

**MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 25, 2025
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SSJID BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors of the South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID) met in person in regular session in the District Boardroom at 9:00 a.m., with public access provided via the online Zoom meeting platform. President Spyksma called the meeting to order and led the flag salute. Upon roll call the following members were noted present:

DIRECTORS: HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN WESTSTEYN
ABSENT: NONE

Also present were General Manager Peter Rietkerk, General Counsel Mia Brown, Engineering Department Manager Forrest Killingsworth, and Clerk of the Board Danielle Barney.

On behalf of SSJID, President Spyksma wished Director Holbrook a happy birthday.

Public Comment

Mr. Peter Rietkerk, SSJID General Manager, stated that nineteen (19) written public comments were submitted to Clerk of the Board Danielle Barney and electronically forwarded to the Directors. In addition, hard copies of the public comment packet were printed and distributed to the Board, were available to the public at the board meeting, and could also be provided upon request.

Ms. Sheila Lawton, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1245 (IBEW or Union), addressed the Board and read aloud an IBEW letter to the SSJID Board of Directors, regarding a “Response to District’s Proposal and Continued Negotiations” of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SSJID and the Union. She noted the Bargaining Committee’s recent rejection of the 4-year package proposed by the District due to the presented changes in employee compensation and benefits, and acknowledged the value of the District’s employees, and the employees’ commitment to the District and its customers. Ms. Lawton concluded, requested the Board’s reconsideration of the proposed employee package, and expressed desire toward a mutually beneficial resolution for the employees, the District, and its customers.

A public inquiry, from Zoom screen name “Andy DuFresne” asked why the submitted public comments were not being read aloud. SSJID General Counsel Mia Brown responded that written public comments received for District public meetings are not read aloud in accordance with the District’s routine meeting practices. She added that the written comments were distributed to the Board of Directors in advance of today’s meeting, are part of the administrative and public record, and that copies were available at the meeting for any interested members of the public.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Checks in the amount of \$198,906.74; Accounts Payable Wires in the amount of \$2,410,577.96; and Payroll dated March 7, 2025 in the amount of \$338,583.26, March 7, 2025 in the amount of \$38,964.30, and March 14, 2025 in the amount of \$700.20.
- B. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2025
- C. Approval of Grant of Easement from Fairway Land Holding Company for Lateral “T”
- D. Financial Reports through February 28, 2025
- E. Investment Report for February 2025

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MOTION: A motion was made by Director Roos and seconded by Director Weststeyn to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted.

The motion passed 5 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:	HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN WESTSTEYN
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	NONE

COMMUNICATIONS

Item #1 – Directors’ Reports

Director Van Ryn stated that he had no updates to report.

Director Holbrook reported that he attended the Escalon Chamber of Commerce Sponsor Appreciation Dinner on March 13. He received an award on behalf of the District, recognizing SSJID’s volunteer work, and involvement in and/or sponsorship of community activities and events.

Director Roos thanked the Division Managers and Maintenance Workers for their hard work and successful start of the 2025 irrigation season.

Director Roos referenced the Escalon Chamber’s Sponsor Appreciation Dinner and noted that Director Holbrook accepted the Volunteer of the Year Award on behalf of SSJID.

Director Weststeyn reported that he attended the San Joaquin Farm Bureau (SJFB) Roundtable Discussion meeting with Congressman Josh Harder, on March 21.

Director Weststeyn reported that he attended a meeting with Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom, on March 21, along with Mr. Rietkerk, SSJID Public and Government Relations Manager Katie Patterson, and SSJID Water Resources Coordinator Brandon Nakagawa. Discussion included an informative presentation by District staff highlighting SSJID’s services, communities, and future plans.

President Spyksma reported that he attended a Canyon Tunnel Ad-Hoc Finance Committee meeting on March 13.

Item #2 – Various Reports

The Managers’ Reports were provided in electronic form to the Board on March 21, 2025.

Mr. Rietkerk stated that the 2024 Irrigation Season officially began on March 19, noting a somewhat slow start due to the recent rain events. He reported that Telemetry Systems Supervisor, Lance Martin and the SCADA Team are working with Sierra Controls on the controls for three (3) Main Distribution Canal (MDC) drops as part of the SCADA Master Plan long-term strategy.

Mr. Rietkerk announced that registration has opened for the California Special District Association (CSDA) 2025 Conference, from August 25-28, 2025, at the Monterey Convention Center. He noted the discount SSJID receives on its Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA) property liability and workers compensation insurance rates when two (2) or more Directors attend the conference, and that only one (1)

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Director has registered to attend this year's event, thus far. One more Director attendance is needed for the District to receive its discounted insurance rates.

Mr. Rietkerk announced the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) 2025 Spring Conference, to be held May 13-15, 2025, in Monterey. To date, two (2) Directors and four (4) Senior Leaders are registered to attend the conference, which will conflict with the SSJID board meeting on May 13. Staff will present the Board with consideration to cancel or reschedule the May 13 board meeting, as the date draws near. Mr. Rietkerk noted that the ACWA Conference will also conflict with the scheduled Tri-Dam Project Board meeting on May 15.

