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TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT Board Meeting Minutes – May 14, 2026

DATE:	Thursday, May 14, 2026
TIME:	9:00 a.m.
LOCATION:	BCAG Board Room, 326 Huss Drive, Chico, California 95928
Directors Present:	President Rich McGowan, Vice President Steve Koehnen, Secretary Rayme Antonowich, Treasurer Andrew Mendonca, Director Bill Chance, Director Brian Mori, Director Paiva, Director Todd Turley
Directors Absent:	Director Craig Knight
Staff Present:	Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager. Counsel Hughes was absent (conference).
Others Present:	Various members of the public were in attendance.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President McGowan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Item introduced. There was no board or public comment.

Action: Director Chance moved to approve the April 15 minutes; Director Koehnen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Finances and Payment of Bills

Invoices presented: General Manager, \$14,583.00; Legal Counsel (Hughes), \$970.00; and Provost & Pritchard, \$4,794.82 (contract near completion for this scope). No public comment was received.

Action: Director Mori moved to approve payment of the three invoices as presented; Director Mendonca seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. South Vina Extension Water Supply Phase One Scoping and Feasibility

GM Giezentanner requested authorization to engage consultants to accelerate the surface water feasibility work completed under the Vina GSA's \$5.5 million SGMA implementation grant, focusing on the two principal obstacles that work identified — the permitting timeline and capital and water costs — and producing a project description to support a Vina GSA consistency determination and Proposition 4 grant positioning. The request was approximately \$20,000 from the technical reserve.

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Discussion confirmed the work advances the “Option B” concept: approximately 7,000 acre-feet of excess Western Canal water serving roughly 2,000–3,000 acres of rice ground at the south end of the District, with a canal levee crossing as the principal permitting issue. Directors stressed economic viability — delivered water at or below pumping costs, with one-time capital costs paid through grants. The GM characterized the project as conjunctive use directly benefiting the southern monitoring polygon showing storage loss, and noted that TWD is the implementing agency without which the project is unlikely to advance. Following Board discussion, GM Giezentanner acknowledged input from Directory Turley and indicated that staff will seek Board direction before soliciting proposals on similar items going forward.

In public comment, Jim Graydon (Vina GSA Board) called the project promising (~7,500 acre-feet against an estimated 20,000 acre-foot-per-year basin deficit) but urged side-by-side comparison of basin projects and raised Table A pricing and water rights/ownership questions; these will be addressed in the GSA’s funded legal implications report and through CEQA.

Action: Director Chance moved to select Water and Land Solutions and Provost & Pritchard for the south scoping and feasibility engagement and authorize a not-to-exceed contract of \$19,950; Director Paiva seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Work runs through July, with a Board presentation in August and a consistency determination sought in July or August.

6. SWEEP Grant Application / Resolution Regarding Grant Funding

GM Giezentanner requested approval of a resolution authorizing submission of a concept proposal to CDFA on May 15, 2026, for a \$4 million SWEEP block grant serving Butte, Yuba, and Sutter Counties; there is no cost to submit, and Sutter RCD, AGUBC, and the Butte County Farm Bureau will participate or support. Approximately \$3 million would fund on-farm water-efficiency grants of up to \$200,000 per farm. Because Proposition 4 bars 501(c)(6) organizations as block grant recipients, TWD would be lead recipient with Farm Bureau administrative support; a full proposal, if invited, returns to the Board. Directors emphasized that water savings be quantified and credited to the subbasin. Director Mendonca requested a conflict-of-interest review for Board members potentially eligible for program benefits.

Action: Director Mori moved to accept the resolution as stated; Director Antonowich seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Resolution No. 2026-05-14.

7. County Assessment Process

GM Giezentanner reported the Auditor-Controller sent the initial assessment packet May 11; staff will respond. A June/July resolution will present full details — the 3,137-parcel list and the \$4.19 assessment applied to acreage — with materials complete by August 10 and County approval by September for the tax rolls. Informational only.

