

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #3
OF THE RIO GRANDE WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
March 5, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.
8805 Independence Way, Alamosa, CO 81101
And By Zoom/Teleconference**

Present: LeRoy Salazar, President; Warren Crowther, Manager; Sam Vance, Manager; Doug Bagwell, Manager; Ruben Sandoval, Manager; and, Elliott Salazar, Ex-Officio Member.

Absent: Nathan Coombs, Vice-President/Secretary/Treasurer.

Staff and Consultants: Pete Ampe, Hill & Robbins, P.C; Amber Pacheco, Deputy General Manager; Angelo Bellah, Program Manager; Chris Ivers, Program Manager; Quinton Norris, Program Manager; Rose Vanderpool, Program Assistant; Linda Ramirez, Program Assistant; Wylie Keller, Water Resource Specialist; Kylie Gregg, Office Manager; Clinton Phillips, Davis Engineering; Michael Carson, Database Administrator; and, April Mondragon, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Jessica Valdez, Jason Lorenz, Chuck Finnegan, Scot Johnson, Jennifer Johnson, Maurice Gibson, Justin Rogers, Matt Peterson, Steve Keller, Deb Sarason, Ryan Unterrainer, Sally Wier, Leroy Martinez, Rosalie Martinez.

Meeting Called to Order

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. A quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Warren Crowther led the opening prayer.

Approval of the Agenda

President Salazar asked to amend the agenda to add a recommendation to the Board of Directors on Subdistrict membership after the Manager's report. A motion was made by Sam Vance to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Warren Crowther and unanimously approved.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

President Salazar asked for any changes, additions or a motion to approve the consent agenda items:

- November 25, 2025-Special Meeting Minutes
- December 4, 2025-Quarterly Meeting Minutes
- December 4, 2025-Executive Session Minutes
- December 22, 2025-Special Meeting Minutes
- December 22, 2025-Executive Session Minutes

A motion was made by Elliott Salazar to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ruben Sandoval and unanimously approved.

Public Comment

President Salazar asked for public comment. Justin Rogers asked for Public Comment to be moved to after the budget.

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

President Salazar asked for disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. Pete Ampe explained the purpose and procedure of the disclosure.

Warren Crowther: Sanford Canal Company, Ephraim Canal Company, Groundwater.

Sam Vance: Mogote, Romero, Manassa, Groundwater.

Elliott Salazar: Lucero, Sisneros, Lovato, Broyes, Groundwater.

Ruben Sandoval: Manassa, Groundwater.

Doug Bagwell: Groundwater, Manassa, Romero, Mogote

Leroy: Rincones, Maes Ditch, Florida Ditch, Groundwater, 6th and 10th.

Attorney's Report

President Salazar asked for the Attorney's report. Pete Ampe reported on the Special Master's fourth recommendation to accept the settlement on the Texas vs New Mexico Colorado US Supreme Court Case. He updated the Board on the Subdistrict No. 1 Plan of Water Management No. 4 trial, the SWAG augmentation trial, and the Phase 7 administrative hearings. Mr. Ampe described the impact the Model update has on La Jara Creek and Saguache Creek.

District Engineer's Report-Clinton Phillips

President Salazar asked for the District Engineer's report. Clinton Phillips presented a map of the monitoring wells. He went over the change compared to the 2015 baseline and 2024. He highlighted the location of each well and the baseline difference in measurement. President Salazar asked Mr. Phillips to provide Subdistrict members the measurements taken by the state once he receives them. President Salazar commented on how the Subdistrict pumped less last year than what was predicted and the how the Subdistrict has purchased wells and offered incentives to individuals to not pump. He also reported on the progress toward the purchase of a large well to assist the Subdistrict with sustainability.

Program Manager's Report

President Salazar asked for the Program Manager's report.

