



Board of Directors Meeting

DRAFT

Friday, March 16, 2018

10am – 3pm

Merced College Business Resource Center
630 W. 19th Street
Merced, CA 95340

MEETING MINUTES

I. Convene Meeting, Introductory Remarks

Chair Vito Chiesa called the first quarter 2018 meeting of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) to order at 10:05am at the Merced College Business Resource Center in downtown Merced and initiated introductions around the table.

Board members present were: James Aleru, Steve Bestolarides, Vito Chiesa, Elaine Craig, Diana Dooley, Lee Ann Eager, Bryn Forhan, Frank Gallegos, Andrew Genasci, Carole Goldsmith, Ismael Herrera (Secretariat), Ellen Junn, Dan Leavitt, Dorothy Leland, Luisa Medina, David Nelson, Joe Oliveira, Patty Poire, Mary Renner, Chuck Riojas, Karen Ross, Luis Santana, Gary Serrato, Ted Smalley, Cherylee Wegman, and Jim Yovino.

Board Deputies present were Cori Lucero and Jim Suennen.

Advisory Board members present were Glenda Humiston, Robert Tse and Lynnette Zelezny.

II. Recognition of Sponsors and Dignitaries

Chair Chiesa thanked the meeting sponsors, which were: Merced College, represented by Autumn Gardia, Interim Director of Business, Industry and Community Services; UC Merced, represented by Dr. Dorothy Leland, Chancellor; Merced County Department of Community and Economic Development, represented by Mark Hendrickson, Director; and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, represented by Glenda Humiston, Vice President.

Mr. Chiesa introduced Mike Murphy, Mayor of the City of Merced, who welcomed Partnership board members and guests to Merced. Mr. Murphy gave a brief update of projects in the city, including the building next door to the Merced College Business Resource Center, which is a brand new LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building where UC Merced employs several hundred people in their downtown center. In addition, UC Merced's 2020 project is continuing to progress, which will double the footprint of the campus by the year 2020. Private investment is occurring in the downtown area as well, including old historic but blighted building, which will become a boutique hotel. There is also an old theatre on the same block that is in the process of being restored and renovated. The mayor continued to say that the city is happy with the partnerships they have with UC Merced and Merced College as well as the San Joaquin Rail Authority.

Chair Chiesa recognized Jerry O'Banion, Merced County Supervisor District 5, who also attended the board meeting. Mr. O'Banion is the third longest serving supervisor in the state of California.

III. Oath of Office

Secretary Karen Ross administered the Oath of Office to re-appointed board members James Aleru, Steve Bestolarides, Elaine Craig, Lee Ann Eager, Bryn Forhan, Frank Gallegos, Dan Leavitt, Patty Poire and Chuck Riojas. Dr. Ellen Junn, President, California State University, Stanislaus, was sworn in as a new board member, having been recently appointed by Governor Brown. Read Governor Brown's announcement of board appointments [here](#).

Dr. Ellen Junn stated that she was excited and honored to be part of the Partnership and felt privileged to accept the appointment. Dr. Junn gave the board a brief update on Turlock's California State University, Stanislaus, which recently made headlines both nationally and campus-wide. Money Magazine ranked them the number one public university in the nation for value added, and they recently graduated the largest class in its history.

IV. Public and Board Comment

Chair Chiesa invited comments from the board and public, recognizing Glenda Humiston. Ms. Humiston explained that the portion of the budget for the UC cooperative extension that comes from state funding goes through the Office of the President, so they're caught up in the audit that the office has been going through. There is a potential \$2.2 million cut. Agriculture and Natural Resources was called out for excellent financial managing and reporting, however, and an effort is being made to change the budget source to come directly from the state budget.

Secretary Ross proposed that the Partnership provide a letter of support to the State Legislature in support of the UC Cooperative Extension and the role that it plays in the San Joaquin Valley. Bryn Forhan moved, Carole Goldsmith seconded the motion and there were no objections.

Luis Santana, Executive Director, Reading and Beyond, shared copies of his organization's annual report with the board. Carole Goldsmith, President, Fresno City College, briefly referenced an upcoming topic of discussion, potentially for the June meeting, regarding a collaboration with San Joaquin Valley Community Colleges, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and Reading and Beyond.

Secretary Ross commented that for a future meeting, the board revisit the Climate Change Investment Fund and opportunities that are available there. With the extension of the Cap and Trade and the option revenue there have been significant increases providing a stability that we need. There are programs being funded that are directly benefiting the rural farming communities of the San Joaquin Valley. The Valley has a lot to gain by working together and making sure that we're on top of the next round of grants.

There were no public comments.

V. Consent Calendar

Ismael Herrera directed board members to the work group reports in the board packet, recognizing the efforts to prepare them.

Bryn Forhan moved to approve the consent calendar. Carole Goldsmith seconded the motion and there were no objections.

VI. Legislative Update

A legislative update was provided by Assemblymember Adam Gray; Matt Rogers, representing UC Senator Kamala Harris; Dominic Farinha, representing UC Congressman Jim Costa; and Baltazar Cornejo, representing CA State Senator Anthony Canella.

Assemblymember Adam Gray gave an overview on the main topics that he focuses on: Healthcare, Infrastructure, and water. Over the course of his six years in the Assembly, they have secured a water bond for the area that funded new storage opportunities and dealt with some of the groundwater issues in trying to find a sustainable future for agriculture. They have brought in some transportation funding and have made strides in rail transit. Healthcare has continued to be a challenge and he believes that good things are happening, but there is a lot of work still to do and hopes that the Partnership will stay engaged.

Mary Renner, with the Central Valley Health Network, acknowledged Assemblymember Gray's support of the clinic expansion project and appreciates his continued support of medical education in the Valley.

Vito Chiesa commended Assemblymember Gray on the water situation and for being a voice in Sacramento for the Valley.

Bryn Forhan, San Joaquin River Conservancy, also commended Assemblymember Gray on his work with the medical center that goes back ten years, and gives him credit for staying with it and pushing for it. Ms. Forhan hopes that the Partnership will continue to stay engaged and supportive and said that although the timelines have been pushed off, the commitment to get it done has not.

Assemblymember Gray also spoke about two other topics: Merced County's discussions with the Port of Los Angeles in trying to create a trade corridor, and homelessness. He is currently chairing the State Select Committee on Homelessness. Affordability is not just an urban problem. It has been becoming a tremendous issue in rural communities as well. He encouraged the Partnership to follow this issue and support the efforts that the committee is making to help solve the problem.

Glenda Humiston was recognized and spoke about the USDA Rural Development's financial support of healthcare in the rural communities. Ms. Humiston discussed the need to talk about the definition of "rural" with new USDA Rural Development State Director, Kim Dolbow Vann, in order for California to have access to the administrations infrastructure funds. She says that as of now, the entire San Joaquin Valley is considered Metropolitan from the census information, which affects the ability to access the funds.

Ms. Humiston spoke about Elevate Rural California, a new effort moving rapidly on three items, which were identified as biomass, broadband and water infrastructure. The state economic summit could be a powerful voice on moving the infrastructure.

Carole Goldsmith, President, Fresno City College, asked the board to think about what could be done collectively to apply pressure to get the "rural" issue addressed. In Coalinga, for example, it is an hour drive to any healthcare facility.

Representing United States Senator Kamala Harris, Matt Rogers spoke to the board about the issues that Senator Harris focused on, which includes the Omnibus Bill, funding to fight wildfires, Immigration Reform, and legislation to stop gun violence.

Dominic Farinha, who also serves as a Patterson City Councilman, attended the meeting to represent United States Congressman Jim Costa. He spoke about the Congressman's main priorities, which include the renewal of the Farm Bill, efforts to strengthen water infrastructure throughout California, and public land projects.

Baltazar Cornejo from California State Senator Anthony Canella's office spoke to the board about how they're working to make sure that the efforts and accomplishments from the past years will continue and promises are kept, as this is the Senator's final year. They introduced a bill that would allow for StanCOG to maintain their transit services. The Senator has supported Temperance Flat and works to have experts heard by the water board about the dangers to areas with increased flow. He's also working on an immigration bill and wants to keep the conversation going about the need for immigration reform at the federal level.

VII. Partnership Priority #1: Water Supply and Quality
Topic: Senate Bill 623, Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

Secretary Ross provided a brief update on legislation for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water, Senate Bill 623. The state of the situation is such that there is a strong coalition of over 100 organizations that are primarily environmental organizations, faith based organizations and a number of agricultural organizations that are strongly in support of the legislation. The primary opposition is from water districts and the Association of California Water Agency. The legislation would create a safe drinking water fund at the State Water Resources Control Board.

Secretary Ross reported that everyone acknowledges that this has been a longstanding problem, which, contrary to people's assumption, it is not isolated to the Central Valley and it is not purely a nitrate issue. It is a statewide situation with a statewide solution being proposed. They will continue to have discussions in Sacramento to see where the process can go.

The Water Board is continuing to use authority granted during the drought to help influence more consolidations that will continue to be the first step that is taken. The fund will be the last resort, but it is necessary to solve the problem.

VIII. Partnership Priority #1: Water Supply and Quality

Topic: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation; GSA's and Their Current Relationships with Disadvantage Communities

Sarge Green, California Water Institute, moderated a panel addressing Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation and their current relationships with the San Joaquin Valley. Sarge reminded the board that at the last Partnership meeting, there was a discussion regarding some of the technical services that some of the organizations are able to provide to the rural communities, in particular, the CSU system which is utilizing the technical assistance grant, which Sarge is involved with at Fresno State. There was also a presentation from Self-Help Enterprises, which gave the board an update on how many systems they're trying to help. Part of the problem is that more problems and systems will likely be discovered under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Representatives from two of the GSA's, Groundwater Sustainability Agency's from the San Joaquin Valley, discussed the relationships of their groundwater sustainability agencies overall and in particular, the outreach and process and some of the problems that they see in implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act with their small, rural communities.

The PowerPoint presentation from Gary Serrato, North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Executive Officer, can be found [here](#). The presentation from Lacey Kiriakou, Merced County Water Resources Coordinator for Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency can be accessed [here](#).

IX. Partnership Priority #1: Water Supply and Quality

Topic: Subsidence in the San Joaquin Valley

Sarge Green introduced his second panel to discuss subsidence, which he explained as the sinking of land due to the overdraft of deep wells. The weight of everything up above and reducing the pressure down below causes some of the materials in the geology to collapse.

The Friant Water Authority has seen problems with the delivery system of getting San Joaquin River water to the Southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Doug DeFlicht, Chief Operating Officer, Friant Water Authority spoke to the board about balance and subsidence and the concerns about having to move water and have water available for those that need the water. Mr. DeFlicht's presentation can be seen [here](#).

Three representatives from the Department of Water Resources were introduced to discuss impacts on the aqueduct and implementation issues, and how they see the subsidence issues up and down the San Joaquin Valley. Don Walker and Leroy Ellinghouse represented the Operations and Maintenance Division of the California Department of Water Resources. Dane Mathis represented the Division of Integrated Regional Water Management of the Department of Water Resources. Don Walker's presentation on the California Aqueduct Subsidence Study can be found [here](#).

Chairman Chiesa called the report sobering and daunting and discussed his experience sitting on two GSA's and feels that the task ahead seems improbable.

Secretary Ross discussed the ability to be more positive about the outlook, naming the university system with great innovation that's coming out and see the situation as an opportunity to right our future. There are many things that will help mitigate the problem, but all of them have big price tags. Secretary Ross said that one of the things that is very positive is how inclusive the law has brought us all together and nobody needs to be left out of the discussion.

Gary Serrato added to the discussion that the Central Valley is critically over-drafted and said that there are a million acres of productive farm land that will have to be taken out of production. He encourages the state board to get in sooner rather than later.

Andrew Genasci, California Farm Bureau Federation, said that we need to increase access to surface water or increase pumping. This board needs to stand up and say that we need more access to water. We need to take a stand and say that we need water and we need access.

Glenda Humiston says that partnerships can help this. The Valley clearly is in dire straits, but there are other partners in other parts of the state that we should be connecting with. Connect with the people up in the Sierra who have been angry that the last water bond had very little funding for them. Ms. Humiston said that the research that has come out of UC Merced, Davis, and Berkeley jointly has clearly shown that if we could get them healthier, they could be producing nine to sixteen percent more water. We should be fighting this battle with them.

Sarge emphasized the point the Glenda Humiston made, that it will force more aggressive management activities that are connecting all of the things together. On the technology side, he is seeing some amazing things at Fresno State through the incubator program. Recharge, connecting better surface water connections to some of the recharge areas. Temperance Flat also has a flexibility option to help save other people's water.

Patty Poire, Kern Groundwater Authority said that her board consists of seventeen members of which two are from disadvantaged communities. In Kern County the agricultural community has stepped up to help provide water for those communities. Ms. Poire believes that the biggest hurdle in Kern is lack of delivery of more water. Water deliveries that have already been paid for are not getting delivered.

X. Lunch – Sponsored by UC Merced

Chancellor Leland shared that the lunch food came from J & R Tacos, which was started by two students from UC Merced.

XI. Topic: UC Merced Downtown Campus Center and 2020 Project

Richard Cummings, Director, Strategic Communications for UC Merced, presented an update on the UC Merced Downtown Campus Center and 2020 Project. Mr. Cummings' presentation, which includes a video, can be accessed [here](#).

XII. Partnership Priority #7: Health

Topic: Beyond a Zip Code: Health and Housing in the San Joaquin Valley

Alicia Sebastian from the California Coalition for Rural Housing moderated a panel discussion entitled "Beyond A Zip Code: Health and Housing in the San Joaquin Valley," which included the participation of Dr. Ellen Piernot, Chief Medical Officer for Golden Valley Health Centers and Lise Talbott, Director of Clinical Education and Outreach for Golden Valley Health Centers. Alicia explained to the board how housing and housing stability have shown to have a huge impact on health outcome and the number one indicator of someone's lifespan is their zip code. Their presentation can be seen [here](#).

Luisa Medina, Central California Legal Services, spoke about the most recent studies that are coming out about PTSD in children of families that can't find suitable, safe affordable housing. This has a traumatic effect on the children. Most of the clients that are seen at CCLS have affordable housing issues.

XIII. Partnership Priority #6: Broadband
Topic: West Hills Broadband Pilot Project

Robert Tse, USDA California Rural Development State Broadband Coordinator lead a discussion on the West Hills Broadband Pilot Project with Linda Thomas, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Workforce Development at West Hills Community College District. View the presentation from Robert Tse and Linda Thomas [here](#).

XIV. Partnership Priority #4: San Joaquin Valley Rail Service
Topic: New Schedule Launch

Dan Leavitt and David Lipari from the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority announced the new schedule launch for the Amtrak San Joaquins to help San Joaquin Valley residents arrive in Sacramento before 8 a.m. The board members were encouraged to help promote the new service with the digital toolkit. Mr. Leavitt said that there will be a lot of media attention on the inaugural ride on May 7. The board members were all invited to participate.

The Morning Express Service presentation can be found [here](#).

[Click to Download the SJJPA Digital Toolkit](#)

XV. Topic: Senate Bill 1, Transportation Funding

Ted Smalley, Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments, gave an update on Senate Bill 1, Transportation Funding. Mr. Smalley reported to the board about the completion of improvement projects on the 99 that cost over one billion dollars and took ten years.

The Valley is a huge winner of SBI with hundreds of millions of dollars coming to the Valley. Several new widening projects on the 99 in the San Joaquin Valley should be approved and completed in the next few years. Mr. Smalley said that although we do not like paying extra taxes, we do like to see the roads fixed, our companies doing well and our dairy trucks not broken because of potholes. The projects include high truck traffic county roads and projects in our smaller communities. Earlimart, for example, will get \$1.9 million for sidewalks - a short-term project that is very exciting.

Ted Smalley provided a San Joaquin Valley Senate Bill 1 project listing which can be found [here](#).

XVI. Public and Board Comments

Chairman Chiesa invited comments from the board and public, recognizing Jim Suennen who reminded the board about the California Earned Income Tax Credit. It's a cash refund for working Californians.

Alicia Sebastian shared that October 2 is the 6th Annual Affordable Housing Summit in Stockton. The board was asked to save that date and details will be shared with the board.

Lee Ann Eager suggested for June meeting to invite Brian Kelley to speak about High Speed Rail.

Steve Bestolarides wants to address the new housing, grants for education and investments in Stockton at the San Joaquin County meeting in December and would like to have Stockton Mayor Michael Tubbs invited to speak.

There were no public comments.

XVII. Adjournment

Mr. Chiesa thanked all board members for their attendance and active participation in the day's discussions. In the absence of any further public or board comments, the meeting was adjourned at 2:46pm.