

**Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
February 4th, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President McCormick called to order the February 4, 2025, Board of Directors meeting of the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District at 10:39 a.m. at The Hyatt, Topeka, KS.

Directors Present in Person

Chad McCormick, President, Industrial Representative

Mike O'Brate, Treasurer, Finney County Representative

Reid Shrauner, Morton County Representative

Andy Moser, Stevens County Representative

Directors Present by Phone or Zoom

Clay Scott, Grant County Representative

Randy Hayzlett, Vice-President, Surface Water Representative

Bret Rooney, Haskell County Representative

Kent Dunn, Seward County Representative

Directors Absent with Notice

Zachary Gale, Hamilton County Representative

Carl Clawson, Meade County Representative

Jacob Harshberger, Ford County Representative

Fred Jones, Municipal Representative

Kyle Maddux, Kearny County Representative

Seth Nelson, Stanton County Representative

Garrett Love, Secretary, Gray County Representative

District Staff Present

Jason Norquest, Assistant Manager

Patty Stapleton, Office Administrator

Chris Law, Director, Field Services

Brandi Sneath, Office Assistant

Trevor Ahring, Engineer

Others in Attendance via Zoom or in Person

Mike Meyer, Water Commissioner, Division of Water Resources, Garden City, KS

Sean Miller, Capital Strategies

Keadron Pearson, Kansas Water Office

Brownie Wilson, KGS

Deborah Kohl, Facilitator, KSU, Community Vitality State Specialist

Nick Schneider, KGS, Water Quality Coordinator

Brownie Wilson, KGS

Lane Letourneau, KDA, Water Appropriations Program Manager

Vijay Ramasamy, Special Advisor for Water for Kansas Governor Laura Kelly

Mark Callendar, GMD1 Board President & Lane County Representative

Tallee Davis, GMD1, Water Resource Specialist

Katie Durham, GMD1, Manager

Jonathan Aguilar, K-State

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Consent Agenda

The following items were submitted for approval as part of the consent agenda:

- Approve Agenda for February 4, 2025
- Approve Minutes of Wednesday, January 8, 2025, regular monthly board meeting

Mike O'Brate moved to approve the revised consent agenda. Reid Shrauner seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Discussion regarding items removed from consent agenda: IF ANY

- Approve General Financial Report for January 2025
- Approve Western Water Conservation Projects, Financial Report for January 2025

Bank statements were unavailable for review before this meeting. Both financials will be presented at the regular March meeting.

Correspondence / Recognition / Formal Comment to the Board of Directors

There were none presented.

President's Report

Agency Reports

DWR

Lane Letourneau talked about being fortunate in getting and keeping staff. At the start of 2025, the backlog number dropped from 1,006 to 770. They are running MYFA amendments and trying to avoid past average use, which creates the thinking of use it or lose it. Senator Francisco has an amendment to the MYFA Report, wanting it every four years.

Mike Meyer reported that the Water Use Reports in Southwest Kansas are halfway done being submitted. About 1,700 remain to be reported, which is a little behind schedule from last year.

KSU

Jonathan Aguilar with K-State updated the group on programs that opened up in Garden City.

Legislative Update, Sean Miller, Capital Strategies

Sean Miller with Capital Strategies stated that a lot of Ag business is happening this week at the State House. This year, the legislative session has changed to a 90-day hard calendar, resulting in about 70 to 75 actual legislative days, down from the usual five-month period from January to early June. This adjustment has frustrated legislators accustomed to a three-day workweek, as they will now work on Fridays. This week, we realized we were behind in the budget process. As a result, we will now hold two meetings daily: one from 9:00 to 11:00 AM, followed by a break, and then a second meeting at 5:00 PM until the agenda is completed. This type of schedule shift often occurs during significant political turnover, such as during presidential election years. The first thing we do is align ourselves with or against the National Agenda. This year, much of our legislative focus will concentrate on property taxes, particularly this new budget process and our future direction. We are in a somewhat different financial situation; we currently have about \$3 billion in the bank, as opposed to \$50.00 from a few years ago. Overall, we are in a good financial position, but there seems to be a more cautious approach to spending this year than in the past. Current revenues were about one and a half percent higher than the January revenue estimates, indicating we are in good financial shape.

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They are fiscally responsible as they look into the future, to the 2029, 2030, and 2031 figures, trying to determine where we will stand and what kind of property tax cuts can be implemented. The Governor prioritized water funding in her State of the State address, and Representative Minnix introduced a bill related to water funding as well. Some conservation funding bills bleed over into the water world. There are about four or five out there moving at different speeds, and at the end of the day, if there is any more water funding, we will have to figure out a way to combine them. Another topic the Governor addressed in her State of the State address is agency reorganization. This topic was abruptly discussed under Representative Highland a couple of years ago. We are currently looking at 14 different agencies that need to be consolidated. Every time a decision is made to include or exclude certain agencies; it tends to sway opinions. We are currently in the first year of a two-year biennium. Another bill we heard through the grapevine was a change in voting in the groundwater districts. It is an Irrigation District Bill, not a Groundwater Management District bill. This shows that a lot of education needs to be done regarding different agencies. Sean talked about the Pump Installation Contractor Bill, which discusses how well drillers must be licensed to drill wells. Another Bill that is up for discussion is House Bill 2111. This Bill would increase the CREP acreage cap from 40,000 to 60,000 acres. Lastly, Sean took the opportunity to discuss the importance of talking to your legislators and reaching out to the 160 other legislators who are not in your area. Legislators in Johnson County don't see the struggles and challenges in Western Kansas. Educating all the legislators allows for more communication and the ability to get things done legislatively.

Grant Proposal with Ducks Unlimited & Upper Ark Watershed Group, River Corridor

The full proposal will be presented next month.

Aquifer Water quality assessment for Kansas KGS. 1:01

Nick Schneider, with KGS, spoke to the group about starting up a water quality sampling network. KGS would like GMD3 to assist them in promoting the program and encouraging people in the district to contact them for more information.

RCCP Program

The RCCP Program is about 91% ready to begin. More to come.

2024 Audit Results

The audit by Lewis, Hooper, and Dick has been completed. The audit ended with a good report with no major infractions.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee Reports

- Draft February Board Meeting Packet: Reviewed
- Executive Director Search / Headhunter and other Leads
 - There are a handful of candidates the committee is looking at.
- Legislation
 - The committee reviewed the following Senate and House Bills:
 - SB58 MYFA
 - SB65 Voting in Irrigation Districts
 - HB2063 State Dollars for Conservation
 - HB2095 Pump Installation Licenses
- Upcoming Calendar Events

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Old Business

There was no old business to take off the table.

New Business

There was no new business to bring to the table.

Interim Executive Director Report

Jason Norquest stated there was a great turnout to deliver reminders at the Capital on Monday. The annual reports from the GMDs are this week. GMD 1, 2, and 5 were this morning, and GMD 3 and 4 will be on Thursday at 9:00 a.m.

Western Water Conservation Projects

There were no announcements for the Western Water Conservation Projects.

Board Member Report

There were no Board Member announcements.

Strategic Planning Discussion

Strategic Planning discussions and breakout sessions will be held at the annual meeting, which is March 12 in Cimarron, KS. Jason and Trevor will contact Deborah to set up some breakout sessions.

Jason alerted the directors to be ready for several committee meetings.

Andy moved to adjourn the meeting. Reid Shrauner seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Garrett Love
GMD3 Board Secretary