

MINUTES
2025 ANNUAL MEETING
BIG BEND GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT #5
AND
CENTRAL KANSAS WATER BANK ASSOCIATION
February 20, 2025 – 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 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Stafford County Annex in St John, Kansas.

Andrew Vosburgh called the Central Kansas Water Bank Association annual meeting to order. Tom Taylor called the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 annual meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 24 eligible voters and 11 visitors in attendance for the meeting with an additional 7 visitors attending via Zoom.

Orrin Feril presented the approved minutes from the 2024 annual meeting and welcomed all present in the meeting.

John Janssen presented the financial report and proposed 2026 budget. The public present were encouraged to review these records in preparation for the July budget hearing to consider the budget for FY2026.

John Janssen announced the District election of directors and presented candidates. Incumbent Fred Grunder was on the ballot for Pratt County. Incumbent Marlyn Spare was on the ballot for Stafford County. Gary Hornbaker was on the ballot for Reno County. Nominations were opened to the floor for all positions three times. Jon McClure moved, and Kevin Schultz 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 announced the Central Kansas Water Bank Association election of directors and presented the candidates for the one open position. Andrew Vosburgh was on the ballot as incumbent this position. Nominations were opened to the floor for the open position three times. Ki Gamble moved, and Phil Martin seconded that nominations cease, and a unanimous ballot be cast for the candidates to fill the open position on the CKWBA board. By show of hands, the motion carried unanimously.

Vijay Ramasamy, Governor Kelly's Special Advisor for Water, addressed the audience via Zoom with the priority items for the Governor in this term of office. Firstly, prioritizing funding for water programs in the state. The Governor has heard the concern that the existing water programs are confusing and inefficient. To that end, HB 2172 is intended to review the effectiveness of state water programs and to identify long-term funding sources for water programs going forward. Lastly, the Governor has begun the discussion on reorganization of three state water agencies (KDA–DWR, KWO, and KDHE) into one office of natural resources. This reorganization has been introduced in the legislature, but it is unlikely that the legislature will take much action on this concept this session.

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. Specifically, the upcoming public review session will be an opportune time for input on the draft document and all are encouraged to review and submit comments in the process.

Lane Letourneau, KDA–DWR, provided a summary of the 2024 activities for the agency. KDA–DWR has been highly involved in the strategic implementation planning process for the Kansas Water Plan. Mr. Letourneau provided a briefing on the current water-related legislation this session.

Orrin Feril provided a brief overview of the District activity for 2024. The District has been working diligently with Olsson and NRCS to address technical comments and concerns from the National Water Management Center regarding the draft Watershed Plan-EIS document. Mr. Feril provided the audience with an updated timeline and encouraged everyone to stay involved in this process. In addition to the Watershed Plan drafting, the District has been working to comply with the new K.S.A. 82a-1044 requirements including identification of areas of concern and development of the action plan. Several questions were addressed from the audience.

Vanessa Marks provided a thorough overview of the Association activities in 2024 and pending actions in 2025. The development of the Compensated Allocation Management Program (CAMP) marries state and private funding to pay water users in the Rattlesnake Creek region near St John to significantly reduce the amount diverted in 2025. CAMP has been an integral part of the Rattlesnake Creek working group to avoid broad water right administration in 2025.

Orrin Feril thanked everyone in attendance for their attention to the activities and encouraged everyone to stay involved in the water conversation in Central Kansas. With nothing further to discuss, Orrin Feril adjourned the joint annual meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Attest by  Date 3-13-25