



**QUANTIFICATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**

Commissioners and Alternates present:

Arturo Delgado, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) – Chair
Jim Barrett, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) – Commissioner
Dan Denham, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) – Commissioner
Henry Martinez, Imperial Irrigation District (IID) – Commissioner
Robert Cheng, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) – Alternate Commissioner
Kelly Rodgers, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) – Alternate Commissioner
Tina Shields, Imperial Irrigation District (IID) – Alternate Commissioner

JPA staff present:

Jeff Ferre, Best, Best, and Krieger – Legal Counsel
Kara Mathews, SDCWA – Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Others present:

Shannon Ayala, Davis Farr LLP
Mike Cohen, Pacific Institute
Jessica Humes, IID
Wendy Joplin, SDCWA
Alan Okewole, SDCWA

Ivory Reyburn, CVWD
Jessica Schroeder, CNRA
Gail Sevrens, CDFW
Darren Simon, SDCWA
Chris Woidzik, SDCWA

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Call to Order

Chair Delgado called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Roll Call

There was a quorum of the Commission present at the time of the meeting.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments at that time.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. Action: Approval of Minutes of Regular JPA Meeting Held December 10, 2020.

Commissioner Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Delgado. The minutes were approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

5. Information: Website (Kara Mathews, SDCWA)

Ms. Mathews called on the public speaker.

Mike Cohen from the Pacific Institute made a public comment that JPA funds should be used to create the website and recommended to create a separate “QSAJPA.com” website for search engine optimization. He thanked the committee for the discussion.

Ms. Mathews opened up the item to discussion. Several comments were made, and questions were asked during the discussion on what to include on the website as far as content, concerns of cost, management and maintenance, where to put the website, and next steps.

Ms. Mathews replied she would do more research and provide an update at the next meeting.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

6. Information: Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Engagement (Chris Woidzik, SDCWA)

Mr. Woidzik introduced auditor Shannon Ayala from the Davis Farr LLP to update the committee on the Audit.

Ms. Ayala reviewed the Audit Engagement Letter and the SAS 114 Planning Letter. The engagement letter had no changes from the prior year and had a slight increase in fees from the prior year. She explained the scope of the audit was to express an opinion and that the auditors were not responsible for providing introductory or supplementary information. She explained the SAS 114 Planning Letter expressed two-way communications about fraud and fraud risk were important as well as any modifications to the audit approach. She said extra testing would be done in interest income and interest receivables this year. She concluded with a timeline and mentioned final field work would start in August 2021 with review of the financial statements.

7. Information: Treasurer’s Report ending December 31, 2020 (Chris Woidzik, SDCWA)

Mr. Woidzik provided a review of the Treasurer’s Report ending December 31, 2020. The month ended with \$36 million in cash and investments. LAIF had a significant amount at \$21 million. He mentioned Chandler Asset invested \$15 million and would invest another \$5 million in April. Interest earnings to date was \$136,000. \$3.7 million in invoices were paid during the quarter. He said annual contributions were received in the amount of \$4.5 million in deposits.

8. Information: Financial Report ending December 31, 2020 (Chris Woidzik, SDCWA)

Mr. Woidzik provided a review of the Financial Report ending December 31, 2020. Total assets were \$99.8 million with \$259,000 in liabilities. Total revenue was \$5.4 million, expenditures at \$3.6 million with a fund balance of \$35.9 million. Approximately 24 percent of the budget was spent to date. He concluded with a summary of expenses on certain tasks.

IMPLEMENTATION

9. Information: Status report on implementation of mitigation measures (Jessica Humes, IID)

Ms. Jessica Humes provided an update on various mitigation measures:

Mitigation Measure 2 – Implementation Team Biologists: The IID biologist team currently has two vacancies: Environmental Specialist II to fill a vacancy and an Environmental Specialist I, with interviews at the end of March.

Mitigation Measure 4 – Salton Sea Salinity and Elevation Program: IID has partnered with IID’s Water Quality Program and is currently collecting quarterly salinity samples at the Salton Sea.

Mitigation Measure 8 – Drain Habitat for Managed Marsh Complex: All emergent wetlands ponds have been filled for nesting bird season. IID staff will conduct marsh bird surveys. Phase 3 has seen a lot of shore bird activity as vegetation begins to grow. IID has a new invasive species control contractor who does weed spray control.

Mitigation Measure 15 - Pre-Construction Activity Burrowing Owl Surveys and Relocation: As part of COVID restrictions, IID has had to adapt to training to staff virtually and created a burrowing owl education video. The training went out in February.

Mitigation Measure 19 – Pupfish Selenium Drain Studies: There is ongoing monitoring for tasks 1 and 2 as part of the salinity monitoring. IID is coordinating with the Regional Water Quality Control Board as part of the monitoring effort.

