

**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**of the**  
**SUNNYSLOPE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT**  
**December 15, 2020**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:17 p.m. by President Parker, as authorized by the State of California Executive Order N-25-20 via teleconference, at the Sunnyslope County Water District office, 3570 Airline Highway, Hollister, California.

**BOARD SWEARING IN CEREMONY** – Secretary Lander performed the Swearing-In Ceremony for Re-Elected Board of Directors, James F. Parker, and Jerry T. Buzzetta.

**B. ROLL CALL: Present In Person:** Vice President Jerry Buzzetta, Director Mike Alcorn, Director Judi Johnson, and President James Parker. **Present Via Teleconference:** Director Ann Ross (arrived at 5:22 pm).

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Director Johnson led Directors and staff in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**D. REPORT IN OPEN SESSION ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION HELD NOVEMBER 17, 2020:**

**1. Conference with Legal Counsel – Pending Litigation (§ 54956.9):**

Attorney Heidi Quinn reported that she provided a status report and no reportable action was taken.

**E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** General Manager/ Secretary Lander requested that agenda item H-4 be moved to item H-1 in respect of Mr. Michael Taormina’s time.

Upon a motion made by Director Johnson to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Director Buzzetta, for which President Parker (JP) then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors Alcorn, (MA), yes; Buzzetta (JB), yes; Johnson (JJ), yes; Ross (AR), yes; and President JP, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

**F. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND AUDIENCE INTRODUCTIONS:** The Board welcomed members of the public and opened the meeting to public comments regarding matters not itemized on the agenda. Director Johnson stated that she has been approached on the time allowed for public to respond when asked for public comment in Board meetings. Director Johnson stated given the pandemic situation, all meetings are virtual and sometimes with the technology used, there may be lag time before someone gets the opportunity to respond. General Manager/Secretary Lander stated that there are a couple of functions that can be used such as raising their hand or using the chat room. He did state that he understands the concern and it will be addressed in the future.

**Staff Present for Open Session: In Person:** General Manager/Secretary Drew Lander, Executive Assistant/Stenographer Carol Porteur, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Jose Rodriguez, and Associate Engineer Rob Hillebrecht. **Via Teleconference:** Attorney Heidi Quinn, Finance and Human Resource Manager Travis Foster, and Mr. Michael Taormina of CSI-HR.

**G. CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. Approval of Minutes – The Board reviewed the minutes for the Regular Meeting of November 17, 2020.