Mr. Rietkerk referenced the Escalon Chamber of Commerce presenting the District with the "Volunteer of the Year" Award, and acknowledged Katie Patterson and staff who volunteered at, or participated in, numerous Chamber events including the Farmers Markets, fundraisers, and parades. He commended Ms. Patterson on her efforts to engage the District in activities within our local communities.

Ms. Patterson addressed the Board regarding the Escalon Chamber's "Volunteer of the Year" Award and stated that SSJID is highly respected among the local cities and agencies due to its strong support of community. She thanked the Shop Department, and District staff, for their contributions, which include building the parade floats and participation at local events. Ms. Patterson noted that there is always room for additional staff and/or Board Member volunteers.

President Spyskma acknowledged the District's excellent community work, and thanked Ms. Patterson for her efforts.

Director Holbrook thanked the Senior Leaders for their detailed Manager's Reports.

ACTION CALENDAR

Item #3 – Consider Conditional Approval of Amendment to Service Abandonment Agreement for Frank and Cathleen Bellino Trust (APN 247-040-07, Consisting of 41.92 Acres)

Mr. Anthony Podesto, SSJID GIS/Engineering Technician, addressed the Board regarding approval of the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement for APN 247-040-07. He described the parcel size and location, and provided background of the previous owner entering an SAA with the District in 2001 (Agreement #1304), and Frank and Cathleen Bellino TR (Owner) requesting an amendment to the SAA so that the property can be eligible to receive District water. If the Abandonment Agreement is amended, the Owner plans to submit a structure permit application to install a new on-farm pressurized system near the end of Lateral "O."

Mr. Podesto provided a detailed explanation of Lateral "O" including size, location, and cast-in-place pipe. He further explained serviceability and required improvements, identified in the adopted Water Master Plan (WMP), including multiple float valves and automated gates.

Staff confirmed that there are no unauthorized encroachments on the Subject Property, and identified an existing easement and one (1) unrecorded Agreement to Convey for a 59' wide right-of-way. Specific conditions for approval were noted regarding flood irrigation, and sprinkler or drip irrigation, and the District's "Policy for Rescinding Irrigation Service Abandonment." Staff recommended that approval of the SAA Amendment include a condition for the Owner to grant the District an easement, consistent with the District's standard form, for all SSJID facilities within the Subject Property and that the District cover all costs associated with development of the Grant of Easement documents.

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MOTION: A motion was made by Director Weststeyn and seconded by Director Van Ryn to conditionally approve the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement, consistent with staffs' recommendation, for Frank and Cathleen Bellino Trust, APN 247-040-07.

The motion passed 5 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:	HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN WESTSTEYN
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	NONE

Item #4 – Consider Conditional Approval of Amendment to Service Abandonment Agreement for C&G Farms LLC ETAL (APN 245-090-06, Consisting of 36.39 Acres)

Mr. Podesto addressed the Board regarding approval of the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement for APN 245-090-06. He described the parcel size and location, and provided background of the previous owner entering an SAA with the District in 2007 (Agreement #1528), and C&G Farms LLC, et al. (Owner) requesting an amendment to the SAA so that the property can be eligible to receive District water. If the Abandonment Agreement is amended, the Owner plans to submit a structure permit application to install a new on-farm pressurized system on Lateral “Kab” within the following one (1) year. The new system will irrigate the subject property, however, it will be designed to accommodate an additional 30.95 acres (to the west), as well.

Mr. Podesto provided a detailed explanation of Lateral “Kab” including size, location, and cast-in-place pipe. He explained serviceability noting that the Lateral “Kab” system is currently overburdened with a service ratio of 1.02 (i.e. demand exceeds supply during peak season). Mr. Podesto further explained that although adding the subject property to Lateral “Kab” will temporarily worsen service to existing District customers, future system improvements will offset the burden.

Staff confirmed that there are no unauthorized encroachments on the Subject Property, and identified an existing easement and one (1) unrecorded Agreement to Convey for a 63’ wide right-of-way. Specific conditions for approval were noted regarding flood irrigation, and sprinkler or drip irrigation, and the District’s “Policy for Rescinding Irrigation Service Abandonment.” Staff recommended that approval of the SAA Amendment include a condition for the Owner to grant the District an easement, consistent with the District’s standard form, for all SSJID facilities within the Subject Property and that the District cover all costs associated with development of the Grant of Easement documents.

Board discussion included the extent of the minor burden to existing SSJID customers should the subject property be approved to receive water, the future operations of the Q/QC Regulation Reservoir, and the probability that more customers will be returning to receive District water.

Director Weststeyn commended Mr. Podesto for his customer service skills, and attention to detail.

MOTION: A motion was made by Director Holbrook and seconded by Director Roos to conditionally approve the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement, consistent with staffs' recommendation, for C&G Farms LLC., et al, APN 245-090-06.

The motion passed 5 to 0 by the following vote:

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AYES: HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN WESTSTEYN
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

Item #5 – Consider Approval of Proposal from LSA for Biological Services Related to the Canyon Tunnel Project

Mr. Forrest Killingsworth, SSJID Engineering Department Manager, addressed the Board regarding the proposal from LSA for biological services for the Joint Supply Canal Bypass Tunnel (Canyon Tunnel or Project). Construction for the Project is anticipated to begin in the latter part of 2025.