Mitigation Measure 23 – Covered Species Baseline and Monitoring Surveys: Southwestern flycatcher surveys started this month.

10. Information: Update on Air Quality Mitigation Program Dust Control Projects (Jessica Humes, IID)

Ms. Humes provided an update on the Air Quality Mitigation Programs Dust Control Projects. She began with background on overall rules and regulations. She explained there are four different agencies that are collaborated with: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Air Resources Board, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) and South Coast Air Quality Management District. She continued with what was included in the State Implementations Plan, which was air quality monitoring/modeling, emissions inventory, and control strategy. She reviewed PM10 emissions inventory in Imperial County and Salton Sea, and stated the annual emissions on the county's inventory for open areas is 199.96 tons per day. On a three-year average, the IID air quality program has found that the Salton Sea playa is only about 1.12 tons per day, which is low compared to all open areas.

Ms. Humes said that at the end of 2020 the Salton Sea playa was 25,589 acres compared to 23,917 acres in 2019. Of that 2,684 acres have proactive dust control projects on them-- 1,954 acres is surface roughening, and 730 acres include surface roughening and vegetation enhancement. 7,000 acres of playa around Salton Sea have been naturally revegetated. She explained the progress on a couple of maps. IID has 7,000 acres of projects in various planning stages. Eighty percent of dust emissions are coming off of 20 percent of the playa in the western shore. There is very little water opportunities in that area, so IID is looking for groundwater to see if that is a source for vegetation.

Ms. Humes further explained the process for dust control performance, which included spatial roughness mapping using LiDAR, sand motion monitoring, upwind/downwind monitoring and visual surveillance. She showed satellite pictures of Alamo South that showed the dust control methods in progress. She reviewed control efficiency during construction in the Alamo South and Red Hill Bay areas. After the operations and maintenance and land leveling, the dust emissions should be reduced going forward since construction is complete. She showed pictures of windstorms before and after surface roughening, which showed reduced dust emissions coming off the playa.

Commissioner Denham asked about sand capture if it was coming from natural desert environment and how much was attributable to the dunes moving toward the sea from the west.

Ms. Humes replied sand and dust came from the desert to the west and the sand dunes move closer every year and she will follow up with a better estimate at a future meeting.

Commissioner Denham asked who owns that land?

Ms. Humes stated the land is owned by the State of CA and/or BLM and the State manages most of it. She said their team has been working with BOR and BLM as well as the state parks to try to identify who owns it. Also, IID is working on targeted messaging to the off-road recreational vehicles and will provide additional maps.

Commissioner Martinez made a comment about the off-roading issues.

Ms. Humes replied that the off-roaders like to deviate off the recreation paths so IID has added more no trespassing signage and repaired broken signage. They are trying to work with Anza Borrego Desert on an educational video so people understand why not to go on the playa.

Alternate Commissioner Cheng asked what do we plan on doing to spend the \$6.6 million for the rest of the year, and what about the JPA's liability for the fugitive emissions that are not caused from this area because the best control measures have already been implemented with our projects?

Ms. Humes explained the \$6.6 million will cover construction, irrigation and planting contractors to do additional vegetation establishment. Also, they are testing groundwater wells in the Salton City area and hoping to have bids back in 4-6 weeks. She further explained that IID was in the planning stages of additional shallow groundwater wells in the Salton City and San Felipe wash areas and were trying some additional plot studies including sand fences, hay bales, and other constructed dust control measures to reduce dust in areas where surface roughening and vegetation enhancement aren't possible.

Alternate Commissioner Ms. Shields replied to Mr. Cheng's liability question stating that there are legal issues involved.

11. Information: Update on State Salton Sea Management Program (Gail Sevrens, CDFW)

Ms. Sevrens provided an update on the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) and began with announcing the species conservation habitat constructions began in January and is ongoing.

The SSMP team submitted an annual report to the State Water Board and it's available on the website, and the State Water Board Workshop is scheduled for March 17. She also announced the SSMP team had submitted an application to the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Environmental Assessment for the SSMP Phase 1 10-Year Plan and public notice was forthcoming and that would begin a 30-day public comment period for written comments to be received to the US Army Corps. She mentioned that some of the specific projects in the environmental assessment would include the Desert Shores Channel restoration project, Audubon California Bombay Beach Wetland Restoration, and the North Lake Demonstration project.

Ms. Sevrens announced on the staffing front that the Department of Water Resources had opened a Program Manager position, with an application cut-off date of March 31 and to please spread the word. She said additionally, CDFW had hired a wildlife technician and other SSMP positions are in progress.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned 9:56 a.m.