2. Allowance of Claims – The Board reviewed the Disbursement Summary (below) for the period of November 1, 2020 through November 30, 2020, totaling \$1,624,217.84 which includes \$1,032,982.02 for payments to vendors, \$220,590.34 for Payroll – employee, and \$ 2,756.29 for customer refunds and checks returned. The last “ACH” # (electronic payments) was ACH #1901, and the last check written was check #28633.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11/03/20	ACH 1862	North American Bancard	-198.50
11/03/20	ACH 1863	North American Bancard	-1,606.75
11/03/20	ACH 1864	North American Bancard	-0.23
11/03/20	ACH 1865	North American Bancard	-119.00
11/03/20	ACH 1866	North American Bancard	-264.00
11/03/20	ACH 1867	North American Bancard	-603.23
11/03/20	ACH 1868	Nationwide Life Insurance	-215.67
11/03/20	ACH 1869	Pathian Administrators (VSP)	-344.91
11/05/20	ACH 1870	American Express	-41.52
11/06/20	ACH 1871	Employee Payroll	-68,076.86
11/06/20	ACH 1872	Payroll Taxes	-18,064.55
11/09/20	ACH 1873	CalPERS - Retirement	-9,743.95
11/09/20	ACH 1874	CalPERS - Retirement	-6,224.26
11/13/20	ACH 1875	ADP	-2,083.26
11/13/20	ACH 1876	RETURNED CHECK	-160.54
11/16/20	ACH 1877	Pathian Administrators (VSP)	-344.91
11/17/20	ACH 1878	RETURNED ACH	-163.42
11/18/20	ACH 1879	RETURNED ACH	-160.03
11/18/20	ACH 1880	RETURNED ACH	-111.43
11/18/20	ACH 1881	RETURNED ACH	-53.97
11/18/20	ACH 1882	RETURNED ACH	-168.12
11/18/20	ACH 1883	RETURNED ACH	-147.02
11/18/20	ACH 1884	RETURNED ACH	-143.85
11/18/20	ACH 1885	RETURNED ACH	-242.81
11/18/20	ACH 1886	Reverse Invoice Cloud test deposit on 11/12/20	-30.00
11/18/20	ACH 1887	RETURNED CHECK	-137.51
11/20/20	ACH 1888	Employee Payroll	-66,848.92
11/20/20	ACH 1889	Payroll Taxes	-18,539.12
11/23/20	ACH 1890	CalPERS - Retirement	-9,534.90
11/23/20	ACH 1891	CalPERS - Retirement	-6,208.16
11/23/20	ACH 1892	CalPERS - Retirement	-9,660.73
11/23/20	ACH 1893	CalPERS - Retirement	-5,931.19
11/23/20	ACH 1894	CalPERS - Retirement	-23.08
11/23/20	ACH 1895	CalPERS - Retirement	-23.08
11/23/20	ACH 1896	CalPERS - Retirement	-23.08
11/23/20	ACH 1897	CalPERS - Retirement	-23.08
11/23/20	ACH 1898	CalPERS - Health Insurance	-17,850.92
11/23/20	ACH 1899	CalPERS - Retirement	-194.58
11/23/20	ACH 1900	CalPERS - Retirement	-686.08
11/27/20	ACH 1901	RETURNED CHECK	-176.00
11/02/20	28551	Razzolink.com	-76.95
11/02/20	28552	MARIA DOLORES GARCIA	-104.90
**	28553	Petty Cash on October Disbursement Summary	0.00
11/09/20	28554	MARK & LIZBETH JUAREZ	-63.39
11/09/20	28555	SCOTT KINDRED	-67.19
11/09/20	28556	Ace Hardware (Johnson Lumber Co.)	-257.53
11/09/20	28557	AT&T	-647.46
11/09/20	28558	Brenntag Pacific, Inc.	-7,029.04
11/09/20	28559	Brigantino Irrigation	-250.56

