

Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority Board of Directors Special Meeting

February 18, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Matt Turrentine, *Chair*

John Hamon

Bruce Gibson

Hilary Graves, *Vice Chair*

Shandon-San Juan Water District GSA

City of Paso Robles GSA

County of San Luis Obispo

Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District GSA

Staff:

Claire Collins, Legal Counsel

Taylor Blakslee, Interim Executive Director

1. **Call to Order**

Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) Chair Matt Turrentine called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Turrentine.

3. **Roll Call**

Mr. Blakslee called roll (shown above).

4. **Meeting Protocols**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the meeting protocols.

5. **Election of Officers**

Mr. Blakslee reported that the Chair and Vice Chair roles are up for election.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Murray Powell.

MOTION

Director Hamon made a motion to appoint Matt Turrentine as Chair and Hilary Grave as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and passed unanimously.

6. **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Blakslee reported that staff is requesting approval of the December 1, 2025 meeting minutes and the November and December 2025 Financial Reports.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal. Murray Powell.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

MOTION

Director Graves motioned to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and it passed unanimously.

7. Executive Director Report

Mr. Blakslee introduced Department of Water Resources (DWR) funded facilitation support services staff, Lisa Beutler and Holly Stanitsas. He provided an update on the public workshop and stakeholder feedback received.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, George Tracy, Jesse Trace.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

8. Update on Water Year 2025-2026 Annual Report

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the annual report timeline and reported that it must be submitted to the DWR by April 1.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

9. Action Items

a. Direction on Improving Stakeholder Representation at PRAGA

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview the stakeholder representation options and he reviewed the public feedback received during the workshops and feedback forms.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Mark Andreni, Greg Grewal, Murray Powell, Gwen Pelfrey, Jesse Trace, Darcia Stebbens.

Legal Counsel Collins explained that a formal advisory committee is established by Board action and subject to the Brown Act, while an informal advisory group is not. She noted formal committees require agendas, staffing, and additional cost.

Director Graves supported directing the Executive Director to gather public input through informal mechanisms and expressed concern about potential advisory committee costs. She stated de minimis users have opportunities to participate through Board of Supervisors meetings.

Director Hamon supported an informal advisory approach to avoid additional expense and noted participation may increase when financial impacts occur.

Director Gibson supported continued public workshops and enhanced outreach rather than formally establishing a committee. He stated de minimis users are not currently regulated and questioned whether expanding the Board is warranted.

Chair Turrentine expressed support for either a formal advisory committee with financial guardrails or structured public workshops.

MOTION

Director Hamon made a motion to direct the Executive Director to establish mechanisms for regular stakeholder feedback through informal processes, including workshops. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and it passed unanimously.

b. Direction on Draft Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the draft fiscal year 2026-2027 compliance budget and summarized public feedback received. He reported that the staff recommendation is to hold an in-person public workshop in March 2026 to provide a comprehensive budget review with stakeholders prior to the board consider budget adoption in April 2026.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Murray Powell, Ann Myhre, Darcia Stebbens, Mark Andreni.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Director Gibson requested confirmation that dry well mitigation funding and workshop costs are reflected in the budget.

There was board consensus to proceed with the staff recommendation.

c. Approval of a Funding Mechanism for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the options for funding mechanism, Proposition 26 and Proposition 218. He summarized stakeholder feedback received during workshops and the feedback forms. Staff recommended proceeding with Prop 26 due to timing requirements.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Jerry Reaugh, Murray Powell, Gwen Pelfrey, Darcia Stebbens.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Director Gibson supported pursuing a Prop 26 process. He also asked legal counsel whether PRAGA has authority to structure the charge as a volumetric fee and whether that approach could be evaluated and supported through the fee study under Prop 26. He expressed preference for a volumetric structure and interest in tax roll collection.

Legal Counsel Collins responded that under Prop 26, charges must have a reasonable basis and that both volumetric and other structures could be evaluated through the fee study. She clarified that Water Code Section 10730 prohibits charging de minimis users unless the GSA has formally regulated them, which has not occurred, and therefore de minimis users cannot be included in a Prop 26 charge at this time.

Director Hamon supported moving forward with Prop 26 and requested additional details on funding mechanism structure.

Director Graves supported Prop 26 and requested fee study comparisons between ET-based volumetric and per-parcel approaches. She requested further analysis regarding de minimis regulation in other basins.

Chair Turrentine stated his preference was Prop 218 but acknowledged consensus for Prop 26 and agreed to support it.

MOTION

Director Hamon motioned to direct staff to proceed with the Prop 26 funding mechanism process for Fiscal Year 2026–2027. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and it passed unanimously.

AYES: Gibson, Graves, Hamon, Turrentine

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSE: None

d. Approval of a Contract with Solterra Strategies for Outreach and Communication Services for an Amount Not to Exceed of \$20,000

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the contract with Solterra Strategies to assist in stakeholder communication regarding a funding mechanism. He added that the proposal is for an amount not to exceed \$20,000, which is within the current fiscal year 2025-2026 outreach budget.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Murray Powell, Greg Grewal, Darcia Stebbens, Gwen Pelfrey.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Director Graves supported enhanced outreach given repeated public concerns about communication.

Director Hamon opposed the contract, stating limited remaining fiscal year time and preference to rely on existing staff support.

MOTION

Director Graves motioned to approve the contract with Solterra Strategies for Outreach and Communication Services for an Amount Not to Exceed of \$20,000. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson. The motioned passed with 75%.

AYES: Gibson, Graves, Turrentine

NOES: Hamon

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSE: None

e. Direction on SLO County Request to Administer the Fallowed Land Registry Program

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of San Luis Obispo County's request for support on the fallowed land registry program.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Jerry Reaugh, Murray Powell.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Chair Turrentine expressed support and appreciation for the County's actions on the fallowed land registry.

MOTION

Director Hamon motioned to direct staff to provide a statement of support to the County for administration of the fallowed land registry program. The motion was seconded by Director Graves. The motion passed unanimously.

f. Authorize Executive Director to Execute Land IQ Contract Subject to General Counsel's Approval

Mr. Blakslee provided a summary of the Land IQ Scope and Agreement that was included for board consideration. He noted that the scope includes approximately \$33,000 that was for ET support for Prop 218. The remaining \$12,00 will be for as-needed services.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Darcia Stebbens.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

MOTION

Director Gibson made a motion to approve the Land IQ contract and scope.

The motion was seconded by Director Graves and passed unanimously.

g. Update on Basin Outreach Strategy

Mr. Blakslee briefly introduced Lisa Beutler and Holly Stanitsas from Stantec, who provide facilitation support services.

Lisa Beutler, Stantec, provided an overview of the approved scope for PRAGA.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Dale Augstine, Murray Powell, Greg Grewal, Ann Myhre.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

The board thanked the facilitators for their time and look forward to the upcoming engagement.

10. Public Comments – Items not on the Agenda

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Dale Austine, Murray Powell.

11. Director Comments / Future Agenda

12. Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Blakslee reported that scheduled meeting is on March 25, 2026, and the location will be confirmed.

Adjourn at 11:53 a.m.

Drafted by: Grace Bianchi, Hallmark Group