Action Item: GM to provide a June/July status summary of the prior assessment (prepayments, collections, delinquencies).

8. County Election Process Update

Staff provided a draft schedule. President McGowan confirmed the County-approved nine-district divisional map is in effect and will govern the new Board positions. Election cycles will be discussed next meeting. Informational only.

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9. Vina GSA Periodic Evaluation and Regulatory Matters

- **Process and Timeline.** GSAs must evaluate their GSPs every five years, with major changes requiring a plan amendment. County attention is shifting from the Wyandotte to the Vina Subbasin, and several significant technical memoranda have been released. Key issues include the monitoring network (currently 13 polygons, possibly expanding), representative monitoring wells, and protecting beneficial uses beyond domestic wells. The heaviest work runs through August/September; final documents compile in October; GSA approval is expected November–December, and submittal will happen in January 2027. Christina Buck noted converging data-gap, GDE, and interconnected surface water work frames the policy question of whether the plan needs adjustment; about two topics go to each joint Vina/Rock Creek board meeting June through August, with a draft by early fall — before the harvest constraints President McGowan raised.
- **Regulatory Ad Hoc Committee.** Director Turley viewed AGUBC as the proper advocacy vehicle, with the District focused on project implementation; Director Mori cited the District’s fiduciary duty to landowners and urged strategic engagement, potentially including counterpoint studies or legal options. The Board formed a Regulatory Ad Hoc Committee with a term ending no later than January 2027, with President McGowan and Director Mendonca volunteering.
- **Domestic Well Mitigation.** On April 22, 2026, the Vina GSA Stakeholder Advisory Committee recommended the plan evaluation describe program development during 2027–2032 and a \$50,000 GSA set-aside in FY 2026-27; the GSA Board on May 13, 2026, approved SHAC’s recommendation. Director Mori noted the funds come from the Part 2 fee (agriculture). The GM presented Vina Subbasin dry-well data showing modest numbers (30-35) despite experiencing two significant drought periods (2012-15 and 2020-22), contrasted with hundreds of dry wells over the most recent drought period (2020-2022) in neighboring counties. Program development is expected to begin in 2027 through a 12-to-18-month public process; President McGowan stressed the District must have input, particularly if it bears funding responsibility.
- **Other Topics.** A GSA staff land-subsidence “straw man,” with a detailed AGUBC response, goes to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee on May 27, 2026, and the GSA Board on June 10, 2026. The GDE technical memorandum identified 6 scenarios of polygons as likely groundwater dependent; AGUBC recommended treating the recommendations as policy options and requiring connection in both seasons. In June, we’ll discuss land subsidence and interconnected surface water. In July, we’ll discuss groundwater levels, sustainable yield, storage and the groundwater monitoring network, including how groundwater levels are related to groundwater dependent ecosystems.

10. General Manager Updates

- **Legal Implications Webinar.** Valerie Kincaid presented a public webinar on Vina GSA legal implications (materials on the [Vina GSA website](#) and [TWD website](#)), covering four GSA pathways — project management, a project agreement with an implementer such as TWD, a broader ordinance, or a full allocation system — and seven terms any agreement or ordinance must address.

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- **Well Permit Ordinance.** The County is updating the 2016 ordinance; through President McGowan's and Vice President Koehnen's efforts, agricultural representatives were added at the technical team and well advisory group levels.
- **Data Tools.** The GM demonstrated Vina GSA and AGUBC interactive maps and a TWD/AGUBC tool comparing RMS well hydrographs and data quality relevant to minimum thresholds and measurable objectives; materials will be posted to the TWD website.
- **Upcoming Topics.** Plan evaluation and amendment; scoping/feasibility results; Geosyntec's groundwater recharge evaluation, including Durham Mutual irrigation main conditions; the Caltrans highway drainage project; the water transfer policy (no progress to report); and a Joel Kimmelshue demand reduction presentation.

Board Member Announcements

None.

Closed Session and Adjournment

The Board met in closed session. There was no reportable action.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.