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
11/09/20	28560	City of Hollister-Finance Dept	-367,889.19
11/09/20	28561	Dept. of Motor Vehicles (DMV)	-27.00
11/09/20	28562	Downtown Automotive	-207.00
11/09/20	28563	Edges Electrical Group, LLC	-384.40
11/09/20	28564	Grainger, Inc.	-145.18
11/09/20	28565	Hach Company	-2,123.07
11/09/20	28566	Mc Master-Carr	-24.26
11/09/20	28567	P G & E	-50,243.01
11/09/20	28568	Quinn Company	-1,783.95
11/09/20	28569	Recology San Benito County	-286.86
11/09/20	28570	San Benito County Water District	-364,315.03
11/09/20	28571	San Benito Tire Pros & Automotive	-20.00
11/09/20	28572	Silke Communications, Inc.	-407.50
11/09/20	28573	Star Concrete	-606.88
11/09/20	28574	Toro Petroleum Corp.	-1,540.90
11/09/20	28575	U.S. Bank Corporate Payment Systems	-4,595.02
11/09/20	28576	USA Blue Book	-3,901.78
11/09/20	28577	San Benito County Water District	-358.75
11/16/20	28578	DAVID & DANIELLE BARLOW	-52.76
11/16/20	28579	AARON & SANDRA HUGHES	-102.04
11/16/20	28580	INDIA MORENO & M MARTIN DEL CAMPO	-32.54
11/16/20	28581	JOSE ANDRES SANCHEZ	-52.76
11/16/20	28582	LETICIA VILLAFAN	-66.01
11/16/20	28583	MITCHELL & LINDA WRIGHT	-400.00
11/17/20	28584	Chavez, Jr., Manuel T.	-133.15
11/17/20	28585	Eclarin, Ernesto P.	-147.48
11/17/20	28586	Brenntag Pacific, Inc.	-25,789.73
11/17/20	28587	Calgon Carbon Corporation	-48,402.00
11/17/20	28588	CM Analytical, Inc.	-16,528.75
11/17/20	28589	Credit Consulting Services, Inc.	-79.19
11/17/20	28590	EBCO Pest Control	-60.00
11/17/20	28591	Edges Electrical Group, LLC	-95.66
11/17/20	28592	Filmtec Corporation	-985.08
11/17/20	28593	Hach Company	-598.57
11/17/20	28594	John Smith Road Landfill	-322.20
11/17/20	28595	Maggiora Bros. Drilling, Inc.	-731.25
11/17/20	28596	Mark Nicholson, Inc.	-2,940.00
11/17/20	28597	Postal Graphics	-54.07
11/17/20	28598	San Benito County Water District	-352,080.02
11/17/20	28599	Trans Union LLC	-143.86
11/17/20	28600	DEBBIE NIELSEN	-150.00
11/23/20	28601	A-1 Services	-403.00
11/23/20	28602	Brenntag Pacific, Inc.	-20,801.29
11/23/20	28603	Hach Company	-3,820.12
11/23/20	28604	Star Concrete	-364.35
11/23/20	28605	Toro Petroleum Corp.	-1,160.96
11/23/20	28606	American Water Works Assoc. CA-NV Section	-850.00
11/23/20	28607	Anne Muraski	-9,625.00
11/23/20	28608	Bryan Mailey Electric, Inc	-1,964.62
11/23/20	28609	De Lay & Laredo	-3,174.50
11/23/20	28610	Vargas Garcia, Michael J	-150.00
11/24/20	28611	CWEA Membership- TCP	-195.00
11/24/20	28612	CWEA Membership- TCP	-225.00
11/30/20	28613	AT&T	-456.44
11/30/20	28614	Auto Tech Service Center, Inc.	-589.00
11/30/20	28615	Brenntag Pacific, Inc.	-5,698.25

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11/30/20	28616	Brigantino Irrigation	-25.30
11/30/20	28617	Central Ag Supply LLC	-2,660.39
11/30/20	28618	ERA Safety Solutions LLC	-1,190.75
11/30/20	28619	Ferguson Enterprises, Inc.	-143.09
11/30/20	28620	Hach Company	-5,187.72
11/30/20	28621	Hollister Auto Parts, Inc.	-89.47
11/30/20	28622	Konica Minolta Premier Finance	-416.76
11/30/20	28623	Mc Master-Carr	-65.57
11/30/20	28624	Mission Uniform Service	-1,333.04
11/30/20	28625	O'Reilly Auto Parts	-70.82
11/30/20	28626	Palace Business Solutions	-118.42
11/30/20	28627	Pinnacle Agriculture	-807.39
11/30/20	28628	Quinn Company	-480.32
11/30/20	28629	State Water Resources Control Brd-WWOPCP	-110.00
11/30/20	28630	UWUA Local 820	-784.72
11/30/20	28631	Veolia Water Technologies	-58,439.41
11/30/20	28632	Verizon Wireless	-230.00
11/30/20	28633	State Water Resources Control Brd-WWOPCP	-110.00
			<b>\$ -1,624,217.84</b>

3. Associate Engineer Monthly Status Report.
4. Finance Manager Monthly Status Reports: a. Narrative Report, b. Operation Summary, c. Statement of Income, and d. Investment Summary.
5. W/WW Superintendent Monthly Status Reports: a. Maintenance, b. City Meter Reading, and c. Groundwater Level Measurement.
6. General Manager Monthly Status Report.

Director Johnson asked to have agenda item G.3 - Associate Engineer Monthly Status Report pulled and moved to Agenda Item J-4, under Board and Staff Reports.

