

# ITEM 3 - Meeting Minutes

## TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS – REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.

BCAG Board Room, 326 Huss Drive, Chico, CA

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President McGowan called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 2. ROLL CALL

**Present:** Rich McGowan (President), Steve Koehnen (Vice President), Andrew Mendonca, Bill Chance, Craig Knight, Brian Mori, Todd Turley  
**Absent:** Rayme Antonowich (Secretary), Jim Paiva  
**Staff:** Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager; Joe Hughes, General Counsel (via Zoom)  
**Public:** Kamie Loeser (Butte County, Director of Water and Resource Conservation), Dillon McGregor (Vina/Wyandotte Creek GSA Program Manager), Joanne Kidd (League of Women Voters), Susan Schraeder

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

### 4. CONSENT AND ACTION ITEMS

**Approval of December Meeting Minutes.** President McGowan noted that Director Brian Mori was inadvertently omitted from the attendance in the December minutes. The GM confirmed the correction would be made.

**Motion:** Director Turley moved to approve the December minutes as corrected. Director Chance seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

**General Counsel Invoice.** The board reviewed an invoice from General Counsel Joe Hughes in the amount of \$3,040.50.

**Motion:** Director Chance moved to approve payment. Director Knight seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

**General Manager Invoice.** The board reviewed an invoice from General Manager Tovey Giezentanner in the amount of \$7,500.00.

**Motion:** Director Turley moved to approve payment. Director Koehnen seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

President McGowan requested that the GM deliver the finalized mission statement to the board.

### 5. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT AND UPDATES (Information Only)

#### ***2026 Election Update.***

The GM provided a brief update on the 2026 district election, reminding the board that the election process will begin in July 2026 under the Uniform District Election Law. An election information page has

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been added to the TWD website, including an election calendar, the resolution establishing the divisions, the approved district map, and an interactive Google Map allowing landowners to identify their division.

Discussion followed regarding how directors are assigned to divisions. General Counsel Hughes confirmed that the district should remain neutral and not assign directors to specific divisions. Rather, each individual director determines which division they will run in based on their land ownership. The GM noted he is available to answer individual questions from directors about division boundaries.

A more detailed election schedule and board update is planned for April or May 2026.

### ***League of Women Voters Forum.***

The GM reported that he participated in a panel discussion at a League of Women Voters forum on January 10, 2026. Approximately 75–100 people attended. The panel included Dr. Todd Green (Chico State, geology), Christina Buck (Butte County, Assistant Director), Becky Fairbanks (SGMA grant administrator), and Jim Brobeck (Aqua Alliance). The GM presented an overview of TWD's formation history, mission, guardrails, and current activities, including water year data and recharge efforts. The tone of the discussion was reported as constructive. Kamie Loeser and Dillon McGregor confirmed it was a well-attended and productive event.

Director Turley asked the GM to summarize Mr. Brobeck's comments. The GM noted that the majority of Brobeck's comments focused on groundwater substitution transfers on the west side of the Sacramento River and concerns about growth-inducing impacts. Brobeck expressed skepticism about the long-term value of shallow recharge.

### ***Recharge Pilot Update.***

The GM shared a photo and update on a recharge pilot project on property near the confluence of Rock Creek and Keefer Slough. Trenches dug between orchard rows captured stormwater during the Christmas and New Year's storms and have produced good recharge values, even in soil types that are not ideal. Sensors are monitoring percolation rates. Additional data will be shared as available.

### ***Water Year and Basin Conditions.***

The GM presented a water year type index chart going back to 1971 and discussed historical dry and wet periods in the Vina Subbasin. Discussion with Kamie Loeser and the board highlighted that groundwater levels in the basin fluctuate closely with precipitation patterns, that current conditions are above historic lows following several wet years, and that the subbasin is not in crisis but must continue planning for future drought cycles. President McGowan shared field observations indicating well levels in his area are near full capacity after an average pumping year with only 11 inches of rain, suggesting significant recharge from the eastern foothills.

Discussion touched on the importance of targeting recharge projects where the water is most needed, particularly near Butte Creek and Rock Creek corridors, and the role of groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and stream depletion as constraining factors in project siting. Director Chance noted that cropping patterns in the district are likely at maximum permanent plantings, and Kamie Loeser agreed, observing that this likely represents peak groundwater demand.

