

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SANTA FE COUNTY**  
**WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**April 14, 2022**

**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**I. A.** This regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) was called to order by Vice Chair Carl Dickens at approximately 5:10 p.m. on the above-cited date.

This meeting was conducted via WebEx.

**B.** A quorum was achieved with the following members present:

**Members Present:**

Carl Dickens  
Mary Helen Follingstad  
J.J. Gonzales  
Lloyd Gronning  
Steve Rudnick  
Emily Wolf

**Member(s) Excused:**

Shann Stringer, Chair  
Ken Kirk  
Bryan Romero

**Others Present:**

John Dupuis, County Utilities Director  
Deborah Leyba, County Utilities Division Staff

**C. Review of Agenda**

Mr. Rudnick moved approval. Ms. Follingstad seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**D. Approval of Minutes: March 10, 2022**

Mr. Dickens offered the following corrections:

4.B. Neal Denton. "Mr. Denton will be bringing the bill back to the committee after it has passed through other committees' review."

6.A. All Pueblo Council of Governors ~~Council~~

Mr. Rudnick moved to approve as amended. Ms. Wolf seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/21/2022

**E. Introductions of WPAC Members, Staff, and Guests**

This was deemed unnecessary.

**3. Matters from the Public**

**A. Christine Chavez, Update on the Next Generation Water Summit and Community Event**

Ms. Chavez was not present and this item was postponed.

**2. Action Items – No action items were presented**

**4. Discussion Items**

**A. Update of the Joint City/County Meeting**

Mr. Dickens said these meetings have not been scheduled.

**B. Update of the City of Santa Fe Water Conservation Committee Meeting**

Mr. Dickens said he attended this meeting and a representative from the Santa Fe Public Schools talked about their sustainability program. Also present was City Water Division Director Jesse Roach who provided an overview of the City's water conservation program and declared that the City was not in a water emergency stance. Mr. Dickens said the County tends to see it differently and that makes it hard to message County residents to conserve and reduce water use when the City is not sending the same message.

Commending Christine Chavez for her efforts at the City, Mr. Dickens noted groundwater is not included in the City's effort. The City has reduced its consumption of the river. He opened the discussion on how the County can effectively message groundwater conservation.

Mr. Gronning said the drought message and a discussion on water resources should be disseminated.

Ms. Follingstad remarked that groundwater is clearly being diminished and the County should publicize its water contracts with other county communities – Cañoncito, Hyde Park – to educate the public.

Mr. Rudnick noted that the City has a population equivalent to that of the County. The City's water supply is predominantly from surface water and uses two-thirds of the Buckman water. The problem is that there is not a clear policy on what happens when wells go dry. Developing incentives for a reduction of well use should be considered rather than draconian measures.

Domestic wells as well as water systems that are delineated within the Drought Plan appears to be sidelined until the City's modeling project is completed. The messaging point is lost with the City calling the shots.

Groundwater users are struck by the notion of reducing water use while the City approves new apartments all over town.

All of these points evidence the need for a regional water authority.

The City's message is we have the water because we have planned so well and in the event the river goes dry the Buckman wells have been resting and replenishing. It was noted that if the City has to tap into the Buckman wells, other wells throughout the County will be affected.

Mr. Dupuis supported the City's statement that there is not an issue with water availability for utility customers. The City's statement is not about well users nor has the City issued an opinion regarding well users. There are City residents who rely on wells. The City wellfields have shown a strong recovery since they are no longer tapped. Perhaps having the City join the County in a message to well users would strengthen that message. The drought index tool has City support. The County strategic goal is to have a year's worth of 100 percent backup from alternate sources. Currently, the amount the County delivers is less than its backup supply from the City.

Ms. Follingstad said the question is how to educate the groundwater users about managing during drought when the City's message is basically we have plenty of water. Mr. Dupuis said a cohesive joint message is necessary. It was noted that if the City is not willing to reach out beyond its target audience, the County will need to.

