



Groundwater Quality Evaluation
Committee for the
Beaumont/Cherry Valley Area.

Minutes

Location: San Geronio Pass Water Agency
1210 Beaumont Ave., Beaumont, CA 92223
May 20, 2009, 6:00 p.m.

Item	Discussion	Action
1. Committee Members Roll Call	<p>Present: Joe Aceto, Nancy Hall, John Covington, and John Watkins</p> <p>Absent: Bruce Cash, Brian DeForge, Luwana Ryan, Sarah Eberhardt, Carl Workman, Cindy Li, Behrooz Mortazavi, Hal Marlow, Mark Norton, and Joe Zoba.</p> <p>Mr. Watkins announced that they do not have a quorum and would be unable to make any decisions or voting at this meeting.</p>	
2. Approval of Minutes from 2/25/09	<p>Because there is not a quorum, approval of the minutes will be done at the next scheduled meeting.</p>	
3. Correspondence Received a. Letter dated 4/21/09 from the City of Beaumont to Supervisor Marion Ashley	<p>Nancy Hall – Concerned that in order for the City of Beaumont to have received this information it would have had to come from someone who sits on the committee.</p> <p>Joe Aceto – Stated that there are several people who attend the meetings that could have given the City this information. Is concerned however that the letter contradicts what the draft report states; that an independent 3rd party, outside agency to do further ground water testing is necessary.</p>	

<p>b. Pipeline – Publication, Small Community Wastewater Issues, Winter 2009, Vol. 19 No. 1</p>	<p>John Covington – The letter from the City of Beaumont is very reminiscent of the letter dated March 18, 2009 from Mr. Thibeault of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to Supervisor Ashley. Concerned that these agencies that had a roll in creating this committee are now circumventing our efforts. These letters make it appear that there are people with ulterior motives at work here. A major concern is that when these agencies receive letters such as these it shows that they have very little confidence in what this committee was commissioned to do. If any city or agency has concerns about what we're doing they should be attending the meetings to give their input.</p> <p><u>UNKNOWN FEMALE</u> – Agrees with Mr. Covington. The committee has placed a lot of time and effort into these meetings. These letters undermine all work that has gone into these meetings and the report. Opinions should wait until after the report is finished, then they have a right to disagree.</p> <p>Joe Aceto – It saddens me to think that there is a contingency of people working to undermine the committee's recommendations.</p> <p>This publication was sent to John Watkins by Mr. John Halliwell who has been very willing to share relevant information. This publication speaks about Source Water protection.</p> <p>John Halliwell – Of particular interest in this publication is on page 3. The section that says <i>"Your Source Water Protection Plan," explains how the program was developed and what the plan for your area should be. I went to the Beaumont/Cherry Valley Water Agency to see if I could get any information and the first time I went received nothing. I went back a second time and was told, "I think we have that," and said they would look for it. In the mean time I searched on line and was able to find some information. I then received the copy from the Beaumont/Cherry Valley Water Agency and discovered that the one I found online was actually a "rendered down" report. The actual report is a 1½ -inch thick report. The first page, of which I supplied Mr. Watkins a copy, talks about the confidentiality of the assessment of public information. It says that some of the information is available to the public and some is not. Copies of it will be made available to the committee. It identifies a number of the wells within the water system. I found that well #13 which is a stand-by well, is most</i></p>	
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	<p>vulnerable to the following activities not associated with any detected contaminants for above ground storage tanks; artificial recharge projects, storm water retention facilities, transportation quarters, freeways, state highways, wells and water supply. It then says that there were no contaminants detected in the water, however, the source is still considered vulnerable to activities located near the drinking water source.</p> <p>The concern I have at this point is that this information doesn't say that there is a problem and if there is, how to fix it.</p> <p>John Covington – Asked what the date was on the Source Water Assessment.</p> <p>John Watkins – Answered saying, December 2002.</p> <p><u>UNKNOWN MALE</u> – Stated “if you go on line and start looking, you’ll find that there has been discussion about other wells since then.” There are also other wells that were used by other water agencies that are in the area that are no longer being used.</p>	
<p>4. Review/Discussion of Draft Committee Report</p>	<p>John Watkins – I only received one comment from the members about the recommendations. Mr. Cash was unable to meet with me due to circumstances beyond his control. Mr. Covington did send some edits to me to be distribute and have been given to you today. Mr. Covington’s edits are on the page printed in color. On the second document I wrote “edits accepted,” agreeing to the changes Mr. Covington made to the report. The changes can not be voted on at this meeting because there are not enough committee members present.</p> <p>Nancy Hall – Although we can’t vote, we can still discuss the format of the report and to accept any other discussion about it. Where it states that “...<i>the parameters were too narrowly focused</i>” should be bulleted and under that another bullet explaining why the report was too narrowly focused.</p> <p>John Watkins – Speaking to Mr. Aceto and Ms. Hall, I would like to ask that you send me, via e-mail, any of your recommendations. We can’t converse outside of this meeting by e-mail, because it would be done outside of a public meeting, but if you send your ideas to me separately then I believe I would be</p>	

