett asked how the groundwater model accounts for topography. Mr. Van Lienden said the model will show this.

Ms. Myhre said they GSP is a living document and needs to start somewhere. She spoke highly of Ali Taghavi and the W&C team.

c. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the August 1, 2018 CBGSA Board of Directors agenda.

8. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on GSP activities, which is included in the SAC packet.

Vice Chair Kelly asked when the SAC will see more regarding Opti (Data Management System software) and Mr. Van Lienden said in the next month or so.

b. Technical Forum Update

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the July 13, 2018 technical forum call. A summary of the issues discussed is provided in the Board packet.

c. Current Basin Water Conditions

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the Current Basin Water Conditions.

Grapevine Capital Ray Shady asked if the data from the 12 wells they provided will be included and Mr. Van Lienden said that W&C will confirm this.

Mr. Shady noted that the Russel and Santa Barbara Canyon faults extend further than the map shows.

Chair Jaffe asked to include the Bulletin 118 boundary and common features on maps for reference.

Mr. Shady noted that they provided water quality data that is not included in the groundwater quality salinity 2011-2018 data map. Mr. Van Lienden said W&C will ensure that data is included.

Committee member Haslett said the groundwater quality salinity 2011-2018 map should be labelled TDS (total dissolved solids) instead of "salinity."

Chair Jaffe said that she has always heard arsenic is an issue in the Cuyama Valley and the Cuyama Community Services District (CCSD) has had to treat for arsenic. Mr. Coates said the shallower wells do not show arsenic. Mr. Van Lienden asked if they have other water quality test and Mr. Coates said they do with the County. Local resident Steve Gliessman suggested W&C show well level information since arsenic occurs at specific intervals.

Mr. Van Lienden reported on subsidence in the Cuyama Valley and Committee member Haslett mentioned that the subsidence measured in the central basin could be due to the extreme groundwater pumping from the high school at one time.

Mr. Gliessman asked that they are going to study storage loss based on subsidence and asked if 11 inches equates to lost storage. He asked if the model does not incorporate subsidence and Mr. Van Lienden replied that he is not sure.

Ms. Wooster said the high school used to have a great well that they managed to pump dry.

Committee Member Furstenfeld left at 6:29 p.m.

Chair Jaffe asked if data gaps will be addressed in the model. Mr. Van Lienden replied that the groundwater conditions section will address these issues and will be released as an upcoming GSP section for review.

d. Draft Undesirable Results Narrative

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the Draft Undesirable Results Narrative.

Mr. Van Lienden mentioned that the Draft Undesirable Results Narrative will be distributed for review to stakeholders and he will clarify the type of review he is seeking when we send it out for review.

Mr. Cappello mentioned that the “x”s should be changed to “TBD.” Committee member Haslett suggested adding “not applicable” to the seawater intrusion section on Item No. 3.

e. Stakeholder Engagement Update

GSP Outreach the Catalyst Group’s Mary Currie provided an update on stakeholder engagement activity, including the second Newsletter and September 5th public workshop.

Chair Jaffe asked if there will be model results to show. Mr. Van Lienden confirmed that they will have a draft of the model’s historic results.

9. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Nothing to report.

Committee member DeBranch asked if the Committee would like to see how the model grid loops into the monitoring process. Mr. Van Lienden said this is something that can be reviewed at the next SAC meeting on August 30, 2018 as part of the educational update.

10. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

11. Public comment for items not on the Agenda

Nothing to report.

12. Adjourn

Chair Jaffe adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

I, Jim Beck, Executive Director of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a fair statement of the proceedings of the meeting held on Thursday, July 26, 2018, by the Cuyama Basing Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee.

Jim Beck
Dated: August 30, 2018