



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING

# MINUTES

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**REGULAR MEETING SESSION**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025**  
**1:30 PM**

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(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Building Boardroom at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California, and by Zoom teleconference, at 1:30 p.m.

**1.1 Roll Call.**

Committee members in attendance were District 2 James Provenzano, District 4 Sheila Barry and Brent Bonino, District 5 Jan Garrod, District 6 Robert Long, District 5 and Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod, and Loma Prieta Resource Conservative District and Chairperson presiding, Peter Van Dyke constituting a quorum of the Committee.

District 1 Mitchell Mariani and Erin Gil, and District 6 Tim Chiala arrived as noted below.

Staff members in attendance were: Gina Adriano, Aaron Baker, John Bourgeois, Olivia Cobb, Vanessa De La Piedra, Zooey Diggory, Vincent Gin, Samantha Greene, Jason Gurdak, Andy Gschwind, Cindy Kao, Candice Kwok-Smith, Walter Gonzalez, Emelia Lamas, Ryan McCarter, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Max Overland, Charlotte Reinthaler, E. Ray Ruiz, Ashley Shannon, Nicholas Simard, Stephanie Simunic, Emily Tucker, Nadia Webster, Gregory Williams, and Beckie Zisser.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3), Director Jim Beall (District 4), and Director John L. Varela (District 1).

Public in attendance were: Valley Water Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7) and Director Shiloh Ballard (District 2), and Katja Irvin (Sierra Club).

**2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no one present who wished to speak.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**3.1. Approval of October 7, 2024 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.**

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the October 7, 2024 Committee meeting.

Public Comments:  
None.

It was moved by James Provenzano and seconded by Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved.

**4. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**4.1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**

Recommendation: Elect 2025 Chair and Vice Chair.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:  
None.

It was moved by James Provenzano and seconded by Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod and unanimously carried that Chairperson Peter Van Dyke remain Chairperson.

It was moved by Brent Bonino and seconded by James Provenzano and unanimously carried that Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod would remain Vice Chairperson.

**4.2. Review and Approve 2024 Accomplishments Report for Presentation to the Board (Committee Chair).**

Recommendation:   A. Approve the 2024 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board;  
                              B. Provide comments to the Committee Chair to share with the Board as part of the Accomplishments

Report presentation pertaining to the purpose, structure, and function of the Committee.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Tim Chiala and Mitchell Mariani arrived.

Robert Long noted speaking about the potential of dams on small pieces of water to 32 landowners with over 20 acres and confirmed only 2 landowners were interested with 22 of the properties having changed ownership in the last 3 years and may be sold in the future.

Public Comments:  
None.

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod and seconded by Jan Garrod and unanimously carried that the following Recommendation A was unanimously approved.

Recommendation: A. Approve the 2024 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board.

4.3. Review and Provide Comment to the Board on Staff's Preliminary Fiscal (FY) 2025-2026 Groundwater Production Charges.

Recommendation: Review staff's preliminary FY 2025-2026 groundwater production charges and provide comment to the Board as appropriate.

Carmen Narayanan reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Carmen Narayanan, Vincent Gin, Darin Taylor, Aaron Baker, Valley Water Board Vice Chairperson Santos and Director Varela were available to answer questions.

Erin Gil arrived.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project status coming back online will be up to the Contra Costa Water District as the owner; the recent drought and water conservation efforts have assisted with the lower water usage actuals/projections which tend to rebound outside of droughts; treated water actuals/projections reflect the amount received/delivered and expected for treated water retailers to deliver to their customers; discussed the definition of a drought and how it relates to demand, availability, handling reserves, budgeting costs, and the logistics of imported and treated water; confirmed projections include consideration of urban development and the roughly 8%-10% agricultural rate use county wide is based on farming meters from wells in South County and crop factors; discussed the District

Act's pricing policy regarding the Municipal & Industrial (M&I) Rate and how it relates to the Agricultural rate; confirmed inflation rates are included in the financial models for the forecasting process; and noted Valley Water's Landscape Rebate Program.

Public Comments:  
None.

Valley Water Director Eisenberg's hand was raised to speak by Zoom teleconference but was not allowed to speak per the Board's Governance Policy 9.2.1.

It was moved by Jan Garrod and seconded by Erin Gil to receive and accept staff's preliminary report for the FY 2025-2026 groundwater production charges and unanimously approved with the amendment to continue the pursuit of water conservation programs, studying the impact of increased rates on agriculture and the potential of freezing agricultural rates.

4.4. Receive and Discuss Introduction to the Upper Pajaro Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool (UPNEET) and Provide Feedback.

Recommendation: Receive and discuss introduction to the UPNEET and provide feedback as necessary.

Zooey Diggory reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Zooey Diggory, John Bourgeois, Samantha Greene, and Valley Water Board Vice Chairperson Santos were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:  
None.

