

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 17, 2026  
BIG BEND GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT #5  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The monthly board meeting of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District #5 was held at the Stafford County Annex in St John, Kansas on Tuesday February 17, 2026. The board members present were Tom Taylor, Fred Grunder, Kent Moore, Darrell Wood, Kerry Froetschner, Gary Hornbaker, Marlyn Spare, Craig Zwick, and Joe Schlessiger. The District staffs present were Orrin Feril and Vanessa Marks. The guests present were Roger Stotts, Keith McNickle, Tim McNickle, Luke Schroeder, Megan Schroeder, Leon Dunn, Lane Letourneau, Karina Mata, Danielle Hollingshead, Jon McClure, Andrew Vosburgh, Brandon Thompson (Zoom), Jeff Crispin (Zoom), Jeff Lanterman (Zoom), Cameron Conant (Zoom) and “citizen” (Zoom).

The February regular board meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Tom Taylor.

Board resolution 2026-3 was added to the agenda as item 5a.

Kerry Froetschner moved, and Craig Zwick seconded to approve the January minutes as presented. Motion carried 9-0.

Orrin Feril provided the board and public with the February treasurer’s report and highlighted the unique items for further board review. Darrell Wood moved, and Fred Grunder seconded to accept the February treasurer’s report as presented. Motion carried 9-0.

Karina Mata, Adams Brown, presented the audit report to the board for fiscal year 2025. A few questions were answered Kent Moore moved, and Marlyn Spare seconded to adopt Resolution 2026-2 to conduct the 2026 audit using the cash basis and budget laws of Kansas. Motion carried 9-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-2

WHEREAS the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5, Stafford, Kansas, has determined that the financial statements and financial reports for the year ended 2026 to be prepared in conformity with the requirements of K.S.A. 75-1120a(a) (as amended) are not relevant to the requirements of the cash basis and budget laws of this state and are of no significant value to the Board of Directors or the members of the general public of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 and

WHEREAS there are no revenue bond ordinances or other ordinances or resolutions of the municipality which require financial statements and financial reports to be prepared in conformity with K.S.A. 75-1120a(a) (as amended) for the year ended 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5, Stafford, Kansas, in the regular meeting duly assembled this 17th day of February 2026 that the Board of Directors waives the requirements of K.S.A. 75-1120a(a) (as amended) as they apply to the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 for the year ended 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE Board of Directors shall cause the financial statements and financial reports of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 to be prepared on the basis of cash receipts and disbursements as adjusted to show compliance with the cash basis and budget laws of this State.

Prior to the monthly board meeting, Tom Taylor presided over the public hearing to consider the revised management program for the District. There were 13 public present at the hearing. Darrell Wood moved, and Fred Grunder seconded to approve Resolution 2026-3 to adopt the revised management program with no modifications as presented. Motion carried 9-0.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 2026-3

WHEREAS the Chief Engineer, Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture approved the proposed Revised Management Program on January 09, 2026; and

WHEREAS a public hearing on the District's proposed, revised management program was conducted pursuant to K.S.A. 82a-1029 on February 17, 2026 at the legally noticed time and place; and

WHEREAS testimony was heard from all District members expressing Interest in said Program; and

WHEREAS the board duly considered all testimony provided;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the board of directors adopts the proposed revised management program as approved by the Chief Engineer, with no modifications; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the revised management program is to become effective February 18, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be numbered 2026-3.

Orrin Feril presented the draft budget for FY2027 and potentially revised budget for FY2026 for board input. When the Watershed Plan-EIS progresses to the design/implementation phase, the District will provide notice of a budget hearing to consider revising FY2026 budgets accordingly. These draft budgets will be presented at the annual meeting for public input. The proposed FY2027 budget will be presented at the budget hearing that is held in July.

Orrin Feril provided an update on the legislative activity in Topeka. The District is currently tracking four water-related bills (HB2433, HB2558, HB2477, and SB317). It was the consensus of the board to continue monitoring these bills and as necessary provide pertinent testimony.

Orrin Feril discussed staff activities for the past few weeks and upcoming months. The legislative reception was well attended and there was good opportunity to provide details to legislators that were curious about groundwater management districts across Kansas. Following the reception, on February 5, the District's annual report was presented to the House Water committee, and several questions were addressed in that testimony. The board was presented with the first draft of the District's action plan in accordance with K.S.A. 82a-1044. This draft will also be presented to the public for initial review and questions at the annual meeting. All were encouraged to take a close look at the draft and provide feedback and comments. The Watershed Plan is in the final week of the public review period. At the conclusion of the of the review period, NRCS will compile the Record of Decision which will then allow the District and associate consultants to begin the design/implementation phase of the project. Further details are going to be provided at the annual meeting on this project. Several comments and concerns were heard from the public in attendance regarding the proposed actions in the Watershed Plan. The board provided feedback and was appreciative of receiving those comments.