Upon a motion made by Director Johnson to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, seconded by Director Alcorn, and for which President Parker then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JB, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JP, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

## H. NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. REVIEW AND ACCEPT THE FINDINGS OF THE EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY 2020:** General Manager/Secretary Lander explained that the employee satisfaction survey was distributed to staff and received in September. After review and analysis of the responses by Michael Taormina of CSI-HR a summary and analysis were prepared and presented to the Board for review and discussion.

Mr. Taormina introduced himself and gave a brief explanation of his background and experience in the field.

Mr. Taormina explained that with the category comparison, combining the two survey response questions of Strongly Disagree and Disagree as a Negative Response; Neither

Agree or Disagree as a Neutral Response; and Agree and Strongly Agree as a Positive Response; greater clarity can be achieved to help identify areas that warrant further focus and attention. He presented the following table of results:

	Physical Environment	Interaction with Supervision	Organizational Communication	Employee Satisfaction	Company Culture	Employee Feedback	Training & Career Advancement
Negative Response	3.35%	3.16%	18.95%	4.86%	5.26%	8.77%	24.21%
Neutral Response	3.35%	15.26%	28.42%	15.79%	14.96%	28.07%	26.32%
Positive Response	84.21%	81.58%	52.63%	79.35%	79.78%	63.16%	49.47%

Mr. Taormina stated that the areas of Physical Environment, Interaction with Supervision, Employee Satisfaction and Company Culture all have a Positive Response rating at 80%. Considering factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and a recent organizational restructuring these responses are extremely positive, additionally, when counterbalanced with an approximate Negative Response rate of 3.3%.

All areas were positive, however when compared to the very positive areas the two items that stick out for improvement are Organizational Communication, and Training and Career Advancement. Strategies for addressing these areas are detailed above and more in-depth assistance in development and implementation can be provided but is outside of the current project scope.

Director Ross expressed her concern for the negative responses on training and career advancement and felt that by allowing maintenance staff to be able to advance with testing and increasing their certificate grade levels, that was allowing for advancement. General Manager/Secretary Lander responded that finding other ways for advancement would be something that the Policy & Procedures Committee could look at in the future.

President Parker suggested that management put together a plan for improvement on the negative response areas and present it to the employees. Director Alcorn stated that in future surveys he would like to see questions regarding satisfaction on salaries and benefits, as well as ranking which is most important to the employees.

Mr. Taormina stated that overall, the results were very positive, and that Management may want to consider improving on the negative areas by setting up programs for advancement that are not just promotional.

Upon a motion made by Director Johnson to accept the findings of the Employee Satisfaction Survey 2020 and place on file, seconded by Director Alcorn, and for which President Parker then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JB, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JP, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

- 2. TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ELECT A PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND PRESIDENT TO ASSIGN DIRECTOR DUTIES TO STANDING DISTRICT COMMITTEES FOR 2021: (Not a project under CEQA per Article 20, Section 15378):** General Manager/Secretary Lander stated that the Board of Directors annually elects one of the five Board of Directors to serve as the President of the Board and a second Director to serve as the Vice President of the Board. The President of the Board then assigns Directors to serve on the four standing committees, the Water Resources Agency, the Association of California Water Agency Joint Powers Insurance Authority, and to perform check signing responsibilities

on behalf of the District. Director Jim Parker served as President and Director Jerry Buzzetta has served as Vice President for 2020.

Director Johnson nominated Director Parker to continue as President, and President Parker respectfully declined. Director Ross then nominated Director Alcorn and Director Alcorn respectfully declined. Director Alcorn then nominated Director Buzzetta and Director Buzzetta accepted the nomination. The motion was seconded by Director Johnson and President Parker then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JB, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JP, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

President Buzzetta assumed his role as President by switching seats with former President Parker and took over conducting the remainder of the meeting.

