



**Public Health Department**

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**BUTTE COUNTY WATER WELL ADVISORY GROUP MEETING  
MINUTES**

April 1, 2021

***Due to protocols established under the Governor's Executive Orders for COVID 19 community response, this hearing will be held via an online format.***

Members of the public who wish to participate in public comment are encouraged to register in advance of the hearing by emailing [bclanduse@buttecounty.net](mailto:bclanduse@buttecounty.net). Use the following information to remotely view and participate in the Water Well Advisory Group meeting, including the Public Hearing portions, online:

**Link:** <https://zoom.us/j/93066001790?pwd=STlaaCtKSVE0MUZmVHRpTkI3UFJXZz09>

**Event (Meeting) Number:** 930 6600 1790

**Event Password:** 9924

**Participants may also call in** 1 669 900 6833

**TIME:** 3 p.m.

**PLACE:** Online Meeting Format. See above for video and call-in information.

**A. PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Acting Chair Kruse called the meeting to order at 3:13 pm.**

**II. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

**Officers (Primary) Barker, Ron Stilwell, Rankin, Riley, Teasdale, Weightman, Zamudio, Scott.  
Officers (Alternate) Kruse, Cody Stilwell, Murphy, Marr, Hammond.**

**Present: Officers Kruse, Murphy, Teasdale, Zamudio, Cody Stilwell, Officer Hammond as non-voting participant (alternate for Officer Zamudio).**

**Absent: Officers Barker, Ron Stilwell, Rankin, Riley, Weightman, Scott, Marr (Alternate).**

**Quorum not established at roll call as Officer Cody Stilwell joined later in the meeting.**



**Others Present:**

**Staff, Environmental Health: Nikolay Ostrovskiy, Program Manager, Environmental Health; Katty Hernandez, REHS; Paul Thao, REHS.**

- III. SELECTION OF OFFICERS** – Approve of draft membership list ([PDF](#)) for 2 year terms ending March 31, 2023. Selection of Water Well Advisory Group Chair and Vice-Chair for one year term ending March 31, 2022.

**Previously appointed Chair Stilwell and Vice Chair Barker were absent from this meeting.**

**Motion: A motion to nominate Officer Kruse as Acting Chair for this meeting was made by Officer Murphy and seconded by Officer Zamudio.**

**Vote**

**Ayes: Officers Kruse, Murphy, Teasdale, and Zamudio**

**Noes: None**

**Absent: Officers Barker, Ron Stilwell, Rankin, Riley, Weightman, Scott, Marr (Alternate), Cody Stilwell (Alternate)**

**Abstain:**

**Advisory Group decided to move approval of membership list to the next scheduled meeting due to lack of quorum at roll call.**

- IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Guests in attendance included: Paul Gosselin, Director, Butte County Water Resource & Conservation Department; Kelly Peterson, Water Scientist. Butte County Water Resource & Conservation; Debbie Spangler, Department of Water Resources.**

- V. MINUTES REVIEW**

**None.**

- VI. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA (CORRECTIONS AND/OR CHANGES TO AGENDA)** – Advisory Group members and staff may request additions, deletions or changes in the Agenda order.

**Motion:** A motion to accept the agenda as presented was made by Acting Chair Kruse and seconded by Officer Zamudio.

**Vote**

**Ayes:** Officers Kruse, Murphy, Teasdale, and Zamudio

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Officers Barker, Ron Stilwell, Rankin, Riley, Weightman, Scott, Marr (Alternate), Cody Stilwell (Alternate)

**Abstain:**

- VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND INPUT** – This is an opportunity for any person to address the Advisory Group. Presentations will be limited to five minutes. The committee is prohibited from taking action on any item presented if it is not listed on the agenda.

None.

**B. INFORMATIONAL NON-ACTION ITEMS**

**I. REVIEW BY-LAWS – [\(PDF\)](#)**

Nikolay Ostrovskiy read the Water Well Advisory Group By-Laws aloud commencing with Section I. Current By-Laws are dated November 1, 2016 with no changes since.

**II. BULLETIN 74 UPDATE - <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Wells/Well-Standards>.** Update from Jerry Murphy regarding Department of Water Resources Workgroup.

Debbie Spangler, Department of Water Resources, provided a brief overview of draft Bulletin 74 updates; the Technical Expert Groups have recently started discussions and projected final release is sometime in 2022.

**C. ACTION ITEMS**

**I. APPROVAL OF CALENDAR – [\(PDF\)](#)**

Advisory Group decided to move approval of calendar to the next scheduled meeting due to lack of quorum at roll call.

- II. **EXPLORATORY WELLS** – Review item 4.09 Information on Exploratory Wells and the Code Enforcement Process from the March 9, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting ([http://buttecounty.granicus.com/player/clip/952?view\\_id=2&redirect=true](http://buttecounty.granicus.com/player/clip/952?view_id=2&redirect=true)). Recommend one of the following options: A. Continue current practice – permitting exploratory wells under existing ordinance and attempt to enforce codes as property owners do not comply. B. Continue current practice BUT add the requirement of an annual inspection of properties with exploratory wells until completion of parcel review. C. Discontinue the approval of exploratory wells and only allow bore holes to determine water availability.

Nikolay Ostrovskiy provided a brief overview of the Exploratory Well Program. The intent is to be able to allow individuals to obtain information on groundwater on sites that have not cleared parcel review. Since inception, Exploratory Wells have been difficult to final and have resulted in illegal well use connected to other illegal activity. Officer Zamudio suggested collecting upfront fees to offset future abatement. Officer Murphy stated that Exploratory Wells are drilled to the same standard as regular wells and have the same level of protection; discussed concern regarding Exploratory Wells not being finalized/covered so future use can possibly introduce contaminants through the top of the casing. It was discussed that a bore hole / test hole can accomplish similar results as an exploratory well when it comes to determining water, however, bore holes in the Foothills / Ridge will typically cost the same as a new well (upwards of \$7,500) due to hard rock. Officer Murphy pointed out that bore holes in the Valley will cost 10% of the total cost of a new large diameter well. It was agreed that the cost of well destruction is approximately 50% of the cost of a new well installation. The Advisory Group concurred that drilling season is between Spring and Fall (during non-wet time) and confirmed that surrounding Counties also saw an increase in well installations between 2019-2020 that may be related to the Sustainable Water Management Act amongst other reasons. Officer Murphy stated that other Counties, such as Placer and Nevada, issue well permits on both legal and illegal parcels with limited use of bore holes.

An informal vote was taken on recommendation for best path forward. All officers present (Officers Teasdale, Kruse, Zamudio, and Murphy) decided that Option A, “Continue current practice – permitting exploratory wells under existing ordinance and attempt to enforce codes as property owners do not comply” was the best path forward with an exception of adding an upfront fee to cover additional costs incurred by staff for abatement, etc and improve enforcement. Advisory Group agreed that Option B is unsafe and Option C is cost prohibitive.



**D. AGENDA PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETING**

Advisory Group requested the following items to be included for the next scheduled meeting:

- Selection of Officers (Approval of contact list, selection of Chair and Vice Chair)
- Approval of Calendar
- Exploratory Wells – follow up
- Water Well Manual – Advisory Group suggested to hold off until Bulletin 74 updates
- Salinity in Groundwater – discussion by Butte County Water & Resource Conservation
- Parcel Clearance – Advisory Group requested a presentation from staff on parcel clearance requirements
- Bulletin 74 Update – Update from Department of Water Resources

**E. ADJOURN**

Acting Chair Kruse adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.