able to combine them into the report and then we can act upon them or adjust them at the next meeting.

Nancy Hall – Reminded the committee that there was a discussion when the committee first formed that when it came time to prepare the report to the Board of Supervisors we would have a “workshop” rather than open panel discussions. There are areas that need to be discussed and we need to ensure that whatever verbiage is used is agreed on by everyone.

John Covington – Agreed. The final report should have clarity to it to ensure that everyone reading it would understand what the committee is trying to say.

Nancy Hall – Requested that the report should be written during the meeting. In this way, the committee would be able to know exactly what will be in the report and re-writes can be done immediately.

John Watkins – Agreed that writing the report during the meeting is a possibility. Will verify that the San Geronio Pass Water Agency will be able to facilitate something like this by having the information on a screen while it’s being drafted. I think we can make plans to do this at the next meeting.

John Covington – Requested clarification that edits to the draft report should continue to be sent to Mr. Watkins.

John Watkins – Confirmed and stated that Ms. Hall and Mr. Covington should send him edits separately and he would combine them. Voting members can not confer with one another and send in a combined edit.

John Watkins – In reference to the footer, suggested that there be an added note that would not be part of the report on the very last page, so that technical members could impart their comments without them actually being part of the report.

John Watkins – In reference to a suggestion that Mr. Covington made under finding #5. He removed the reference about AB-885 in one area and not another. Considering this, bill AB-885 is dead and it is recommended to remove all references to it.

	<p>John Covington – Agreed to remove references to AB-885. Questioning Mr. Watkins asked if the current format of the report will be the actual format when it is given to the Board of Supervisors.</p> <p>John Watkins – The format was chosen strictly as an option. Voting members can use whatever format they like during the drafting period. This format also allowed us to include the number of meetings and presentations. When the report is submitted to the Board of Supervisors there is a specific format that must be used, but that in essence would be a coversheet to the report.</p> <p>John Covington – Would like to see more technical data included in the report.</p> <p>Joe Aceto – Feels that the report should include references by page and paragraph.</p> <p>Nancy Hall – Agrees that when referencing specific data from the Wildermuth Report, that the report to the Board of Supervisors should reference page and paragraph information, to make it easier to find the information. When we state that there are discrepancies, and that the models are exaggerated, we should reference this information.</p> <p>John Watkins – The ability to edit the report in real time will help them to accomplish a lot at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>5. Committee Member Comments</p>	<p>John Watkins – Stated that Mr. Halliwell supplied him with a copy of the 2008 Consumer Confidence Report and said that there was no reflection in it that nitrate levels exceeded the standard. I will include the Consumer Confidence Report on the web site.</p> <p>Nancy Hall – Recalled that Mr. Covington stated that the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health was not “red flagged” about the nitrates.</p> <p>John Watkins – That would have gone through the State Department of Public Health. They would have jurisdiction.</p>	

	<p>Nicki Magee – Stated that she was also familiar with the report of nitrate exposure and had verified the information with civil engineers licensed through Sacramento. Concerned that in listening to discussion that we are forgetting that the Wildermuth report was hypothetical. It stated that if certain conditions existed then such and such could happen. One of the problems with the report is that it does not emphasize enough that it was hypothetical. They did not say that the models used were in fact what was going to happen. The models showed what could happen if certain conditions existed.</p>	
<p>6. Public Comments</p>	<p>Ed Doherty – Was unsure whether he should share information now or when there were more committee members present.</p> <p>John Watkins – Stated that it could be presented now. His comments will be on audio and will also be reflected in the meeting minutes.</p> <p>Ed Doherty - In the letter from the City of Beaumont there is a sentence that states <i>“The council strongly believes that no credible and scientifically based information has been presented to the committee that contradicts the findings that necessitated the prohibition.”</i> I have some comments to this. There was a well located north of Live Oak Orchard that recorded a high nitrate reading but was not included in the sewered area under Measure B. My second concern is that when Ms. Davis from Wildermuth Environmental was asked where she got her facts from for this report, she said she got them from a 1974 EPA study. She was then shown more current information from 1995. She said she knew of the more recent data but chose to use the older information. I have information on a study done by an environmental toxicologist from Washington State University that examines the link between nitrates and blue baby syndrome. I only have two copies of this, but it disputes what Ms. Davis stated in the Wildermuth report.</p> <p>John Watkins – If you can provide me with a copy, I will make it available on the web site.</p>	

