

**San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District**  
***Regular Board Meeting***

San Joaquin Farm Bureau  
3290 Ad Art Way, Stockton, CA 95215

**Thursday, February 15, 2024 • 12:00 p.m.**

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**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Richard Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members of the Board present included Richard Rodriguez, Phil Balmat, John Herrick, Diego Olagary (via phone), and Jim Thoming. Kamal Bagri (SJC Ag Commissioner/Sealer), Ryan Hansen (Assoc. Director), Krista McCoon (RCD), Sonya Miller (NRCS - Stockton), Ruth Mulrooney (SJCDWQC), and Mike Wackman (SJCDWQC), were also in attendance.

**MEETING AGENDA**

A motion to accept the agenda for the February 15, 2024, meeting was made by Mr. Balmat. Mr. Thoming seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**MEETING MINUTES**

A motion to accept the regular meeting minutes from January 18, 2024, was made by Mr. Balmat. Mr. Thoming seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

All bills for the month were presented. A motion to pay all invoices presented in the packets was made by Mr. Herrick. Mr. Thoming seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**NRCS UPDATE**

- A. EQIP and Personnel Update – Ms. Sonya Miller sent a report noting the CSP application deadline is March 22. Tractor and climate smart practices deadline is March 1.

**RESOURCES (Limited to 5 minutes/speaker)**

- A. Ag Commissioner's Report – Ms. Kamal Bagri mentioned permitting was winding down, but applicants can still go to the Lodi office, if needed. She also mentioned the County is looking to purchase a building in the Lodi area, and her office might share. Additionally, she discussed that approximately 100 people attended the Spray Safe event, about 50 percent of normal attendance. Continuing education classes will be offered earlier in the year, in addition to those in November/December. Applications closed for the management analyst position, and the selected person should be in place in April.

Additionally, two deputies were hired. Interns interested in helping to produce the crop report should reach out to her. The abandoned orchard case had not been filed, but she's working to get the issue resolved.

- B. CARCD (California Assoc. of Resource Conservation Districts) Report – Ms. McCoon discussed some of the current transparency concerns regarding CARCD, especially as related to the request for a current budget to determine voting eligibility.

Mr. Balmat moved to send in the approved 23/24 RCD budget along with a cover letter explaining all SJCRCD revenue are restricted funds. Mr. Herrick seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. CRAE (California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment) Report – No report.
- D. RCD Administrator Update – Ms. McCoon updated the group on proposals returned as a result of the RFP for new legal counsel.

Mr. Herrick moved to continue forward with Herum/Crabtree/Suntag as new general counsel for the SJCRCD. Mr. Balmat seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. McCoon also discussed that Ms. Spaletta submitted an engagement letter for her new firm, Stoel Rives.

Mr. Thoming moved to authorize SJCRCD President Mr. Rodriguez to sign the engagement letter with Ms. Jennifer Spaletta and her firm, Stoel Rives, LLP. Mr. Balmat seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## **IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM**

- A. Financial Report – All bills for the month were presented. Mr. Herrick moved to pay coalition invoices as presented and accept and file the financial report. Mr. Thoming seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- B. Program Report – Mr. Wackman reviewed water column toxicity hits. He also discussed future testing for Round Up toxicities.
- C. Steering Committee – The program manager's report was included in the packet.
- D. Membership Report – Ms. Mulrooney noted 1900 packets were mailed in addition to 1,000 letters informing members to go to the portal. Currently, 40% of members are set up on the portal.
- E. Delta Regional Monitoring Program – No report.
- F. CV Salts/Valley Water Collaborative – Mr. Wackman discussed an initial meeting with others impacted by the CV Salts to determine each group's potential contribution. There was a great deal of variation in the proposed responsibility for dairy and agriculture. The board gave staff direction to get Mr. Olagary and Mr. Koster in a room with Mr. Hamm (representing dairy), to see what could be worked out.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. DWR Contract – No Update
- B. CDFA – Water Efficiency Technical Assistance Grant – Ms. McCoon noted 11 evaluations were completed in 2023. Interns will be solicited earlier in the year for 2024 and board members were asked to brainstorm and recruit applicants.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Ninth Circuit Amicus Brief Re: Return Flow Exemption in the Clean Water Act – Mr. Wackman discussed a request sign on to an amicus brief being submitted in a hearing with the Pacific Coast Fly Fisherman’s, which would mean agriculture drains would not be exempt from the Clean Water Act.
- Mr. Balmat moved to support \$1,000, payable to KSC, for work on Ninth Circuit amicus brief regarding return flow exemption in the Clean Water Act. Motion seconded by Mr. Herrick. Motion passed unanimously.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

All communications were included in the meeting packet.

## **ADJOURN**

A motion to adjourn the board meeting on February 15, 2024, was made by Mr. Thoming. Ms. Balmat seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

The next board meeting of the San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. Thursday, March 21, 2024, at San Joaquin Farm Bureau.