Director Parker nominated Director Ross for Vice-President. Director Ross respectfully declined. Director Alcorn then nominated Director Parker for Vice-President and Director Parker accepted the nomination. The motion was seconded by Director Johnson and President Buzzetta then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JP, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JB, yes; the motion carried 5-0

President Buzzetta assigned Directors to the following committees or as agency representatives:

- Finance Committee – Mike Alcorn & Judi Johnson (Alternate – Ann Ross)
- Water/Wastewater Committee – Ann Ross & Jim Parker (Alternate – Mike Alcorn)
- Employee & Personnel Committee – Jerry Buzzetta & Jim Parker (Alternate – Judi Johnson)
- Policy and Procedures Committee – Ann Ross & Jerry Buzzetta (Alternate – Jim Parker)
- Water Resources Agency – Judi Johnson (Alternate – Jim Parker)
- ACWA/JPIA Board Representative – Mike Alcorn (Alternate – Jerry Buzzetta)
- District Check Signing Responsibility for 2021 –
  - First quarter – Jerry Buzzetta;
  - Second quarter – Judi Johnson;
  - Third quarter – Mike Alcorn
  - Fourth quarter – Jim Parker

- 3. AUTHORIZE THE CAPITAL PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF VIDEO SECURITY SYSTEM EQUIPMENT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000 (Not a project under CEQA per Article 20, Section 15378):** General Manager/Secretary Lander reported that the security of the administration building is critical for the operation of the District and requires high quality security surveillance to ensure both crime deterrence as well as a speedy resolution of any issues that may occur. The existing administration building video equipment has reached the end of useful life after 10 years. The recording hard drive is failing and many of the cameras have degraded to a point where they are cloudy or pixilated.

Three quotes for commercial grade recording equipment and high-definition cameras were solicited by independent vendors and a replacement system meeting the requirements of the District has been identified which is expandable, high quality, and dependable. The equipment identified will be installed in the new server tower and all cameras will be accessible internally on a monitor and on mobile devices with the appropriate security.

As defined by the District Asset Capitalization Policy this purchase will be a capital purchase. The purchase of 12 replacement cameras and recording device with memory storage is \$7,784.49. Installation of the cameras and wiring is estimated at \$2000. A

capital expenditure allocation is requested to complete this project no to exceed \$10,000. The balance of the Capital fund is \$1,775,900.

Director Alcorn stated that for personal reasons he has priced the cost of home security equipment and it is considerably cheaper than what is being presented. General Manager/Secretary Lander responded that this equipment is specifically for commercial use and has the capability of adding additional cameras at the water treatment facilities and wastewater treatment plant in the future. Director Alcorn also asked if there would be a subscription fee with this installation and General Manager/Secretary Lander responded that there would not be, and he specifically considered that in his search for the equipment.

Upon a motion made by Director Alcorn, to authorize the purchase and installation of video security system equipment for the Administration Office not to exceed \$10,000 and seconded by Director Johnson, and for which President Buzzetta then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JP, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JB, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

- 4. AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER TO EXPEND NO MORE THAN \$100 TO INCENTIVIZE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PAPERLESS BILLING AND AUTOMATIC PAYMENT; AUTHORIZE THE DISTRICT TO ABSORB THE SURCHARGE AND E-CHECK COST OF AUTOMATIC CHECK PROCESSING BY CUSTOMERS WHO USE THE PAY BY PHONE (IVR) PORTAL:** General Manager/Secretary Lander stated that in January 2021 the District will begin to use Watersmart® as the primary public interface for billing and payments. This software is most advantageous when customers sign up for both Paperless Billing and Automatic Payment. This will also result in the District receiving updated contact information for customers which will be extremely valuable for future communication with our customers. To generate public momentum towards accessing our new web portal the consultant assisting with the District Newsletter has advised that an incentive of a gift certificate from a local restaurant or other service would be very valuable in generating public interest in signing up. An incentive raffle is not subject to the regulations of Penal Code section 320.5 and other raffle laws because signing up is voluntary and does not cost the customer any fee for signing up. The opportunity to participate is not purchased by a customer and only requires that the customer pay their bill in a particular way designated by the District. This request is asking only for a one-time opportunity to see if this type of incentive does influence public participation in online billing. It is proposed that in February all customers who have signed up for Paperless Billing and Automatic Payment will be eligible, and a winner will be chosen randomly from all eligible names.