### **C. Update on the Water Resources Plan**

Mr. Gronning said the Santa Fe County website identifies the plan as the Santa Fe County Water Resource Plan and also speaks to the Santa Fe Water 2100 five-year water resource cycle. It appears there are two names for the same thing. He recommended updating the website and using "2100" to eliminate confusion.

Mr. Rudnick noted that the document on the website is a planning document for generating a water resources plan. It clearly identifies how to proceed to get to the plan.

Mr. Dupuis said there is not a replacement for the website document until year four of the water resource cycle is accomplished.

Mr. Gronning asked about the public workshop on supply and demand. Mr. Dupuis said those occurred in the spring of 2021 and he offered to obtain additional information and forward it. The City and County participated together in what was rolled into the strategic staffing plan.

Mr. Dupuis said supply and demand is being treated as a regional issue, and staffs are working as a regional entity without the title.

Mr. Rudnick remarked that while he values committee and/or public input he would prefer experts write plans.



The product being developed, stated Mr. Dupuis, also includes climate change impacts and groundwater as a modular component. Eldorado is an example of that component and they will participate in the process in the future. The county groundwater component can be modified and added to the simulations. The goal is to have all groundwater-related impacts included in the plan. The building blocks are there and local entities provide demand input. The County spent \$75,000 to ensure the modular component was built and that the model could be updated for the county's growth/demand.

Mr. Gronning asked that documents or reports developed regarding supply and demand scenarios be provided to WPAC.

Mr. Dupuis offered to provide a presentation at the next WPAC meeting and noted that it is embedded in the strategic staffing plan. As a highlight, he noted the plan was divided as "near term," "midterm" and "long term." Near term reflects needs for the next budget cycle which has already occurred. Mid and long term are three-year groupings to respond to major expansions within the utilities. Midterm there is expansion occurring because of the economy FY 23-25 and long term is FY 26-28 where expansion within the Pojoaque Basin is anticipated. There is a further division by growth from development and growth from conjunctive use and mutual domestics. The county experiences growth differently from the city. Rather than relying solely on growth projections, the area of growth is taking on existing users – strategically there is a benefit to taking on water systems because in the event the County requires a backup, the aquifer is there. The County obtains a revenue stream from selling potable water to existing users versus pumping it into the aquifer and the losses that result when pumping it out.

Mr. Rudnick questioned the 4,000 number of connections shown for Eldorado. Currently, the community has 2,800 homes in the community and the water utility has a commitment for another 10 percent at most within the service area and another 10 percent outside of the homeowners limits. Mr. Dupuis said this was developed earlier this year and although the interim contract was not complete it showed up to 300 acre-feet of usage. Initially, it was set at 100 acre-feet. He anticipated the County would not begin supplying water until mid 2023. He said he worked with Steve King on these calculations.

Mr. Dupuis said the notion is to have a fully sustainable holistic plan where growth, water supply and revenues and expenses were all taken into consideration. Career paths for employees was also been developed within the plan.

Mr. Gronning appreciated the overview and requested additional information showing the water supply for the County, the current demand, and the areas that the system will be extended to existing commitments and anticipated, and additional areas beyond the contracts.

Mr. Dickens recommended putting this item on next month's agenda.

## 5. Matters from the Committee

**South Santa Fe WPAC Member:** Mr. Dickens said he spoke with the OSE District 1 manager about water issues in the southern part of the County. He said he was unaware of the fact there was a water system there and that well users are primarily ranchers.

**Drought outreach program.** Mr. Dickens said he and Ms. Wolf have been working on this and one of the challenges is how to engage county well owners. Ms. Wolf will be investigating how to engage youth through schools. She will be talking to Christine Chavez to ascertain costs, identify schools, etc.

Mr. Rudnick recommended contacting Angie Walker, the science coordinator for SFPS. Ms. Wolf said she has talked to Ms. Walker and Lisa Randall.

