

## Arvin Edison Water Storage District May 14, 2019

By Don A. Wright

**T**he **Arvin Edison Water Storage District** held its Tuesday, May 14, 2019 meeting at its Arvin headquarters. I don't want to lose friends by making this statement but the best lunches are the **AEWSD BBQ**.

Chairman **Edwin Camp** called the meeting to order at noon and we all saluted the flag and introduced ourselves. After public comment the consent calendar was considered and passed. The first action item was a request for contributions to the Cultivate California program by the California Farm Water Coalition. The board approved with some discussion. Assistant Manager **Don Nixon** gave the financial report and the board also agreed to pay its bills.

General Manager **Jeevan Muhar** presented the board with the changes in the Kern Groundwater Authority agreement. Under SGMA Kern County would be responsible for white areas. Kern County backed out leaving lands at the mercy of the State Board's draconian actions. The Kern County Water Authority has agreed to take over the County's duties provided it was agreeably indemnified. Part of this agreement will include AE providing SGMA services at no exposure to itself. Attorney **Scott Kuney** said the agreement presented to the board is similar to other district's agreements and pretty safe. It includes a covenant not to sue or contest AE and was reviewed extensively by legal counsel. In other words in exchange for keeping the state at bay the white area folks have to do what AE says. A good deal by any measure. The board agreed unanimously.

Muhar told the board about an electric pump on a well on the north canal that needs further electrical work to go out to bid. The board agreed. AE is looking at a groundwater metering project and has four bids for 51 landowner sites. There was also a need for pipe to alter manifolds to install the meters and three bids were received. McCrometer won the meter bid at \$84,885.00 and Jim's Supply won the pipe bid at \$56,000.00. The board agreed to the low bids. It also agreed to spend another \$65,000 to Provost & Pritchard for a task order amendment. Nixon reported there needs to be a lien filed against a delinquent property and the board agreed.

The board needed to vote on approving Resolution No. 19-14 concerning a complicated bookkeeping matter potentially worth \$10 million. It involves tax exempt financing. The bank won't touch the deal without the board passing a resolution. The board approved. The next resolution, No. 19-15, was fixing charges for general administrative service charges. This is charged to all lands in the district and has to comply with the latest 218 elections. The district wants to raise the charges by \$500,000 across the board. The board agreed. A letter will go out. Former GM and current Consiglieri **Steve Collup** pointed out the new expenses include SGMA costs.

Collup next reported on Temperance Flat. He said the old JPA has transferred authority to the new MOU group and the Temp Flat Reservoir Authority will take over from there. So far Friant Water



Authority, City of Fresno and the Exchange Contractors are the founding members. Westlands WD and San Luis Delta Mendota wants to see some of the modeling before jumping in. There is a tour at Temp Flat with the California Water Commission, DWR and California F&W representatives.

Collup said the parallel canal option to repair the subsidence damage on the Friant Kern Canal, option five, has been chosen. Estimates run between \$238 million and \$357 million. An ad hoc group is working on the funding options and while things are delicate there is reason to hope agreements, legislation and other avenues of funding will bring about a less painful cost fix. There is a state bill SB 559, that would provide funding to fix the FCK. Muhar said there is some push back in Kern County from State Water Project contractors. There are efforts to smooth those feathers. May it be successful so there will be no farmer fighting farmer. The actual cause of subsidence on the FKC is being looked at and that will soon come to light along with some response. In the FWA family there are “parking lot” discussions. Issues not before the entire board are being addressed in ad hoc committee meetings.

The color of water in the San Joaquin River once it passed Friant Dam expands. There are unreleased restoration flows, 215 flood flows, Class I&II flows. The US Bureau of Reclamation is who determines the color. It has a lot of extra water this year and getting it properly classified is of interest to all. The Valley Blueprint is on the lips of Governor **Gavin Newsom** and his chief enviro **Wade Crowfoot**. That’s a good thing. We all agreed the recent Friant Water Authority annual meeting at Buck Owen’s Crystal Palace in Bakersfield was a success. Several folks from up and down the anal showed up and there appears to be a thaw with the South Valley Water Association folks and that’s good as well. The Valley Blueprint is gathering momentum.

Muhar reported on the Kern Groundwater Authority saying a letter has been prepared to go out with each approved well drilling permit. A draft will be available for review. The AE GSP has a draft available.

**Anona Dutton** from EKI of Sacramento gave an update on the GSP. She said the draft chapters were submitted and feedback received. On July 12<sup>th</sup> the administrative draft of all the member GSA GSPs should be out in draft form. DWR will be in Bakersfield tomorrow willing to answer questions and get the in-depth feedback on SGMA compliance for the Kern County Sub Basin. Dutton said the GSAs south of the Kern River have been meeting and the coordination has been positive and productive. Muhar said the north of the river GSAs are starting to take note and are beginning to meet. There are differences between challenges facing the north and south sides of the river ranging from hydrology to supplies. She said the AE GSP has words in chapters and is being refined. A big step up from nothing on paper and the deadline to submit the draft to KGA is June 7<sup>th</sup>. There is still no future water budget prepared. The economic impact hasn’t been written yet. Many of the sections of the draft umbrella GSP have not been written so to some extent there is no assurance all the measurements and language will give from GSA to GSA. She also said Kern County has an obligation to move 86,000 a/f of banked water out of the county annually. There was a chart of the “glide path” to sustainable pumping amounts. It looked like each five-year interval between 2020 and 2040 would ramp down 25 percent through reducing pumping, bringing in more water and others. It was asked if the state’s estimations of climate change are subject to revision. In 10-years if the climate hasn’t changed as much as estimated will the state be held responsible? That’s a good question. Annual reporting starts April 20, 2020. Dutton continued by showing a map of the white lands north east of AE. There are about 1,000 acres that will need to be included in the AE GSA area. There was a question about why a landowner can be limited without AE being limited. The simple answer was the landowner doesn’t import water the district does.

There were other topics but time was tight.

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**Arvin Edison Water Storage District**, 20401 Bear Mountain Boulevard Mailing Address: P.O. Box 175 Arvin, CA 93203-0175  
661/854-5573

Staff: GM-Jeevan Muhar, Senior Advisor-Steve Collup, Asst. GM-David Nixon, Attorney- Scott Kuney

AE has a nine-member board: President Edwin Camp, Vice President – Jeffrey Guimarra, Secretary Treasurer – John C. Moore, Ronald R. Lehr, Derek Yurosek, Dennis B. Johnston, Charles Fanucchi, Catalino M. Martinez & Kevin E. Pascoe