Employees of the District are not eligible to participate to avoid “gift of public funds” irregularities.

To further encourage automatic payment and to deter call-in payment processing the District is also offering pay-by-phone automatic payment processing. Presently the District policies encourage processing of payments manually by staff because the District absorbs the fee for manual processing of Credit Cards and Checks but does charge customers for automatic online processing of payments. This is counterproductive because online processing costs the district on average \$5 per transaction. The new electronic voice recording payment processing costs \$1.95 per transaction. Directing customers to this service will save the District on average \$3 per transaction. Director Ross expressed her concern and the importance of how customers are handled when being asked to use the new services and General Manager/Secretary Lander stated that staff is really good about it but there will be additional training on how to politely encourage the customers to elect the new services offered.

General Operating Revenues will be allocated to offer one time \$100 incentive for participation. Conversion of only 38 customers to online payment processing will save the District the same amount in the printing, mailing and staff time.

The District currently pays the costs associated with automatic payments and with the processing of manual credit card processing. On average the district expends \$3000 per month on Credit Card fees plus the expense of staff time to process and service the customer. As we convert to IVR payments staff will encourage customers to process payment using e-check. If all current customers who call monthly (approx. 1100 transactions) move to e-check this could save the District more than \$1000/month and staff will no longer be required to handle customer financial information.

Upon a motion made by Director Johnson, to authorize the General Manager to expend no more than \$100 to incentivize public participation in paperless billing and automatic payment; authorize the District to absorb the surcharge and e-check cost of automatic check processing by customers who use the pay by phone (IVR) portal, seconded by Director Parker, and for which President Buzzetta then took a roll call vote as follows: Directors MA, yes; JP, yes; JJ, yes; AR, yes; and President JB, yes; the motion carried 5-0.

## **I. BOARD COMMITTEE and STATUS REPORTS**

1. **Governance Committee:** No meeting held.
2. **Water/Wastewater Committee:** General Manager/Secretary Lander reported that a meeting was held on December 1, 2020 to receive a presentation from Mr. Lynn Hilden regarding Tyler Trail, in Hollister. The District has a wastewater line that crosses Mr. Hilden's driveway which he has concerns with. Staff is investigating and gathering information on the situation. Mr. Lander reported that Attorney Heidi Quinn was also in attendance of the meeting via teleconference.
3. **Finance Committee:** No meeting held.
4. **Policy and Procedure Committee:** No meeting held.
5. **Personnel Committee:** No meeting held.
6. **Water Resources Association of San Benito County (WRA):** Director Johnson presented a written report on a meeting that was held on December 3, 2020. Director Johnson reported that there was discussion of recent work of WRA with the replacement toilets, landscape audits, and removal of water softeners. There was an announcement to the public regarding turning off irrigation and emphasizing methods of conservation. Director Johnson reported that there was considerable discussion of Prop 1 money for the storage construction and status of Pacheco Pass Dam.

## **J. BOARD and STAFF REPORTS**

1. **Directors:** Director Johnson provided a written report to the Board on attending the virtual ACWA Region membership meetings that took place on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Topics discussed were the importance of attracting and using diversity/inclusion in hiring for the workforce; the value of engaging community and stressing collaboration; and water has no color.

Director Johnson reported that there were reports of JPIA memberships in each of the insurance categories and there were rewards for the Districts/Agencies for outstanding



performances. There was discussion on the influence of COVID 10 in the various work areas.

A keynote speaker, Tim Quinn, discussed beating coalition building with firm goal settings. Another topic was the great tribute to Bette Boatman, a real leader in California industry.

Director Johnson reported that the recurring theme of several sessions were, climate change; what is new in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of water; and post-election analysis. One of the big questions was, when will District's/Utilities be able to begin collecting late fees again and stop forgiving penalties for delinquent accounts and the response was, most likely when an end to the pandemic is declared.

Another big question presented at the conference was, an anticipated date or timeline for the release of Prop 1 funds, and the response to the question was, soon.

