

Item 3

TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT Board Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2026

DATE: Wednesday, June 17, 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 Craig Knight, Director Brian Mori, Director Jim Paiva, Director Todd Turley.
Directors Absent: None.
Staff Present: Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager; Joe Hughes, General Counsel (participating remotely).
Others Present: Joe Turner (Geosyntec), Christina Buck (Butte County Water and Resource Conservation), and 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. Audience introductions followed.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received at the opening of the meeting.

3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

President McGowan presented the May 14, 2026 minutes, noting the draft had been corrected to identify Director Koehnen as Vice President. Director Mendonca requested an update on the SWEEP grant conflict-of-interest review raised at the prior meeting; the GM responded that he will address it if the application advances past the concept phase.

Action: Director Mori moved to approve the May 14, 2026 minutes; seconded by Director Antonowich. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Finances and Payment of Bills

One invoice was presented: the General Manager's monthly invoice. No Board or public comment was received.

Action: Director Antonowich moved to approve payment of the invoice as presented; Director Paiva seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Item 3

6. County Election Process Update (Taken Out of Order)

The Board heard this item ahead of Item 5 to accommodate the morning's schedule. President McGowan noted the election timing had been misstated previously, and General Counsel Hughes clarified the schedule: the sitting directors were elected to four-year terms (December 2023) that run through 2027, so no district election is required in 2026. All nine divisions will stand for election in November 2027, when the staggering of terms will be completed — consistent with prior Board discussion, odd-numbered divisions would receive four-year terms and even-numbered divisions two-year terms in that first cycle, with all terms four years thereafter so that elections occur every two years. Informational only; no action was taken.

5. Geosyntec Groundwater Recharge Feasibility Study — Final Results

Joe Turner, principal hydrogeologist with Geosyntec and project manager for the groundwater recharge feasibility study funded through the Vina GSA's SGMA implementation grant, presented final results. A public workshop was held June 15, and the display boards were available at the meeting. The final report is due June 30.

Scope and Methods. The team inventoried candidate sites with cooperating landowners, conducted site visits, performed field investigations at eight sites, and ran pilot studies. Methods included tTEM geophysics (a ground-based counterpart to DWR's airborne AEM survey, covering roughly 400 acres per day on 10–15-foot line spacing), cone penetration testing, soil borings with permeability testing, monitoring and stilling wells, and water quality sampling. A separate condition assessment of the Durham Mutual Water Company irrigation main is appended to the report.

Key Findings. Perched groundwater systems — shallow water at roughly 4–10 feet held up on clay layers, with regional groundwater near 50 feet — were identified at several sites and shaped site screening; recharge remains feasible in the subbasin where hydrogeology allows. A 140-foot reverse tile drain set at 12 feet in an orchard along Comanche Creek infiltrated approximately 0.3 acre-feet per day (10–14 feet per day), performing equally well with clean water and floodwater; a surface basin at the same site infiltrated 2–3 feet per day, well above the one-foot-per-day SAGBI “excellent” benchmark. Pilot floodwater diversions were conducted under Water Code section 1242.1 without a water right permit, giving the project team direct experience with its notification and reporting requirements. Sediment management will be necessary for creek diversions; groundwater mounding was monitored and dissipated as expected.

Proposed Projects. (1) Three gravity-flow basin complexes along Keefer Slough and Rock Creek, with sediment forebays and returns to the creeks, pairing recharge with flood attenuation near the Highway 99 corridor; (2) a pumped recharge complex at the Comanche Creek pilot site (an aging walnut orchard that may not be replanted), requiring a 10,000–15,000 GPM pump, rehabilitation of an existing diversion, and enhanced monitoring given a VOC plume in the vicinity (recharge water sits near 25 feet, well above the plume near 100 feet); and (3) repairs to the Durham Mutual pipeline, which video assessment found largely serviceable with localized repairs — restoring surface water deliveries, reducing groundwater pumping, and potentially conveying winter water to future recharge sites under Durham Mutual's winter rights (siphons under Butte Creek could not be inspected). Land acquisition is the largest cost driver; projects can be phased, and ecological features such as pollinator and bird habitat would strengthen grant competitiveness.

