

Minutes from Galena Groundwater District Regular Meeting - January 2, 2024

Hybrid: City of Sun Valley Meeting Room and via zoom
January 2, 2024

Call to Order: 11:00am

In attendance: Pat McMahon (Board – via zoom), Judd McMahan (Board), Heather O’Leary (GGWD counsel), Zach Latham (Brockway Engineering), Marybeth Collins, three members of Eastfield at Bellevue Farms (Sandy, Margie and Liz) and Steve Haims, Woodland Meadows HOA.

Peter Atkinson (Board) communicated he would not be able to attend today’s meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am at the Sun Valley City Hall and via zoom. Quorum was established.

Proof of notice was confirmed (posted at City Hall and online at www.GalenaGWD.com), accomplished in advance of today’s regular monthly meeting.

Minutes:

Minutes for the regular monthly meeting, held on December 5, 2023, were distributed in advance of the meeting.

MOTION: Judd motioned to approve as drafted the minutes for December 5, 2023. Pat seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by those present.

Financials

Financials for December 2023 as well as the unaudited 2023 calendar year financials were sent under separate cover and discussed briefly at the meeting. Bookkeeping reviewed the major categories for the financials, reflecting that the Year 2 waiver of water purchase was instrumental in a positive year end balance. Discussion of the Supplemental Policy occurred. Various accounts payable items were reviewed for clarity and all were approved by the Board.

MOTION: Pat motioned to approve the accounts payable list of five vendors. Judd seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Also included in the financial review was a three year comparison of District expenses in the time of the Big Wood Groundwater Management agreement, including the negotiation year, Year One and Year 2. Both Negotiation Year and Year One were in overt drought conditions, and Year Two was a standard water year.

Public Comment

Three members of the Eastfield at Bellevue Farms [37-2557Y] were present to continue conversation regarding the water right which the HOA has, how that water is currently used and Galena’s billing. Both Zach Latham and Heather O’Leary spoke to several questions posed by the Eastfield HOA members regarding items of irrigation year, surface and groundwater to supplement the surface water, a water right versus use of a water right, cut-off dates and averages, GGWD billing for irrigation and the flex of supplemental policy action, billing by use possibility, watermaster conversation, IDWR monitoring (meter and drone), Water Banking, etc. Zach offered to speak with the Eastfield representatives members, separately, related to the current issues of water access and what tools might be available to the Board.

Steve Haims representing Woodland Meadows HOA [37-7588] spoke to their water, its ‘domestic’ provision, the HOAs request to participate with GGWD, fee increases, municipality responsibilities, unchecked irrigation at Golden

Eagle HOA, inconsistent standards between one neighbor and another and policy enforcement (IDWR), and future expense expectations. Mr. Haims inquired about public disclosure on annual billing by GGWD for each water right holder, and counsel responded stating that there is lack of statute support for such request.

Both water rights holders' questions led to specific points contained within the BWGWMA.

BWGWMA Update

Discussion of the existing BWGWMA, its general agreement details, how the municipalities are reflected in the agreement, features of the agreement (water purchase, shortened irrigation season, funds for capital improvements) and the literal protections it has afforded (no call option), and the like.

Several Statewide items referenced, too, included domestic well exemptions, inquiry as to whether wells require permitting, what IDWR is working on currently, proposals for domestic exemption narrative update by IWUA, etc.

Legal Update

Heather confirmed the pending status of Idaho Supreme Court decisions related to IDWR Director actions from 2021, impacts of such decision, as well as updates on several other items currently in legal path.

Executive Session

None.

Next Meeting Date

The Board confirmed next meeting to be Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 11am for the next monthly Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44am