

**Southwestern Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Special Meeting via Zoom
January 09, 2024**

Present: Dagan Chadd Kenny Heldman David Guilliams (Joined during 3.0)
JR Ford Rusty Hinger Jenny Russell
Amy Huff Charlie Smith

Absent: Gerald Koppenhafer

Staff: Mo Rock, Programs Coordinator
Steve Wolff, General Manager

Consultants: Beth Van Vurst, General Counsel, Van Vurst Law

Guests: Jason Coleman, Florida Ditch Company
Alisa Hjermsstad, Western Weather Consultants

1.0 Call to Order – Roll Call and Verification of Quorum

President Jenny Russell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was established.

2.0 Review and Approve Agenda

There was unanimous consent to approve the agenda.

3.0 FY2024 SWCD Budget Hearing and Adoption

Jenny opened the 2024 budget hearing. Steve Wolff walked through the 2024 draft budget explaining changes from the October meeting, the changes were as follows;

- Property tax revenues are now based on the final assessed valuations from the counties and using the changes made during the November special session of the Colorado General Assembly.
- Interest Income - This number is hard to estimate due to CD portfolio, but the \$100,000 is a good (though conservative) estimate.
- Water Information Program – Partner contributions to WIP is up over \$5,000 so to match that SWCD has increased total contributions to provide their 50% match.
- USGS Contract – The final contract value is \$101,994, with SWCD paying \$56,914 and partners paying \$45,080.
- We are recommending allocating \$250,000 to the 2024 SWCD grant program.
- There are two carry-over grants from the previous year shown in the 2024 budget – totaling \$47,000.
- Federal and State Lobbying Cost – Federal costs were the same as last year, and State went up 3% based on SWCD's consulting services contract.
- In 2023, General Engineering Fees came in approximately \$10,000 over what we had initially estimated. This was primarily due to activities related to SWCD's participation in several water court cases. We are recommending increasing the General Engineering category a bit in our 2024 budget – to \$175,000. We will reduce other technical services dollars, so this is neutral in the budget.

\$1,755,449 in 2024, as amended at the board meeting. The motion was seconded by Rusty Hinger. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve Wolff asked Jenny Russell and Charlie Smith if they were okay if staff signed the resolutions electronically. Jenny and Charlie confirmed they were okay.

4.0 Review and Possible Approval of Proposed Settlement with Elk Ridge Mining and Reclamation in Cas No. 21CW3076, Water Division 4

Beth Van Vurst provided an overview of the water court application filed by Elk Ridge Mining and Reclamation, LLC filed in Case No. 21CW3076, Water Division 4. Beth explained the basis for SWCD's participation in this case and the terms of a proposed settlement negotiated among the parties.

Jenny Russell thinks this is a good resolution and addresses SWCD's concerns. Kenny Heldman asked if any of the water would be used for agriculture, Beth clarified that the junior water right sought in this case would be used for industrial purposes and augmentation.

Beth recommends approving the settlement as outlined today. Kenny Helman made a motion to approve the settlement as outlined today, JR Ford seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8.0 Upcoming Meetings and Announcements

Staff shared upcoming meetings for the district, including January 25th @ noon, which will be our first legislative call, our next regular Board meeting on February 14th and 15th.

8.0 Adjournment

Jenny Russell adjourned the meeting at 09:41 am.



Charlie Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

Approved on 4/10/2024