

**PANOCHÉ WATER DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
July 12, 2022, at 9:30 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held in accordance with District Resolution 807-22 proclaiming a local emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and authorizing the District's legislative body to hold meetings by web and teleconference, and to make meetings accessible to the public electronically, pursuant to Assembly Bill 361. Those present at the meeting were:

Directors Present:       John Bennett, President  
                                  Aaron Barcellos, Vice-President  
                                  Mike Stearns, Secretary  
                                  Steve Fausone, Director  
                                  Beau Correia, Director

Directors Absent:       None

District Staff Present:  Ara Azhderian, General Manager  
                                  Juan Cadena, Water Resources Manager  
                                  Lorena Chagoya, Ethics & Compliance Officer

Others Present:         Philip Williams, General Counsel

**ANNOUNCEMENT PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54952.3**

Pursuant to the Brown Act, President Bennett announced that Directors do not receive compensation or a stipend for simultaneous or serial order meetings of Panoche Water District, Panoche Drainage District, Panoche Financing Authority, and/or the Panoche Resource Conservation District.

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Bennett called the regular meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the Agenda.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum of the Board and presence of the District's Officers were confirmed.

**POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No conflicts were reported.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**DIVISION REPORTS**

No reports were given.

**PANOCHÉ WATER & DRAINAGE DISTRICTS’ JOINT CLOSED SESSION**

General Counsel Williams announced that the Panoche Water and Drainage Districts Boards would meet jointly in closed session for a conference with legal counsel on anticipated litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9, Subdivision (d), Paragraphs (2) or (3).

*At approximately 9:30 a.m., President Bennett called the joint closed session to order.*

*At approximately 12:20 p.m., President Bennett adjourned the joint closed session.*

**JOINT CLOSED SESSION REPORT**

General Counsel Williams reported the Boards met jointly with legal counsel in closed session and took no reportable action.

**CLOSED SESSION**

General Counsel Williams reported there was no need for a Water District only closed session.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

General Manager Azhderian presented the Board with the Consent Calendar items, which included a Resolution extending remote teleconference meetings through August 11<sup>th</sup> due to the COVID pandemic; draft meeting minutes from the July 13, 2021, regular meeting of the Board, draft meeting minutes from the July 16, 2021, special meeting of the Board, draft meeting minutes from the July 21, 2021, special meeting of the Board, and draft meeting minutes from the June 22, 2022, adjourned regular meeting of the Board; the monthly financial statements for the period ending July 31, 2022; and the Directors Monthly Credit Card Usage Report. Directors Bennett and Stearns affirmed the minutes from the July 13, July 16, and July 21, 2021, meetings. After consideration, on a motion by Director Barcellos, seconded by Director Correia, the Board unanimously accepted the Consent Calendar as presented.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

- Ayes: Bennett, Barcellos, Stearns, Fausone, Correia
- Nays: None
- Abstain: None
- Absent: None

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVING A REQUEST FROM LITTLE GREEN NUT TO TRANSFER 150 ACRE-FEET TO WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT**

General Manager Azhderian presented the Board the transfer request. He noted the request was dependent upon groundwater substitution and, if approved, should be billed the District’s Operations and Maintenance cost to avoid redirected financial impact. The Board expressed reluctance to approve a transfer dependent upon groundwater substitution but ultimately elected to do so after requesting staff inform Little Green Nut that, in light of evolving Sustainable Groundwater Management Act activities, this would be the last time their request for a groundwater substitution transfer would be approved. With that, on a motion by Director Correia, seconded by Director Barcellos, the Board approved the transfer request.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

- Ayes: Bennett, Barcellos, Stearns, Correia
- Nays: None
- Abstain: Fausone

Absent: None

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVING A REQUEST FROM NELLORE FARMS TO TRANSFER 80 ACRE-FEET TO SAN LUIS WATER DISTRICT**

General Manager Azhderian presented the Board the transfer request. He noted this request was also dependent upon groundwater substitution and, if approved, should be billed the District's Operations and Maintenance cost to avoid redirected financial impact. After consideration, on a motion by Director Correia, seconded by Director Barcellos, the Board approved the transfer request with the same condition that Nellore be informed this would be the last time their request for a groundwater substitution transfer would be approved.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

Ayes: Bennett, Barcellos, Stearns, Correia  
Nays: None  
Abstain: Fausone  
Absent: None

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF AN INVITATION FOR BIDS TO MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL A TRAVELING SCREEN AT PUMP STATION 6E**

General Manager Azhderian explained Pump Station 6E was situated at the end of the Contour Canal and that it plays a critical role in the District's ability to recirculate drain water, convey transfer water, and improve water quality. It currently has a traditional trash rack that does not effectively protect the pumps from discarded plastic and drip tubing, which results in frequent outages and repair costs averaging about \$20,000 per year, he said. Summers Engineering was asked to prepare an initial cost estimate to manufacture and install a traveling water screen, which was approximately \$221,000. Azhderian requested the Board authorize preparation and issuance of an Invitation for Bids so that the District may further explore the costs and potential benefits of installing the screen. After consideration, on a motion by Director Barcellos, seconded by Director Correia, the Board unanimously authorized issuance of the Invitation.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

Ayes: Bennett, Barcellos, Stearns, Fausone, Correia  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER REQUEST FROM THE PANOCHÉ RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT TO FUND A CONSULTANT TO ADVISE ON THE FUTURE OF THE DISTRICT**

General Manager Azhderian reported in the spring of 2021, the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission conducted its periodic review of the Panoche RCD and reapproved the RCD's Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence. After doing so, he said, it presented the RCD a number of recommendations, including a request to explore whether there remains a service need for the RCD. Azhderian explained the RCD has no revenue and that much of the service area, which is substantially greater and more varied than the Water District's, is unknown to staff. In order to assess the potential service need of the RCD, Azhderian requested the Board authorize up-to \$10,000 of funding to hire a consultant to explore the RCD's potential and offer the Board recommendations about its future. After discussion, the Board requested staff reach out to neighboring RCDs to gain better insight as to their activities and sources of revenue and to report back at a future date. No further action was taken.

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER AMENDING THE DISTRICT’S EMERGENCY COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE POLICY TO ADDRESS REVISED CDC AND CAL-OSHA GUIDANCE**

General Manager Azhderian presented the Board the revised Policy. He explained the revisions were prepared by staff and the District’s labor counsel to reflect recent changes in CDC and CalOSHA guidance. After consideration, on a motion by Director Barcellos, seconded by Director Fausone, the Board unanimously amended the Policy.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

Ayes: Bennett, Barcellos, Stearns, Fausone, Correia  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

**THE BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS**

General Manager Azhderian presented the Board with the District’s accounts payable. After consideration, on a motion by Director Fausone, seconded by Director Correia, the Board unanimously approved payment of the bills.

The vote on the matter was as follows:

Ayes: Bennett, Linneman, Fausone, Barcellos, Correia  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

No reports were given.

**REPORTS UNDER DISTRICT POLICIES**

No reports were given.

**GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT**

No report was given.

**REPORTS ON OTHER ITEMS PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54954.2(A)(3)**

No reports were given.

**FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The next regular meeting of the Board was scheduled for August 9, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business on the agenda, President Bennett adjourned the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

  
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John Bennett, President

  
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Mike Stearns, Secretary