



Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition • 1170 N. Lincoln Street, Suite 110
Dixon, CA 95620 • (707) 678-1655

MINUTES

AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 23, 2024

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kurt Balasek
Herb Wimmer
Eric Schene
Cork Mclsaac
David Viguie
Bruce Brazelton
Sam Beukelman
Spencer Bei (Arrived at 6 pm)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Paul Lum

COALITION STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Huff
Chris Rose
Martha McKeen

The discussion began at 5:35 pm.

Finances of the Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition

Ms. McKeen reviewed the program year-end projected final budget for 23/24.

Fiscal year budget 23/24 will finish \$46,653 more than expected due to a large carry-over of \$34,026 from SVWQC, \$7,956 unexpected interest income, and \$10,000 less in DRCD and SRCD staffing costs. The projected income vs. expenses for the year's net position is (-\$2,716) with an ending fund balance of **\$202,405**.

The FY 24/25 preliminary budget assumes the cost of \$3.75/acre fee for irrigated land. Fiscal year 24/25 will be an assessment year for surface water monitoring and is expected to have a



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net position of (-\$101,846) for the year-end. FY 24/25 projected beginning fund balance is \$202,405 less the projected 24/25 net position (-\$101,846) would leave an ending fund balance of \$100,559. The **\$100,559 ending fund balance** would consist of \$50,000 set aside for reserves plus an added \$50,559. After much discussion, the committee recommended that the minimum fund balance reserves be increased to \$100,000. In the projected 24/25 budget, this would leave \$559 in additional funds on June 30, 2025.

The Committee Members collectively agree and recommend that the 23/24 projected budget be approved and the 24/25 preliminary budget should be approved once an additional \$50,000 is assigned as minimum fund balance reserves.

Policy Update - Ms. McKeen asked the committee members to provide feedback on whether the current per/irrigated acre fee of \$3.75 should remain the same or increase and a possibility of an administrative fee be assessed to each account (invoice).

The committee members discussed these action items. Mr. Wimmer shared that the addition of a modest admin fee or an increase to the per/acre fee seems reasonable for the cost of doing business. Mr. Mclsaac commented that based on the preliminary budget for FY 24/25, there is enough funds in the budget to make it through the next year, an assessment year, therefore raising the fees or adding an admin fee is not needed at this time. He believes that the budget runs lean because of the hard work of the DSRCDWQC staff and the committee's goal to keep the cost low for the members. Mr. Balask would like to see a cost comparison of staff time assisting of landowners with small acreages vs. large acreages.

Ms. Huff reminded the group that the committee has always made it a goal to keep the cost as low as possible and try not to fluctuate fees. The committee reviewed the possibility of the admin or per acre fee increase.

The discussion continued with the entire committee adding their thoughts to the dialogue. The group discussed another option to increase the reserves to cover any unexpected cost that might arise for FY 24/25 and table the per acre fee and admin fee options until next year. Mr. Viguie suggested that the coalition staff present information to the board members for review.

Ms. McKeen will provide a variety of stats including the staff time spent on each account and compare costs of large and small growers along with the possible loss of farmland acreage to land development while basing this on a per-acre fee increase and/or the additional admin fee.

Based on the preliminary FY 24/25 budget having an ending fund of \$100,559, the Committee has made the following recommendations:

- The \$3.75 per/irrigated acre fee should remain the same for FY 24/25.
- Do not adopt an Admin fee at this time.



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- Raise the minimum fund balance reserves for the Water Quality Coalition budget to \$100,000 by assigning the additional funds of \$50,000 to the reserves.
- Share the potential for per acre fee increase and/or addition of an admin fee as an informational agenda item to both the Dixon and Solano RCD Board of Directors for discussion of the possibility to adopting next fiscal year.

Coalition and Program Updates - Informational Only

Enrolled Acres - Ms. McKeen shared that the acreage appears to have stabilized for now. Mr. Brazelton stated that he knows about 800 acres of Almond that might be taken out of production due to the California Forever Group.

Ms. Huff mentioned that there is a significant area around Vacaville and Dixon (more than 2500 acres just around Dixon) that could potential go into development over the next several years.

Coordination with GSA-Groundwater Sustainability Agencies - Ms. McKeen reminded the Committee that the Dixon and Solano Boards have approved the deliberate coordination with the Solano GSA. We share the DMT data we have collected on groundwater use at the field level. In addition, Ms. McKeen shared that we are getting staff time and time for outreach efforts reimbursed for groundwater projects under the DWR grant that was procured by the Solano County Water Agency. This funding runs from July 2023 through February 2026.

Groundwater Percentage from the DMT - Ms. McKeen presented information on the groundwater use percentage collected from the crop year 2023 farm reporting. There was a much better response for crop year 2023 with 97% vs. 40% response for 2022 crop year. The Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition Staff, technical staff for the Solano Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA), and consultants are looking at the information to see how the data points can help to ground truth modeled information and to fill areas without groundwater use statistics. Ms. Huff confirmed with the committee that they are still in support of allowing the sharing of this data and the group agreed to continue the collaboration.

Drinking Water Wells - Here are the current stats of the program as of May 14, 2024:

Sacramento-Valley:

- 2902 on-farm drinking water well samples
- 374 of those exceeded the drinking water objective (10mg/L) for nitrate
- Equal to 13% of the wells sampled in the area.



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Solano County:

- 378 on-farm drinking water well samples
- 110 of those exceeded the drinking water objective (10mg/L) for nitrate
- Equal to 29% of the wells sampled in the area.

There was some discussion from the committee if these totals seemed to capture all of the drinking water wells in the County. Ms. Huff explained that these stats are for only those parcels enrolled in the ILRP-Irrigated Land Regulatory Program that have actively used drinking water wells. The total of wells is not all-inclusive of all drinking water wells in Solano County. There are drinking water wells on parcels not enrolled in the ILRP that are not subject to this program.

Groundwater Protection Targets - The coalition staff shared that the Groundwater Protection Targets have been developed and submitted to the Regional Board for HVA - high vulnerability area - townships in Solano County and are working to update Groundwater Management Plans that show how those targets will be achieved. The Coalition staff will keep the DRSD and SRCD boards and committee members informed, as more information is known.

CV Salts Update - Over the last four years, Southern Central Valley (Priority 1) areas have developed local nitrogen management zones that have started on Early Action Plans to test drinking water wells and to provide free alternative drinking water where groundwater is impacted by nitrates.

Yolo County (Priority 2) area, the only one in the Sacramento Valley, has begun the same process as the Priority 1 areas.

Although the Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition is not currently prioritized, there is a surprising number of drinking water wells that exceed the drinking water limits in Solano County and the potential for this area being prioritized in the near future is very probable.

Mr. Viguie asked if Yolo County had started the distribution of drinking water to those with nitrates higher than the drinking level limits. Ms. Huff commented that Yolo County is developing their Early Action Plan now, which will include drinking water distribution to those well users with high nitrates above the safe drinking limit. Ms. Huff shared that the Coalition staff will be keeping a close eye on the progress and will inform the committee and board members as we learn more.

Online Payments - We began accepting online payments with *ALL PAID*, an online payment service at no cost to the Coalition. The process went well for the members who made 49 payments totaling \$7,615.21. We will also continue to take payments online and checks through the U.S. mail.

No recommendations from the Committee required for any of the informational agenda items.

All agenda items were discussed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.