

**WATER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 9<sup>th</sup> 2026. AT 9:00 A.M.**  
**CASTLE VALLEY TOWN BUILDING - 2 CASTLE VALLEY DRIVE**

\*\*This meeting was a hybrid meeting held electronically by Zoom and also in person at the anchor site of the Town Building.

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Groo called the Meeting to Order at 9:02 AM, and called the roll.

Water Committee Members Present: John Groo, Sue Bellagamba, Bob O'Brien, Ryan Anderson

Water Committee Present on Zoom: Dave Erley (joined at 10:00)

Absent: Pam Hackley

Present at the anchor site: Jocelyn Buck, Sarah Stock, John Stafsholt, Debbie Stafsholt, Janea Wallace, Egmont Honer

Present on zoom: Scott Barnhart, Dave Frey

**REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING**

1. Open Public Comment
  - No public comment
2. Approval of Minutes
  - WAC meeting February 16th, 2026
    - O'Brien made a motion, Anderson seconds, all voted in favor.
3. Items of Interest
  - Utah Legislative Session Report (HB 60 Water Rights Amendments)
    - Stock reports that this bill limits the scope of protest on water rights. HB60 requires the engineer to "consider only issues directly related to: the beneficial use of water; or the quantity, quality or availability of water in the state." It removes language that allows the state engineer to consider denying water rights applications that "unreasonably affect public recreation or the natural stream environment, or will prove detrimental to the public welfare."
      - Anderson will check on the status of other water bills in the session.
  - Colorado River Authority of Utah updates
    - O'Brien reports briefly on Marc Stilson's presentation to the Grand County Commission.
    - WAC discusses funding for water metering available through the State Division of Water Resources. Stock will contact Marisa Egbert to get more information.

**NEW BUSINESS**

4. UGS Study Presentation report and discussion of implications and findings
  - O'Brien discusses the interaction of poor quality water coming into the valley fill aquifer from the sides of the valley. He notes that the presenters of the UGS study were not willing to say that a decrease in water in the valley fill aquifer would result in more intrusion of poor quality water from the paradox.
  - Wallace recognizes that the UGS and the UDWRi have a complex relationship, with UGS receiving funding through UDWRi. Also emphasizes that the report has a slightly different

interpretation. Recommends that we work with the UDWQ's Sam Taylor and Amy Dickey on water quality.

- Stock brings up the relative thinness of the Castle Valley aquifer and how that leaves it vulnerable to change.
- Wallace: Recommends seeking DEQ Non-Point Source (NPS) funds to augment TMDL study with isotopic and nutrient sampling in the creek to further understand water quality and groundwater interactions.

#### 5. Groundwater Management Plan - Janae Wallace

- Groo introduces the idea. Mentions that our first step is that we need to find out how much land is still available in the watershed for additional appropriations. Says there are pretty good appropriation policies already in place. He describes our current appropriations policies: there are limits on new water rights appropriations region wide, with stricter restrictions in Willow Basin. There is also a policy that anyone seeking water in Castle Valley town must go through the town or find another existing water right to use. In addition to this, we can ask for a groundwater management plan from the Division of Water Rights.
- Wallace: Believes that it requires more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of waterusers to petition to trigger the UDWRi to develop the groundwater management plan. Sand Hollow triggered a groundwater management plan with  $\frac{2}{3}$  of water rights holders.
- Bellagamba: Asks if this is by amount of water rights or by number of entities. Moab is in crisis, but the current State Engineer is hesitant to develop one. Bellagamba is worried about potential political upheaval if the State Engineer does not want to do a groundwater management plan, but then we go ahead and trigger it by petitioning for one.
- Groo is surprised that such an act would cause controversy.
- Wallace thinks taking a water quality approach would be beneficial because water quality is outlined in the code for groundwater management plans.
- The basic process of petitioning the UDWRi is discussed by the WAC. It is decided more information on this process is needed.
- Bellagamba says we should first ask Cash Stallings, our Regional Engineer, to develop a groundwater management plan, see what the response is from him and the State Engineer, and then evaluate the next steps, politics, and whether or not we petition for one. She talks of the definition of "safe yield" being the amount of water going in equalling the amount of water going out and the limitations of that definition.
- Groo: the reality of safe yield in Castle Valley may not be related as much to water quantity, but rather water quality (as poor quality water further intrudes into the aquifer).
- Wallace: reads part of the UGS report that she wrote that was taken out of the final draft. about the critical threshold for aquifer health. She reads, "The potential degradation of water quality in the valley-fill aquifer could be caused by reduced recharge from the LaSal Mountains and/or excessive water withdrawal from the aquifer. Any future decrease in water supply, coupled with increasing TDS concentrations due to increased well water withdrawal, could diminish the amount of potable water available to the community."