### ***Office Space Update.***

Director Chance reported on lease negotiations for approximately 1,225 square feet of office space at the Capital Building in the Independence Circle area. Key points:

- Base rent of \$1.00 per square foot was agreed upon, which Director Chance described as favorable in the current market.
- The Letter of Intent specified a three-year term with rent fixed, plus a three-year extension option with 3% annual increases. The landlord's draft lease applied 3% annual increases from the start rather than holding flat for the initial term. Director Chance flagged this discrepancy but noted the 3% escalation is within market norms.

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- The landlord declined to accept responsibility for ADA compliance, instead assigning it to the tenant. Director Chance stated this is a deal-breaker in his view, as a tenant on a three-year office lease should not assume that liability. The board expressed agreement.
- The space is first-floor with ramp access. It includes an entry area, two offices, a conference room, kitchen pass-through, storage, and shared restroom access.

Board consensus was to push back on the ADA provision and accept the 3% annual escalation. The lease will come back for formal board action at the February meeting.

The GM noted for the record that Director Chance's daughter holds a real estate license under his firm, and that Director Chance's firm may be entitled to a leasing fee. General Counsel Hughes acknowledged he had seen this in the lease documents. Director Chance offered to waive any fee if the board considered it a conflict.

### ***Ad Hoc Committee Updates.***

**Finance Ad Hoc.** Met January 16 to review the remaining FY 2025–26 budget and discuss assumptions for the FY 2026–27 budget. The discussion informed the closed session items. No follow-up meeting has been scheduled yet.

**Surface Water Ad Hoc.** A 185-page feasibility analysis is being revised and expected by the end of January. The ad hoc will review the document and work toward discussions with the Vina GSA, Butte County, PID, and Western Canal regarding the surface water opportunity. Key topics include roles and governance, interest in pursuing Proposition 4 funding for shovel-ready projects, and development of a term sheet with partners. Next meeting: February 11.

**Recharge Ad Hoc.** A shorter feasibility document (5–10 pages) is expected by February 11. The ad hoc will review it and address governance questions around projects that may be located east of Highway 99 (outside TWD boundaries but within the Vina Subbasin). Next meeting: February 11.

Kamie Loeser provided context on the strategic framework, describing the four pillars of sustainability: surface water importation, recharge, demand reduction, and — if the first three are insufficient — regulatory management actions. She emphasized that TWD and the Vina Subbasin are currently in a favorable position but should be preparing projects now to be competitive for Proposition 4 and other state funding when it becomes available. She noted approximately \$385 million in Prop 4 funding is designated for SGMA implementation alone, with additional funding available through other state agencies.

### ***Investment Policy.***

The GM reported that General Counsel Hughes is drafting an investment policy for the Raymond James account. A draft will be presented for board review and approval at the February meeting.

### ***Meeting Time.***

Director Turley requested a change to the board meeting start time due to a standing conflict. Directors present indicated no objection. The GM will confirm with the absent directors and circulate an updated schedule.

## **6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No additional comments or agenda requests were made.

## **7. CLOSED SESSION**

The board adjourned to closed session to discuss the General Manager position and the General Counsel transition. No reportable action was taken.

## **8. MEETING ADJOURNED**

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### Mission Statement

*(Adopted November 19, 2025)*

The Tuscan Water District (TWD) is a locally governed California Water District dedicated to ensuring the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources within the Vina and Butte Subbasins. TWD's mission is to:

- Protect and enhance the beneficial use of groundwater for all landowners by implementing projects and management actions consistent with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA);
- Represent and advocate for groundwater-dependent landowners in coordination with Butte County, the Vina, Butte, and Rock Creek Reclamation District GSAs, and other public agencies;
- Develop, fund, and operate surface-water supply, recharge, and conservation programs that improve basin conditions and preserve the region's agricultural and rural economy; and
- Defend local groundwater rights while pursuing cooperative, science-based solutions that sustain the Tuscan Aquifer for future generations.

### Supporting Context

Statutory Basis: California Water Code §§ 34000 et seq.; LAFCo Certificate of Compliance (02/2024).

Core Functions: Evaluate, fund, implement, and oversee projects to achieve groundwater sustainability; serve as the implementing and funding partner to the GSAs.

Special Benefits Identified in the Engineer's Report: Local control, representation, funding advocacy, and protection of groundwater rights.