

Kern Groundwater Authority GSA February 26, 2020

By Don A. Wright

The Kern Groundwater Authority Groundwater Sustainability Agency held its Wednesday, February 26, 2020 meeting at the law offices of Klein, DeNatale and Goldner. Chairman **Jason Selvidge** open the meeting at 8:00am and there were no public comments. The room was strangely under-crowded. There were seats available. Last time I was here it was standing room only. In fact Selvidge commented how he was always happy to see everyone but not as often and so packed together.

The minutes and the treasurer's reports were approved. Attorney **Valarie Kincaid** gave her report and said the submission of the **KGA** Groundwater Sustainability Plan was completed on time. She mentioned the Madera Sub Basin did not get its GSP approved because it wasn't able to get the cooperating agreement signed by all parties. She explained the process for the next steps in the ongoing SGMA drama plays out. The Department of Water Resources has two years as of midnight January 31st to review the plan and she doesn't think it will take that long but if there is a problem it could be returned for correction or sent to the State Water Resources Control Board – control being one of the words in the title of that organization taken seriously.

KGA Planning Manager **Patty Poire** gave her report and started by saying the board officers need to be elected and installed. **Denise Mullins** had been chair from the start but he sadly and unexpectedly passed away last year. The ripples of this are still being felt in the Kern County water community. The board unanimously reinstated Selvidge who agreed to serve for this year at least. Good for him.

Next Poire discussed the Prop One grant disbursement and it was a boos to the budget for sure. The board agreed to an equitable divvying of the dough. That was easy – giving money away almost always is. Not so easy is the decision of who gets to control what property in a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and who has to control other lands in a GSA. This setting of boundaries was the first heavy lift when the GSAs were first formed and there is room to adjust these boundaries. If you are in a water rich GSA you probably don't want to include lands water poor. But if you're in lands water poor you want to be in a water rich GSA. Poire said she worked with Rosedale Rio Bravo's General Manager **Eric Averett**. Which was a wise choice as Averett is one of more knowledgeable concerning SGMA. The latest boundary adjustment was hand delivered to DWR in Sacramento by Poire and Kincaid. Looks like things are OK in that area. All the irrigated lands in the sub basin are covered, but for the lands that aren't. If the lands not covered want to join up in the future that should work out as well. Kincaid said DWR is agreeable to a good deal of local boundary fiddling as long as the sub basin achieves sustainability. She said Kern isn't the only place in the state with this situation. She was asked if the State Board has placed anyone on probation and the answer is no. Rejected or



missing GSPs have a grace period – I believe 180 days. The board voted unanimously to remove non-districted lands from the KGA.

Poire next spoke about the first annual SGMA report for the KGA due in early April. She said all the GSAs have been meeting since December and Todd Groundwater will help with writing this report. the next meeting will be March 13th where a draft will be rolled out. She also said since the next phase is implementation spread over 20-years the need for monthly board meetings may not be as ripe as it has been. The day by day will be covered but she'd like to have the board's blessing to pay invoices and such without having to call a meeting for approval. Selvidge said the dates are already set for 2020 and can be cancelled as needed. Kincaid said this could fall under direction to staff and not need formal action. Ultimately the board didn't feel Poire would have adequate protection without a formal act by the board and since this action wasn't on today's agenda there will be a meeting next month if for no other reason than to allow time to place an action item on the agenda. There was not closed session so that was that.

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SGMA The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 calls for the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Areas within Basins and Sub-basins to develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

Staff: Patty Poire – Executive Director, Valerie Kincaid - Attorney

The Kern Groundwater Authority membership:

Chairman – Jason Selvidge of Rosedale Rio Bravo WSD. Members Arvin-Edison Water Storage District, Cawelo Water District, City of Shafter, Kern County Water Agency, Kern-Tulare Water District, Kern Water Bank Authority, North Kern Water Storage District, Olcese Water District, Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District, Semitropic Water Storage District, Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, Tejon-Castaic Water District, West Kern Water District, Westside District Water Authority & Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District

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DWR Listing: Basin San Joaquin, Sub Basin Kern 5-022.14