- *Update on Election of Officer*

Angelo Bellah reported receiving three (3) letters of interest to serve on the Board of Managers for the managers whose terms are expiring. He reported, upon District Board appointment, Brandon Thomas would be replacing Ruben Sandoval as voting District No. 2 Manager. Pete Ampe described the Board of Directors selection process and how the Subdistricts were set up. Mr. Bellah explained the purpose of the straw poll ballot. Discussion was held on input from Subdistrict members and the impact it has on the selection of Board of Managers. Ruben Sandoval described how each Board of Manager has a certain geographical location they represent. Elliott Salazar explained how each Subdistrict has their own set of Bylaws. Rose Vanderpool reported sending out 32 straw poll ballots with only 16 returned. Sam Vance commented on the Subdistricts formation process and having geographical representation and local control. Mr. Bellah described the staggering term lengths, read the letters of interest received into record, and went over the straw poll ballot results. President Salazar suggested the public submit letters of rational/recommendations to the Board of Directors.

The Board paused for a break at 8:47 a.m. and resumed at 8:51 a.m.

- *Financial Report:*

Angelo Bellah presented the costs covered by the District for formation, the amount reimbursed, expenses, and the remaining balance due. He presented the Balance Sheet and went over the assets, liabilities and equity. Justin Rogers asked for the loan information. Mr. Bellah highlighted the yearly loan payment amount, interest, term length and principal amount on Alpha, Lupita and Sowards loans. President Salazar explained how the collected fees are used for different purposes. Mr. Rogers commented on the lack of communication regarding the fee increase. Mr. Bellah reported on the conversations held in open session meetings/work sessions regarding the fee increase. President Salazar commented on the lengthy conversations that have been held regarding the need to remedy depletions, sustainability, purchases of water, and the need to decrease pumping. Jason Lorenz explained the need to decrease pumping in order to get where the Subdistrict needs to be. Michael Carson encouraged members to get involved, stay informed, attend meetings and be a part of the process. He also commented on how the website is updated regularly. Maurice Gibson reported on a text message he sent to the Board of Managers requesting last years rates. He explained how he did not appreciate being referred to Mr. Bellah and feels the Board of Managers owe the Subdistrict members time to discuss their needs. Mr. Gibson reported how the Subdistrict should not raise the fees so high that no one could farm. President Salazar described how a pumping allocation could be an alternative to increasing fees. Elliott Salazar commented on how fortunate he feels to be in the Subdistrict. Chuck Finnegan reported on the outdated material on the District's website. Mr. Bellah presented the 2026 Profit and Loss Statement, he highlighted the income, expenses and net income. Mr. Bellah presented a summary of all of 2025 Profit and Loss Statement and read over Kylie Gregg's financial notes. He also gave a summary of the investment accounts and fixed assets.

A motion was made by Ruben Sandoval to approve the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Sam Vance and unanimously approved.

- *2025 ARP*

Angelo Bellah provided a water accounting update on the Rio Grande, Alamosa and Conejos Rivers. He reported on a request from Trout Unlimited to release stored water during winter. Mr. Bellah went over the current reservoir account balances, updated the Board on the 2025 ARP irrigation season projects and gave an overview of the Preliminary Water Report.

