

MINUTES
2024 ANNUAL MEETING
BIG BEND GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT #5
AND
CENTRAL KANSAS WATER BANK ASSOCIATION
February 15, 2024 – Stafford County Annex – St John

The annual meetings for the Big Bend Groundwater Management District #5 (District) and the Central Kansas Water Bank Association (Association) were held February 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Stafford County Annex in St John, Kansas.

Orrin Feril called the Central Kansas Water Bank Association and Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 annual meeting to order on behalf of John Janssen and Fred Grunder respectively at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 54 eligible voters and 32 visitors in attendance for the meeting.

Orrin Feril presented the approved minutes from the 2023 annual meeting.

Andrew Vosburgh announced the Central Kansas Water Bank Association election of directors and presented the candidates for the two open positions. John Janssen and Greg Ebert as incumbent candidates on the ballot for these two positions. Casey Gamble nominated Ki Gamble to be added to the ballot for consideration. Eligible voters in attendance were directed to select two candidates to fill the open positions. The ballots were collected to be counted.

Fred Grunder announced the District election of directors and presented candidates. Incumbent John Janssen was on the ballot for Kiowa County. Incumbent Kerry Froetschner was on the ballot for Pawnee County. Tom Taylor was on the ballot for the At-Large position. Nominations were opened to the floor for all positions three times. Kevin Schultz moved, and Alex Vosburgh seconded that nominations cease, and a unanimous ballot be cast for the candidates to fill the open positions on the Big Bend GMD5 board. By show of hands, the motion carried unanimously.

John Janssen presented the financial report and proposed 2025 budget. The public present were encouraged to review these records in preparation for the July budget hearing to consider the budget for FY2025.

Vijay Ramasamy, Governor Kelly's Special Advisor for Water, addressed the audience with the priority items for the Governor in this term of office. Mr. Ramasamy provided an update on the budget priorities for the state, specifically water related projects. Additionally, he is excited to see the formation of the working group in the Rattlesnake Creek region to see progress and additional entities taking a look at the issue as it affects so many aspects of the region.

Jim Schneider, Olsson, provided an overview of the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan-EIS status and how the public can be involved in the process. Several questions were addressed by Mr. Schneider and Orrin Feril regarding water quantity and quality in the area, land access, and timeliness of a resolution.

Orrin Feril provided a brief overview of the District activity reports for 2023. The District has been working diligently with Olsson and NRCS to address comments and concerns in the drafting of the Watershed Plan-EIS document. Mr. Feril provided the audience with an updated timeline for this process. Due to the time it takes to review this type of document, it is likely it will be late in 2024 before this plan will be finalized by NRCS. Further discussion was held on the recent letters sent by the Chief Engineer to area water users in the Rattlesnake Creek region regarding a draft administration plan that could be implemented in 2025. Several legislative bills directed at GMDs were highlighted for discussion.