UNKNOWN MALE – Has a couple corrections. The first is on page 4 of 6 where it states “...*may not necessary until...*” I believe it should say “...*may not be necessary until...*” On the next page at the bottom it states “*Water source assessment and projection program.*” I believe it should state “*Water source assessment and protection program.*”

Robert Newman – The selective data collection issues of the Wildermuth report that have been previously mentioned need to be expanded to be more representative of the area. I feel that nothing can be decided with this limited data and further studies need to be done. With respect to the report that will be going to the Board of Supervisors, it is extremely important to reference points from the technical information.

Nancy Hall – There were a lot of comments and questions throughout the presentations that were not included in this report. I think we may have to go back and review the minutes so that some of these points of interest are included.

Hal Flanders – It is my thinking that with so much information going into the report, the Board of Supervisors may not read it. I thought the idea was to give them your recommendations. I think there may be too much information.

John Covington – I don’t believe the report is going to be too long, but clarity is a big issue here. We want the Board to be able to read it and understand how we came up with the recommendations.

Hal Flanders – Questioned whether it would be the Board of Supervisors reading the report or their staff.

John Watkins – It will be the members of the Board that will review the items that are submitted to them.

John Covington – How will the report be presented to the Board of Supervisors?

	<p>John Watkins – It is my understanding that the report will be presented to the Chairman of the Board. I don't know whether it will actually show up on the agenda, but I would suspect that it would be an item that they would pull for discussion.</p> <p>Patsy Reeley – I would like to receive a synopsis of that meeting.</p> <p>John Watkins – That would be something that the Chair or the Vice Chair would present to the committee. There would also be copies sent to the different agencies that have an interest in what the committee is doing.</p> <p>Robert Newman – I have a couple of concerns; 1) If the report is going to become voluminous, it might be appropriate to have a brief summary to simplify it in the event that the report itself not be read. 2) The USGS report overlapped with the Wildermuth report and most of us have much more confidence in the USGS report which appears to be unbiased and very scientific. The USGS report has also been reviewed by a number of PhD's. Along those lines, I attempted to receive clarification from Cindy Li from the Regional Water Quality Control Board because she completely endorsed the Wildermuth report. There were inconsistencies between the two reports and areas where they overlapped. Ms. Li's response was that the USGS report had a much greater scope. Her answer did not address the question. Where two different studies collect the same data, it may be analyzed differently, but the data should not be inconsistent between the two.</p> <p><u>UNKNOWN FEMALE</u> – How long will the information from these meetings be available on the web site?</p> <p>John Watkins – This would be a logistical issue. There is no planned deletion date, but it would be dependent on how much information is on the web page and how much space is available to keep the information, especially the audio files that are extremely large. The audio files may not remain as long as the documents. If it appears that information will be deleted, we can make it available on DVD.</p>	
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	<p>John Covington – It would be a good idea to store the information on a DVD and include it with the report.</p>	
<p>7. Next Meeting Date</p>	<p>Nancy Hall – When you received notice from Mr. Cash that he would not be able to attend the meeting today, did he give any possible dates for a future meeting?</p> <p>John Watkins – No. It is on record that the previously scheduled meeting was cancelled at the last minute. That was done at the request of the Chairperson. At that time he spoke with the Vice Chairperson, Luwana Ryan, to see if she wanted to hold the meeting or reschedule and they elected to re-schedule the meeting for today.</p> <p>Nancy Hall – How will the next meeting date be scheduled?</p> <p>John Watkins – We will decide on a date this evening and hope that the other committee members are available to attend.</p> <p>The next meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place at the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency on Wednesday, May 27, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. An alternate date of Monday, June 1, 2009 was also discussed.</p>	