### **PRIORITY ACTION REPORTS**

#### 6. Water Management Plan Priority Action List

- Aquifer Monitoring (additional well) - Groo
  - Groo has been in contact with the owner of lot 194. He's agreed to allow the use of that abandoned well for ongoing monitoring. We can at the very least measure static level. The well may require a different top to do chemical sampling.

- Wallace: Says another option is to grab chemical sampling from the hydrant on the other well on his lot because it is very close.
- Aquifer Monitoring (UGS Program) – Stock/O’Brien
  - Wallace: The UGS will add this well for water level sampling and potentially chemical sampling for free this year.
  - Groo: Future MOU should reflect this change.
- Water Rights - Groo
  - Groo: We received notice of someone with a fixed time application seeking an extension in the valley. We filed a protest on that extension. The property owner is trying to find existing water rights to transfer to his lots, Castle Valley has water rights that we could allocate at this moment and we outlined this.
- Well Metering – Stock/Groo/Honer
  - No updates
- Castle Creek – Pam
  - No updates
- Non-Potable Water for Cisterns – Groo
  - Groo: Describes the small water fill up in De Beque, CO. Coburn and De Beque both are supplying treated water, and Castle Valley has no way to treat the water currently. We would want to distribute “non-potable” water. Next steps are to research what it would be like to distribute “non-potable” water.
  - Bellagamba asks what treatment could look like.
  - Groo: Discusses ultraviolet light and chlorine as options for treatment.
  - Bellagamba clarifies that this would be a town water right.
  - Groo: A benefit is that this would be a “municipal” water right, and we are trying to move towards having more municipal water rights. These rights have better protection and more flexibility. The burden of proof for these rights is less.
  - Wallace: Discusses groundwater classification. Because we don’t have a municipal water supply we could not classify the groundwater as “1B Irriplacable.” If we have municipal status, that could change.
- Grand County Watershed Protection Overlay District – O’Brien
  - O’Brien: At the Grand County Planning Commission, they will be discussing some protections for the two watersheds, Glen Canyon and Castle Valley, this week. The protected areas from the state and WSPO cover at least a third of the Glen Canyon Aquifer in Spanish Valley. They still need to develop regulations for the entire sole-source aquifers. O’Brien thinks these regulations should be discussed during the process to revise the Land Use Code for Grand County, this year. He will push for the most protections we can get. Potential protections for the sole source aquifers could include: limits on underground storage for petroleum products, excluding highways, certain conditional uses in range and grazing. WSPO has tiers of protection based on distance from municipal supply wells.
- DRWi Appropriations Policy for CV – Erley
  - Discussed during Groundwater management plan discussion
- Explore options for protection of surplus water- Bellagamba
  - Bellagamba sent out a link to water marketing. She’s not sure water banking is right for Castle Valley. Classified municipal water has more protection than other classifications of nature of use. They also have different timelines to prove beneficial use. The nature of use matters, a water attorney could answer some questions here. Water banking would require a change of use application. A change application triggers some changes that may not be the best for Castle Valley.

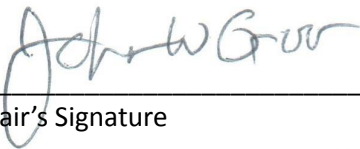
- Erley: The other big question coming out of our meeting with Cash is that our water rights are underground, but the “surplus” water in Castle Creek is surface water. This complicates it.
- Bellagamba stresses that you need to know both hydrology and water law. Emily Lewis says that she would come talk with us. Two water banks have been approved, so it’s not impossible. The State Engineer took a long time to approve the one that Bellagamba has worked on. The banked water can be left in the aquifer, the nature of use becomes “water banking” and doesn’t necessarily have to be leased.
- Stock mentions small scale watershed improvements like beaver dam analogues that could use town water rights upstream.
- Bellagamba says that use would be very tiny. Says that you can also file “non-use” on your water rights. A water rights attorney could answer many questions for us.

**ADJOURNMENT**

O’Brien moves to adjourn at 10:28.

**For Meeting Packets go to:** <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html> Government: select "Cites"  
Entity: select "Castle Valley" Body: select "Town of Castle Valley "Select this meeting and click on  
"Download attachments"

**Contact information:** Sarah Stock, wateragent@castlevalleyutah.com

  
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Chair’s Signature

APRIL 6TH 2026  
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Date