The Committee discussed the following topics: potential UPNEET assistance with confirming if a site could implement a low flow channel for fish and potentially provide resources to stock pond owners; support for resources regarding balance of food safety and natural habitat enhancement near farmland; Chairperson Peter Van Dyke invited to be a part of the technical advisory group for the development of UPNEET; UPNEET User Interface may provide general or detailed site information from existing maps/data for a recommendation that is ecologically appropriate per the local fish/wildlife history, topography/vegetation communities, and land uses; opportunity areas will generally be below 1,000 feet; Valley Water or any other project proponent would need to work with landowners for access to private properties and with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and others for restoration permits as needed; currently in beginning planning phase 1 which includes creating a beta version with the anticipated final UPNEET launching and training of users in 2026.

The Committee received and noted the information and took no formal action.

- 4.5. Discuss the Potential of Forming a Subcommittee for the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC).

Recommendation: Discuss the potential of forming an AWAC subcommittee per the Committee's approval at the January 9, 2023 meeting.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke requested and reviewed this agenda item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo.

Vincent Gin and Nicole Merritt were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:  
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action and noted the option of forming a subcommittee as needed.

- 4.6. Review and Discuss Resolution 17-75 Regarding the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Membership and Provide the Feedback or Recommendations to the Board.

Recommendation: Review and discuss Resolution 17-75 (PROVIDING FOR AND DEFINING THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND REPEALING RESOLUTION 15-28) as to its provisions regarding the membership of the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) and provide feedback or recommendations to the Board.

The Committee requested further discussion regarding AWAC membership requirements and fulfilling the vacancies at the October 7, 2024 meeting, and reviewed this agenda item per the attached Committee Agenda Memo and per information contained in Attachment 1 without a staff presentation.

Nicole Merritt, Andy Gschwind, and Valley Water Director Varela were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:  
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action and continued the discussion regarding the agricultural challenges in Santa Clara County, the significance of maintaining interest of stakeholders and support for outreach to the Santa Clara County Farm Bureau and local elected officials. Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted to continue working with the AWAC Committee Oversight Managers Vincent Gin and Darin

Taylor regarding a potential recommendation to the Board.

- 4.7. Review and Approve the Proposed 2025 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) Work Plan, the Outcomes of Board Action of Committee Requests, the Committee's Next Meeting Agenda; and Recommend the Proposed 2025 AWAC Work Plan to the Board.

Recommendation: Review and approve the Committee work plan to guide the committee's discussions regarding policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:  
None.

Nicole Merritt, Vincent Gin, and Jason Gurdak were available to answer questions.

It was moved by Tim Chiala and seconded by Robert Long and unanimously approved to recommend the proposed 2025 AWAC Work Plan to the Board with the amendment to add the Semitropics Groundwater Storage Bank as a separate AWAC Work Plan topic.

## **5. INFORMATION ITEM:**

- 5.1. Standing Items Report.

Recommendation: This item allows the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee to receive verbal or written updates and discuss the Board's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Work Plan Strategies. These items are generally informational; however, the Committee may request additional information and/or provide collective input to the assigned Board Committee.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:  
None.

Nicole Merritt was available to answer questions.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, noted the attached Board Work Plan standing items report.

## **6. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS:**

*This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.*

Nicole Merritt confirmed the Committee took formal approval action for Peter

Van Dyke to continue as the Chairperson and Trevor Garrod to continue as the Vice Chairperson under Item 4.1; approval of 2024 Accomplishments Report for presentation to the Board under Item 4.2; approval to receive and accept staff's preliminary report for the FY 2025-2026 groundwater production charges with the amendment to continue the pursuit of water conservation programs, studying the impact of increased rates on agriculture and the potential of freezing agricultural rates under Item 4.3; received, noted and provided feedback on UPNEET under Item 4.4; received, noted, and provided feedback on forming an AWAC Subcommittee under Item 4.5; received, noted, and provided feedback on Resolution 17-75 regarding AWAC Membership under Item 4.6; and approval to recommend the proposed 2025 AWAC Work Plan to the Board with the amendment to add the Semitropics Groundwater Storage Bank as a separate AWAC Work Plan topic under Item 4.7.

## **7. REPORTS:**

- 7.1. Federal and State Affairs Report  
Beckie Zisser provided the verbal update and confirmed financial assistance with the unhoused will be addressed locally through partnerships with the county or other jurisdictions to obtain federal funding.
- 7.2. Director's Report  
Valley Water Board Vice Chairperson Director Santos reconfirmed support of AWAC Members doing outreach to local elected officials to assist with the unhoused.
- 7.3. Manager's Report  
Aaron Baker provided a verbal update regarding the Valley Water Board elections and the Anderson Dam project update.
- 7.4. Committee Member Report  
Tim Chiala noted appreciation for the Federal and State Affairs Report.  
  
Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted the significance of agriculture for Santa Clara County and presented samples of the locally produced fruits, beans, and vegetables.
- 7.5. Information Links:  
Links noted on agenda.

## **8. ADJOURN:**

- 8.1. Adjourn to Regular Meeting at 1:30 p.m. on April 7, 2025.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m., to the regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. on April 7, 2025.

Date approved: April 7, 2025

Nicole Merritt  
Assistant Deputy Clerk II

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