Item 3

Discussion. Directors' questions addressed seasonal infiltration and winter testing, test durations (24-hour and two-day floodwater events at roughly 1,000 GPM), and the limits of flood-only diversion compared with temporary 180-day or five-year permits, which entail CEQA. Christina Buck confirmed M&T Ranch and Llano Seco were aware of the concepts and noted this study completes the feasibility work funded under the GSA's SGMA implementation grant. Director Antonowich provided history on the Durham Mutual system, noting its winter water rights could support recharge in that area. In response to public questions, Mr. Turner discussed adding ecological enhancements to lower-yield basins. No formal action was taken.

7. Vina GSA Periodic Evaluation Update

GM Giezentanner reviewed recent Vina GSA plan evaluation actions, presenting GSA staff materials.

- **Domestic Well Mitigation.** As approved by the GSA Board in May, the plan evaluation will state that program development begins in 2027 supported by an approximately \$50,000 GSA budget set-aside.
- **Land Subsidence.** On June 10, 2026, the GSA Board adopted the SHAC-recommended draft amendment language. The County has tracked subsidence since the late 1990s using groundwater levels as a proxy; InSAR data for 2020–2025 — a period including historic-low groundwater levels — show no subsidence and some uplift. The amendment moves toward InSAR as the primary measure while retaining groundwater levels as an additional line of evidence, with causation language tied to physical impacts on infrastructure. AGUBC provided detailed comments through the public process and supports the outcome. Director Mori asked how InSAR distinguishes elastic from inelastic subsidence; the question was referred to County technical staff.
- **Interconnected Surface Water.** Analyses over the past five years — comparing LiDAR-derived stream elevations with groundwater levels from the monitoring network — show the Sacramento River is primarily connected, other streams are seasonally connected, and some are ephemeral. Because DWR has not issued guidance on the central remaining question of depletion volumes, the SHAC recommended and the GSA Board adopted a “show progress, proceed carefully” approach: document the work completed, await guidance, and make no premature changes to minimum thresholds or the monitoring network. AGUBC supported the outcome. Responding to Director Turley on timing, Christina Buck noted the Sacramento River is a regional feature; the draft regional work plan contemplates roughly five years of data collection, monitoring, and modeling, with sustainable management criteria addressed in the back half of that period.
- **Groundwater Levels — Next Topic.** A staff memorandum and “straw man” on groundwater levels, including the monitoring network and minimum thresholds, was expected within days, for initial discussion at the June 24 SHAC meeting and the July 8 GSA Board meeting, with the minimum-threshold discussion continuing at the July and August SHAC meetings. Water quality and projects/management actions follow later in the process.
- **Plan Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee.** The Board expanded the plan evaluation ad hoc committee: Directors Turley, Antonowich, Mendonca, and President McGowan, with

Item 3

Director Mori also volunteering. The ad hoc meets the following week, ahead of the SHAC meeting.

8. General Manager Updates

8A. Well and Septic Ordinance Updates

Butte County Environmental Health will hold a public meeting on July 22, and stakeholder surveys are due August 21; the GM will return in July with a recommended approach to the survey, and Environmental Health will be the featured presentation at an upcoming Board meeting. Through President McGowan's and Vice President Koehnen's efforts, agricultural representation is being added to the County's Water Well Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Committee; the GM will serve on the TAC on behalf of the District.

- **SWEEP Grant.** The concept proposal was submitted to CDFA on May 15; no feedback has been received. An update is expected by the July meeting.
- **Thriving Farmland Summit.** Chico State's Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems (director Cynthia Daley) will host a farmland summit at the University Farm on July 1, with keynotes by the California Secretary for Natural Resources and the Secretary of Food and Agriculture.
- **Upcoming Meetings.** Butte County Water Commission (later that day); Vina GSA SHAC, June 24 at 9:00 a.m.; Vina GSA Board, July 8. Both GSA meetings will take up groundwater levels.
- **Upcoming Topics.** The Environmental Health ordinance presentation; a full assessment status review requested by President McGowan (December and April assessments — prepayments, collections, and outstanding balances); budget review; continued office space pursuit (Director Chance); and a South Vina extension progress update. Also ahead: continued Caltrans discussions on Highway 99/Keefer Slough drainage; a Joel Kimmelshue demand reduction presentation; and the water transfer facilitation policy, deferred pending the general counsel transition.

Board Member Announcements

Director Mendonca noted the Vina GSA has announced an opening for the alternate domestic well representative and encouraged referrals of qualified candidates.

Closed Session and Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:35 a.m.