Mr. Dickens said he will be developing ways to reach out to the 1,100 well owners. The County's land use plan may provide an avenue to meet with the community organizations. Those organizations tend to have extensive area email lists that may be useful and provide opportunities. The committee needs to decide on what information to give to the well owners which he thinks should be the hydrological future of the area, where the water comes from, its limitations and what can be done to assist in conserving the water. Mr. Dickens recalled that NMED had in the past conducted water fairs to test water and that event would provide an opportunity to share water information. He asked how funding would be accomplished. Mr. Dupuis said the County can provide some funding for community-based requests. Galisteo may not have used all of their allotted funds and that may be available for another group to utilize.

Mr. Dickens said standardized information would be useful for the County. And there is a lot of hydro information out there that needs to be understandable to the non-science person and it also needs to be Spanish. He offered to develop ideas where funding is necessary.

## 6. Matters from County Staff

### A. Update on SJCP Return Flow Pipeline and Planning Process

Mr. Dickens, spokesperson for the Pipeline Coalition, which is a group of 20 organizations, stated the return flow pipeline is now referred to as the "water reclamation facility." He has been working closely with Mr. Dupuis on this. The Coalition has offered to take over the process with a meeting next week. A draft RFP was developed by the facilitator. This is an opportunity for a group of people/stakeholders to shape the planning. The Coalition has reached out to the pueblos and will continue to do so. He estimated there was 150 acres of farmland fed by the river below the wastewater treatment plan. The Coalition is committed to transparency and he offered to keep WPAC advised of their progress.

### B. Update on Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System

Mr. Dupuis said the County recently requested support from the pueblos and BOR in moving forward with Phase 3 distribution lines with the current CDM design-build work. Phase 3 actually gets water to customers. The initial work is to build the facility and connect it to the



pueblos. The subsequent connection to County customers with the distribution lines would not happen until 2027 and this would move the process up, provide revenues, and make the system more viable. The more water produced the lower the cost per gallon and this helps to reduce groundwater extraction. Staff will be meeting with BOR on how to move forward with that.

### C. County Staff Update

Mr. Dupuis said an offer was accepted by Michelle Hunter for the water resources manager (Ms. Bean's past position). Ms. Hunter was the previous Groundwater Bureau Chief from NMED.

Mr. Dickens said he understood from City's Water Resource Coordinator Schneider that the City was working on the hydrology by the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Dupuis said work is being done for the preparation of the environmental component of the return flow project. Mr. Dickens said Mr. Schneider would be attending the next collaborative meeting and he would advise the WPAC of that date.

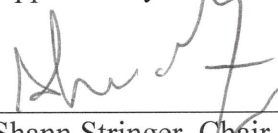
Mr. Dickens said that rain gardens save water, recharge the aquifer and clean the water. He advocated expanding on rain gardens.

Mr. Dupuis said Cañada de los Alamos sent a request for County assistance with their water system. The County committed to assisting Hyde Park Estates, Chupadero and Cañoncito without a process or analysis. Subsequent to that, a resolution was developed setting out the criteria to analyze and provide a report to the County Commissioners. WPAC will need to review the criteria against the information Cañada de los Alamos provided. He offered to facilitate that subcommittee meeting. Cañada has been proactive in obtaining funds and has over \$3 million awarded to them which will go a long ways to get a future water connection. The community has been hauling water for over a year.

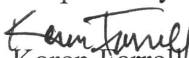
### 7. Adjournment

Mr. Dickens declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

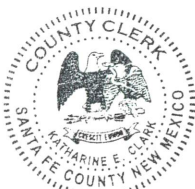
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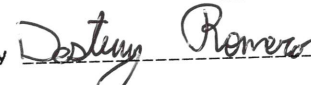
  
Shann Stringer, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

  
Karen Farrell, Wordswork

COUNTY OF SANTA FE )  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO ) ss  
I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for  
Record On The 21ST Day Of July, 2022 at 10:46:17 AM  
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1993430  
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office  
Katharine E. Clark  
Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM