

**MINUTES FOR THE APRIL 23, 2024  
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 Weststeyn called the meeting to order. SSJID Engineering Department Manager Forrest Killingsworth led the flag salute. Upon roll call the following members were noted present:

DIRECTORS:           HOLBROOK KAMPER ROOS WESTSTEYN  
ABSENT:               SPYKSMA

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

**Public Comment** – None

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Approval of Checks in the amount of \$232,710.86; Accounts Payable Wires in the amount of \$1,129,436.05; and Payroll dated April 19, 2024 in the amount of \$311,044.32, April 19, 2024 in the amount of \$1,207.56, and April 19, 2024 in the amount of \$3,716.35.
- B. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2024
- C. Approval of Encroachment Request for an Electrical Crossing at Lateral Vj and Spur Line “U”

President Weststeyn requested clarification on what city the site was located as the Item #C staff report indicated Ripon, but the Application for Encroachment Agreement listed Manteca. Mr. Killingsworth responded that the site in question was in Manteca.

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

The motion passed 4 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:               HOLBROOK KAMPER ROOS WESTSTEYN  
NOES:               NONE  
ABSTAIN:           NONE  
ABSENT:            SPYKSMA

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Item #1 – Directors’ Reports**

Director Roos thanked the Division Managers and Maintenance Crews for running water, and a successful start of irrigation season.

Director Kamper acknowledged SSJID’s irrigation crews and stated that he had received multiple customer comments on their friendliness and positive attitudes.

Director Holbrook referenced the Irrigation Operations Manager’s Report, dated April 23, 2024, and commended the Field Maintenance Crews for a customer letter received thanking them for the knowledge and professionalism demonstrated while working on the landowner’s vent and irrigation line.

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Director Holbrook reported that he attended the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) 2024 Conference, on May 7-9, 2024, in Monterey, CA. He stated that it was a good conference and highlighted discussions on workforce and company culture, especially as it relates to in-person versus virtual attendance, and Artificial Intelligence.

Director Holbrook reported that he attended the SSJID Public Relations Committee meeting just prior to today's board meeting at 8:00 a.m. Discussion included status of SSJID's 2024 work plan, and community relations.

President Weststeyn reported that he attended the SSJID Public Relations Committee meeting along with Director Holbrook and noted additional discussions including the District's social media platforms and Powered by Purpose campaign.

President Weststeyn acknowledged the Division Managers for their excellent customer service, promptness, and willingness to help.

**Item #2 – Various Reports**

Director Holbrook addressed Mr. Bill Schwandt, SSJID Retail Electric Manager, and requested an update on the Robert O. Schulz Solar Farm (Solar Farm) project. Mr. Schwandt stated that the project is going well, is ahead of schedule and under budget, and commended Mr. Mel Bradley, Independent Solar Farm Consultant, and the contractors for their contributions and jobs well done. He explained the photos, included in the Electric Utility Manager's Report dated April 23, 2024, of the solar arrays, and new 60 kilowatt inverters being installed, and noted that discussions are underway regarding options for the next project phase scheduled to begin in October.

President Weststeyn referenced the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Manager's Report, dated April 23, 2024, which cited that WTP production was up while WTP power consumption was down, and inquired on cause. Mr. Ed Erisman, WTP Manager, responded that the reduction in power consumption could be from the recent replacement of LED light bulbs, to which Mr. Schwandt concurred adding that LED lights can significantly reduce energy consumption.

Director Holbrook addressed Ms. Sonya Williams, SSJID Finance and Administration Manager, and requested an update on SSJID's annual audit. Ms. Williams stated that the annual audit commenced in February, is going well, and is on-track for Board approval on June 25. She added that the auditors, Price Paige & Company (PP&C) have recommended some changes to accounting procedures and policies.

Director Holbrook addressed Ms. Katie Patterson, SSJID Public and Government Relations Manager, and asked her to elaborate on a recent television news segment featuring SSJID's Vehicle Art Wrap Contest. Ms. Patterson responded that Fox 40 News aired an interview, on April 19, which highlighted 4<sup>th</sup> grader Aubree Betschart as SSJID's Grand Prize Winner of the 2024 art contest. She added that the annual contest is a way to educate local area grammar school students about SSJID and the importance of water in our community. The video will be linked to the District's social media platforms.

Director Holbrook addressed Mr. Killingsworth and requested an update on the Canyon Tunnel Project. Mr. Killingsworth responded that the project is nearing completion of the 90% Design phase, and that landowner negotiations are still ongoing. He stated his intent to present a Canyon Tunnel Update at the Tri-Dam Board meeting on May 16 to provide an overview of the 90% Design Phase, and a proposal for the 95% Design Phase. An on-site meeting is scheduled with the appraiser on May 29. Mr. Killingsworth offered Director Holbrook a private discussion regarding the Mangante service connection approved by Board action on April 9, since Director Holbrook was out of town attending the CMUA Conference.

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Mr. Peter Rietkerk, SSJID General Manager, reported that he attended the CMUA Annual Conference, on April 7-9, 2024, along with Director Holbrook and Ms. Patterson. He noted the benefit of attending the conference to interact with the “public power world,” and highlighted sessions/discussions regarding rate increases, workforce issues, staffing, and succession planning.

**ACTION CALENDAR**

**Item #3 – Consider Approval of Amendment to Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement for Tilbury Orchards LLC, APN 245-240-11**

Mr. Anthony Podesto, SSJID GIS/Engineering Technician, addressed the Board regarding the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement (SAA) for Tilbury Orchards, LLC, APN 245-240-11. He described the parcel size and location, and provided background of the previous owner entering an SAA with the District in 1992 (Agreement #562), and Tilbury Orchards LLC ET AL (Owner) requesting an amendment to the SAA so that the property can be eligible to receive District water. Currently, the property is for sale with Winters Farms (Future Owner) as the potential buyer. If the Abandonment Agreement is amended and the sale is successful, the Future Owner plans to submit a structure permit application to install a new pressurized system, utilizing the existing turnout and sump box. The existing parcel is planted in almonds and is irrigated with a private well.

Mr. Podesto stated that in 2011, while the property was subject to the 1992 Service Abandonment Agreement, the District issued a structure permit for a new sprinkler sump takeout including a steel pipe and sump box adjacent to the Main Distribution Canal (MDC), sump pump, and filter station. Upon investigation, it was noted that only the canal takeout and sprinkler sump were installed. The permitted structure has never received service from the District.

Mr. Killingsworth stated that it is unusual for a structure permit to be issued to a property subject to a service abandonment agreement. He added that there was no evidence that an irrigation pump had ever been installed on the existing sump. He emphasized that current procedures for accepting and processing permit applications would prevent issuance of structure permits for properties ineligible to receive service.

Staff confirmed that there are no unauthorized encroachments on District property, and Operations staff can provide service per District specifications on a regular rotation. Specific conditions for approval were noted regarding flood irrigation, and sprinkler or drip irrigation, and the District’s “Policy for Rescinding Irrigation Service Abandonment.”

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Director Kamper and seconded by Director Roos to approve the Agreement to Amend Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement for Tilbury Orchards, LLC Et Al, APN 245-240-11.

The motion passed 4 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:	HOLBROOK KAMPER ROOS WESTSTEYN
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	SPYKSMA

**Item #4 – Consider Approval of SSJID Strategic Plan Update 2024**

Mr. Rietkerk addressed the Board regarding approval of the SSJID 2024 Strategic Plan (Plan), and provided background of the District initiating its first strategic planning effort in 2016 to develop a well-defined Mission

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statement, Vision statement, and organizational Values (MVV). The SSJID Strategic Plan was finalized in 2017 to provide alignment, direction, consistency, and clarity for the SSJID Board and employees, and assurances to its constituents of the District’s mission to service its community.

Board action on April 4, 2023 approved to commission Bell, Burnett & Associates (BB&A) as a facilitator/consultant to update the Plan. Mr. Rietkerk explained BB&A’s scope of work to update the Plan included surveys, interviews, and workshops to gauge internal needs and help SSJID develop strategic priorities and goals. He introduced Mike Bell, and Alex Burnett, both Principals with BB&A.

Mr. Bell addressed the Board and gave a PowerPoint presentation providing detailed explanations of the 2024 Plan’s intent to identify and set the stage for District’s strategic priorities over the next five (5) years; the process to develop the 2024 Plan; the focus of the 2024 Plan; the unchanged Mission Statement; the revised Vision Statement; and the District Motto.

Mr. Burnett addressed the Board, continued with the presentation, and cited the 2024 Strategic Priorities and 5-Year Goals, in priority order, for Water Supply, Maintenance, Treatment and Distribution; Finance and Rates; Workforce and Culture; Customer Service and Community Relations; Legislative and Regulatory; and Retail Electric.

Mr. Burnett concluded and thanked the Board, Mr. Rietkerk, Senior Leaders, and staff for their contributions to the SSJID 2024 Strategic Plan. He added that the participants/employees were engaged and transparent, and commended Mr. Rietkerk for his leadership.

Mr. Rietkerk acknowledged the team effort towards the Strategic Plan, and willingness to “throw ideas on the table,” and identify resources necessary to accomplish goals and/or projects. He thanked Mr. Bell and Mr. Burnett for their facilitation to assist SSJID to build something that staff believe in.

Mr. Burnett noted survey questions regarding employee opinions on working at SSJID, and emphasized the high percentages of staff who value their jobs and the District, feel their jobs are important, and enjoy working for the South San Joaquin Irrigation District.

President Weststeyn thanked Mr. Burnett, Mr. Bell, and staff for their collaborated efforts on the 2024 Strategic Plan. He commended all on a job well done, and stated that he was 100 percent (100%) in agreement with the Plan.

Mr. Killingsworth added that he was honored to be part of the 2024 update process, and have a Board that supports it. He stated that the workshops were active, productive and united, and thanked BB&A for facilitating the process.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Director Roos and seconded by Director Holbrook to approve the South San Joaquin Irrigation District 2024 Strategic Plan.

The motion passed 4 to 0 by the following vote:

AYES:	HOLBROOK KAMPER ROOS WESTSTEYN
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	SPYKSMA

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**Item #5 – Quarterly Presentation of Financial Statements through March 2024**

Ms. Sonya Williams, SSJID Finance and Administration Manager, addressed the Board, gave an oral presentation of the quarterly Financial Statements through March 31, 2024, and stated that the March 2024 Financial Statements were in draft form as the Auditors were finalizing the District’s 2023 audit. She noted procedural changes to occur, suggested by PP&C, regarding year-to-year comparison, deferred revenue, and prepaid expenses.

Ms. Williams provided detailed explanations of the balance sheets; unrestricted net positions; total assets; liabilities; revenues, expenses and changes in net position; non-operating revenues; irrigation revenues and expenses; cash flows; reserve allocations and balances; actual versus year-to-date budget comparisons; and breakdown of cash investments by category.

The Board inquired on the status of the Tri-Dam annual audit, to which Ms. Williams responded that the Tri-Dam audit was scheduled to begin in April, and the SSJID auditors are aware that the Tri-Dam audit is pertinent to finalizing the District’s audit.

**Item #6 – Quarterly Presentation of Investment Report for March 2024**

Ms. Williams addressed the Board and gave an oral presentation of the quarterly Investment Report through March 2024. She provided detailed explanations of the components of cash and investments, interest income year-to-date and monthly, amounts invested by yield to maturity, investment holdings, treasury yield curve, investment activity, maturities schedule, employment rates, and rates of inflation.

*It was announced that all remaining items on the Closed Session agenda would be discussed. The Board took a brief recess at 10:30 a.m. and convened to Closed Session at 10:40 a.m.*

**Item #7 – CLOSED SESSION**

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

*The Board returned to Open Session at 12:10 p.m.*

**Item #8 – 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 #9 – ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

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Danielle Barney, Clerk of the Board