Mr. Killingsworth noted the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for the Project and the Board’s adoption of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) on March 14, 2023. An amendment to the CEQA document was adopted by the Board, on February 25, 2025, to account for design changes occurring after initial adoption.

Mr. Killingsworth explained that a component of the IS/MND includes a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) to mitigate effects the Project will have on the environment (e.g. animals, vegetation), and that incorporation of adopted mitigation measures identified in the MMRP will need to be executed. He further explained that one of the mitigated measures, BIO-10, involves an on-site survey for special-status plant species within the Project area.

Mr. Killingsworth cited the bloom cycles of the seven (7) target plant species and noted that they are identifiable only during spring and summer. Since time to identify the special-status plants is limited, staff recommended the District retain a qualified consultant to perform the required surveys and requested a proposal from LSA, an environmental services firm.

Mr. Killingsworth explained LSA’s scope of work including two (2) 1-day surveys, preparation of a Botanical Report meeting CEQA’s mitigation measure requirements and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) permit agreement, and Project Management services.

Staff recommended Board approval of the proposal from LSA; and to authorize staff to enter the District into a Professional Services Agreement for Biological Services for the Canyon Tunnel Project, to be performed on a time and expense basis, not to exceed \$15,850.00 plus up to an additional \$10,000.00 by addendum to be authorized by the Engineering Department Manager in the event that additional field surveys are required to comply with CEQA.

MOTION: A motion was made by Director Weststeyn and seconded by Director Holbrook to approve the proposal from LSA; and authorize staff to enter the District into a Professional Services Agreement for Biological Services for the Canyon Tunnel Project, to be performed on a time and expense basis, not to exceed \$15,850.00 plus up to an additional \$10,000.00 by addendum to be authorized by the Engineering Department Manager in the event that additional field surveys are required to comply with CEQA.

The motion passed 5 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES: HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN WESTSTEYN
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

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Item #6 – Update on Financing Options for Canyon Tunnel Project

Ms. Sonya Williams, SSJID Finance and Administration Manager, addressed the Board and gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding financial planning options for the Canyon Tunnel Project.

Ms. Williams displayed slides and provided detailed projections of a 5-year cash flow analysis including operating revenues and expenditures, reserves, and days cash; capital improvements including reserve balance trends, operating losses, and non-operating revenues; strategic long-term management including irrigation rate increases, capital needs, revenue streams, and operational costs; and dry year impacts including loss of revenue, and changes in reserves. She recommended the District issue revenue bonds for up to 50-percent of the estimated cost of the Canyon Tunnel Project by 2027, to fund that project and other priority capital projects. Also recommended was an annual review of projections, by March 31, to update financial assumptions and inform future financing options. Ms. Williams presented a finance timeline and next steps including a Board adopted Reimbursement Resolution which would repay the District for recovered costs, an annual financial plan update and review, a financial software purchase, and a Request for Proposal for debt issuance.

Board discussion included appreciation of the highly detailed presentation, to include capital spending projections in the annual financial plan update, the importance of prudent planning and transparency, and interest rates. The Board requested clarification of the financial planning software mentioned in the presentation. Ms. Williams responded that Synario Financial Modeling software, recommended by the District’s financial advisors, PFM Financial Advisors, could be purchased to manage SSJID’s financials at a cost of \$70,000.00 for the first year including implementation and set-up charges, and \$30,000.00 annually for the yearly maintenance package. She added that approval of the Synario software would be presented to the Board at a future board meeting.

Item #7 To Be Discussed Following Closed Session

Ms. Brown stated that a total of nineteen (19) written public comments were received for Closed Session agenda Item #8.e., and were printed and provided to the Board with copies available for interested members of the public. The written comments are incorporated into the official record of the meeting, and are public records available for inspection. Ms. Brown added that a total of two (2) previous verbal public comments were also received earlier for Closed Session agenda Item #8.e. President Spyksma opened Public Comment for Item #8.e. at 10:08 a.m. Seeing or hearing no requests to speak, President Spyksma closed Public Comment for Item #8.e. at 10:10 a.m.

It was announced that all remaining items on the Closed Session agenda would be discussed. The Board took a brief recess at 10:14 a.m. and convened to Closed Session at 10:25 a.m.

Item #8 – CLOSED SESSION

Director Weststeyn exited the meeting at 12:31 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to Open Session at 12:41 p.m.

Item #9 – ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPORTABLE ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION

Disclosure of reportable actions taken in Closed Session, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.1: There were no reportable actions taken in Closed Session.

Item #7 – Consider Approval of Agreement for Conveyance of Water with Oakdale Irrigation District

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MOTION: A motion was made by Director Holbrook and seconded by Director Van Ryn to approve the Agreement for Conveyance of Water between SSJID and Oakdale Irrigation District.

The motion passed 4 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:	HOLBROOK ROOS SPYKSMA VAN RYN
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	WESTSTEYN

Item #10 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

ATTEST:

Danielle Barney, Clerk of the Board