- 2026 Irrigation Season and ARP Year

Angelo Bellah provided an update on the SWSP renewals, the Alpha Hay Farms recharge ponds, sale of the Alpha tracts and the CWCB loan. Mr. Bellah reported on the inactivation of the Sowards well and Cordova well. He presented a forbearance agreement tracking sheet and went over the plan to remedy depletions on La Jara Creek. President Salazar reported working on being able to use accretions from other Subdistricts to make up the depletions of other Subdistricts. Mr. Bellah went over the aquifer sustainability programs and asked the Board to consider implementing a Pumping Reduction Program (PRP) in 2026. He highlighted the NRCS streamflow forecast and provided the acre-foot amount of reduced pumping in 2025. President Salazar provided the dollar amount paid to individuals last year to not pump. Jason Lorenz explained how they came up with the amount per acre-foot to pay for the reduction of pumping. Discussion was held on how participating in the PRP would not have an effect on a well owners five (5) year average. The dollar amount to offer for the PRP was also discussed. Ruben Sandoval commented on the need to reduce pumping by several hundred acre-feet and how fees go up due to the lack of participation in pumping reduction programs. He suggested they introduce a long-standing program (multiple years) and not penalize individuals that participate in conservation programs. Justin Rogers urged the Board to set the incentive amount and parameters of the program as soon as possible. Mr. Bellah reported on the parameters of the PRP set by Board of Managers of Subdistrict No. 6. Discussion was held on the amount of participation the program could receive if they follow the same criteria as last year and with the same incentive Subdistrict No. 6 is offering this year. Mr. Bellah suggested offering an amount above what producers would earn from a crop.

A motion was made by Doug Bagwell to set the PRP price at \$215 per acre-foot of committed reduction. The motion was seconded by Elliott Salazar and unanimously approved.

Angelo Bellah reported the PRP application would be attached to a letter set to go out to Subdistrict members and based on when it is received by staff on a first come first serve basis.

Sam Vance was excused from the meeting.

The Board paused for a brake at 10:55 a.m. and resumed at 11:01 a.m.

Angelo Bellah presented and read the updated draft letter to Subdistrict members regarding the 2026 allocation program, PRP, reporting meter readings, and clerical error on the 2025 fees assessed in 2026. Ruben Sandoval suggested he add participation in the PRP would not affect members pumping average. Mr. Bellah continued to read through the letter regarding the clerical error that occurred and asked how the Board would like to address it. President Salazar provided a couple suggestions to remedy the clerical error. Pete Ampe reminded the Board of the action taken at the last meeting and explained the process to reconsider a motion.

A motion was made by Warren Crowther to reconsider the motion previously made concerning the refund. The motion was seconded by Doug Bagwell and unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Doug Bagwell to issue refund checks for the amounts that were overcharged. The motion was seconded by Ruben Sandoval.

Angelo Bellah reported the sustainability fee should have been \$13.20 per acre-foot but erroneously charged members \$21.84 per acre-foot, which would result in a \$7.87 per acre-foot refund.

The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Mr. Bellah urged the public to attend the upcoming budget/fees meetings and work sessions.

New Business

President Salazar asked for new business.

- Colorado Water Plan, CWCB's Low and No Regrets Strategy

Angelo Bellah reported on and encouraged all to participate in a series of discussions hosted by the Roundtable regarding CWCB's Low & No Regrets Strategy.

- RGWCD's Investment Policy

Angelo Bellah gave an overview of the District's Investment Policy and reported discussion and possible action would take place at the next quarterly meeting regarding CSAFE and Colo Trust.

Executive Session to Receive Legal Advice Concerning the Purchase of Real Property

President Salazar asked for a motion to enter into executive session to receive legal advice concerning the purchase of real property. A motion was made by Ruben Sandoval at 11:26 a.m. to enter into executive session. The motion was seconded by Warren Crowther and unanimously approved.

Mr. Ampe stated the Board was entering into executive session pursuant to section 24-6-402(4)(a) to receive legal advice concerning the potential purchase of real property, and to receive legal advice thereto. The Board would take no formal action or position during the executive session.

Possible Action from Executive Session

President Salazar asked for possible action from executive session.

A motion was made by Doug Bagwell to purchase the portion of the Martinez well that was not purchased by the Senate Bill 22 funding for the total amount of \$4.1 million, the Subdistrict would provide whatever amount is not covered by the Senate Bill 22 funding. The motion was seconded by Warren Crowther and unanimously approved.

President Salazar suggested the Board of Managers submit a letter to the District Board justifying why one person or another should fill the seat currently held by Doug Bagwell on the Board of Managers.

Next Meeting

A special meeting was scheduled for April 13, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.



President



Vice-President/Secretary/Treasurer