2. **District Counsel:** No report.
3. **General Manager:** General Manager/Secretary Lander gave an update on the COVID-19 reporting the office remains closed due to the surge in cases within the County. There has been no transmission of the virus in the building, however there was an employee that tested positive, as well as family members of staff.

Mr. Lander reported that he has sent a letter to the Director of Health and Human Services Agency, requesting that District staff be considered priority in Phase 1-B of the vaccination in the County.

Past due balances are increasing, with current outstanding past due totaling about \$160,000. Account technicians continue to contact customers and encourage setting up a payment plan. Information on payment plans will be included in the newsletter that will be going out and the newsletter will be stating that once the District can go back to charging late fees, customers on payment plans will not incur them, but everyone else will be responsible for late fees.

Director Ross asked if staff was informing customers of the option of assistance from Community Action, and Mr. Lander stated that may be something for us to consider.

General Manager/Secretary Lander reported that he and Directors Buzzetta, Johnson, and Parker all attended the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for a presentation by Todd Groundwater. He stated that he will be sending a copy of the draft report to the Directors in the next week.

4. **Associate Engineer:** Director Johnson pulled item I.3 so that Associate Engineer Rob Hillebrecht would explain #4 Well 5 Irrigation System and Mr. Hillebrecht explained that Schaaf & Wheeler has signed and entered a professional services contract with Sunnyslope for the design of the Well 5 Irrigation System Improvements. Staff will be meeting with them on December 17th to finalize the scope and schedule of the design. Mr. Hillebrecht stated they hope to hit the ground running in January.

Director Johnson also wanted Mr. Hillebrecht to explain #7 USA 811 Positive Response Training, to which Mr. Hillebrecht explained that staff is training on posting a positive response for all Underground Service Alert locate request tickets. Beginning January 1, 2021, utilities are legally required to submit a Positive Response online for each USA ticket that is directed to them.

Director Johnson also asked Mr. Hillebrecht to explain #1 Santana Ranch Water Break – The contractor for Santana Ranch caused a significant water main break on Dec. 3rd by excavating behind a stubbed water main before District staff had shut off the service. The stubbed cap pushed off the pipe drawing over 5000 gallons per minute from Sunnyslope’s system. These high flows caused water to lift and suspend sediment inside the water mains making the water appear colored or dirty around Santana Ranch and parts of Ridgemark. Staff flushed this cloudy water all day to clear the minerals and sediments from the system. The contractor will be charged the cost of all the water from the initial break and flushing along with all staff time related to the incident. Mr. Hillebrecht added that the contractor was to wait until he went to the site to turn the water off, but construction workers began excavating before he arrived.

General Manager/Secretary Lander stated that he is planning on a public outreach meeting with the homeowners of Santana Ranch sometime in January. Director Alcorn suggested changing the language in our contracts to place more liability on the contractors for such incidents.

**K. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

**L. PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION MATTERS** –Members of the public may address the Board on the item or items listed on the Closed Session agenda, with a time limit of three minutes per speaker. No comments.

At 6:36 p.m., President Buzzetta closed the meeting to the public for closed session.

**M. CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTIONS:**

1. **Conference with Legal Counsel – Pending Litigation (§ 54956.9):**

*County of San Benito vs. SSCWD*, San Benito County Superior Court Case No. CU-20-00068

2. **Public Employee Performance Review (§ 54956.9)** – Title: General Manager

**N. REPORT IN OPEN SESSION ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION:**

1. **Conference with Legal Counsel – Pending Litigation (§ 54956.9):**

Attorney Heidi Quinn reported that she provided a status report regarding item #1 and no reportable action was taken.

2. **Public Employee Performance Review (§ 54956.9)** – Title: General Manager

Attorney Heidi Quinn reported that the second item was discussed by the Board and direction was given to the General Manager to bring the item to the Personnel Committee for clarification of procedure.

**O. ADJOURNMENT:** President adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

**APPROVED BY THE BOARD:** *Jerry T. Buzzetta*  
Jerry T. Buzzetta, President

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:** *Drew A. Lander*  
Drew A. Lander, Secretary